

CHRIST IS OUR PEACE

Thomas Yoder Neufeld

October 16, 2009

Saskatoon, Mennonite Brethren Board of Faith and Life sponsored Study Conference

Introduction

In my earlier presentation I drew attention to the deep roots of early Jesus confession in the wisdom traditions of Israel, and to the artistry with which that confession was made. This morning I wish to introduce you to a very particular piece of confessional art. “Introduce” may be the wrong term, since many of you will be very familiar with the text. But like all great art, revisiting it will be well worth the effort. This is confessional art which was created in a world in which divisions ran deep, hostilities were rampant, and pluralism a given—a description we might well give to our own day.

I love museums and galleries. A lot goes into organizing a gallery, proper presentation, lighting, choosing which paintings get set next to each other, how to organize them to provide maximum impact for viewers of the gems in the museum’s collection, much the way someone will give thought to properly framing a painting. You choose the frame, you might choose a mat, or to double-mat, in order to fix the focus of the viewer on the centre, the painting or photograph itself. And the painting or photograph is itself organized so as to direct and arrest the attention of the viewer.

The writers of the Bible frequently did precisely the same thing in a literary fashion. They used a device called “chiasm.” It comes from the letter “chi” which looks to us like an “X”, but is really the “ch” in, for example, “*Christ*” or “*Christology*.” Chiasm is a kind of framing device intended to draw the readers’ or hearer’s attention to the centre around which the rest of the passage is arranged. We find it in both Old and New Testaments. The chiastic structure was in its time wonderfully suited to contemplation and memorization in an oral and aural culture in which texts were less read than performed, less viewed than heard.

In Ephesians this device is employed to great effect, especially the first half. This letter is the fruit of deep reflection, inspired rumination, and deliberate construction. It is divided into two roughly equal halves (chapters 1-3 and 4-6), like two galleries in a great museum. The first depicts God’s fathomless grace in and through Christ, the second what a fitting response looks like for those who have experienced that grace. In other words, one half of the diptych is what God is up to, the other what we as the beneficiaries are to be up to.

We don’t have time to tour both galleries. In fact, like a tour guide in a rush, I won’t even let you look at much of even the first gallery, the first half of Ephesians, and move you quickly to the prize piece in the collection.

(I recall making a visit to the Louvre with my wife and running through the galleries to find the Mona Lisa, given that we had only an hour for that grand museum. We predated Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code* by several decades.)

As you can see on your hand-out (attached as Chart #1), I consider the first half of the letter to be constructed in a chiastic fashion. You can yourself at your leisure test

whether I view this correctly. At the center we find the text we are focusing on this morning. It too is organized chiasmically (see chart #2). So, let me act the museum guide for a moment and point out a number of things about this greatest of gems in this gallery.

Outer Frame

Remember what I said about chiasm. We should look for corresponding elements. I'll call the first set the "outer frame". Take a moment to compare verses 11 and 12 with 19-20. Do you see the contrasts?

- a) The first section (verses 11 and 12) begins with a reminder to Gentiles of who they once were: "uncircumcision", outsiders to the covenants, "atheists" and thus without hope.
This is very much a picture of "them" from the perspective of "us", where "we" are Jews, insiders with a long relationship with God, and "you" are everyone else, "Gentiles," "nations," the undifferentiated masses whom "we" have considered to be beyond the circle of God's care.
- b) Compare now the corresponding part of this "outer frame", verses 19-22: "You are no longer strangers, but members of the family, part of the commonwealth, now not rejected but chosen by God. More, rather than being "atheists," "without God, godless", you now constitute a home for God. This "outer frame" thus draws a sharp contrast—before-and-after—in the starkest possible fashion.

Inner Frame

There is a second frame, we might call it the inner frame—much like double matting, for those of you who do your own framing. This inner frame draws attention to Christ's reconciling and restoring activity "through his blood" (v. 13) in the upper half of the inner frame, and to his being an evangelist of peace (vv.17 and 18) in the lower half. This inner frame is not marked by contrast, as is the outer frame. What holds the two parts together is the phrase "the near and the far".

Two texts from Isaiah play a role in the creation of this inner frame. The first is taken from Isaiah 57:19, which has a messenger announce Yahweh's message: *Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the LORD*. Jesus is here depicted as the messenger of peace. He is wearing, if we can borrow from another part of this great letter, the shoes of preparedness to announce the good news, the gospel of peace, as 6:15 has it. We hear the echo here of Isaiah 52:7:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

This inner frame is most remarkable. Jesus is not only the peace evangelist, as verse 17 states, but he makes peace by offering his own life. "Blood" in v. 13 is surely

shorthand for Jesus' death on the cross, as will become explicit in the next verses. But I think we should also be open to seeing in "blood" a symbol of Jesus' *life*—blood as the liquid of life itself, and thus also of his giving life to those who drink of it (as John 6 puts it in almost too graphic a way). "Blood" thus becomes also a way of speaking of Christ as the giver of life. That too will become explicit shortly.

Who are these "near and far"? In Isaiah 57 the "far" are clearly the exiles in Babylon, "us away from home." In Isaiah God is calling his people home from exile, bringing their long exile to an end. But here in Ephesians, who are the "far"? Are they not the Gentiles mentioned in vv 11 and 12?

Let me be the museum guide once more: this whole passage is written from the perspective of "us", of "us" talking to "you", of us Jews talking to you Gentiles. Do you then notice the remarkable recasting of the Gentiles as "us away from home?" Gentiles are recast in the very way Scripture is used in this passage as no longer the "other" but family members in exile, recipients of God's intervention to bring their long exile to a close. And then, notice, the evangelist and maker of peace takes both the far and near together into the presence of their common divine parent, in the presence of the one who is called in 3:14 "the father of every family, in heaven and on earth." This way of using Scripture is breathtakingly creative. This is enormously creative art.

The Centre

And now we come to the very centre of the chiasm, the very heart of the doxology that makes up the first half of Ephesians.

Let me stay with the visual metaphor for a moment: the two frames I have described, the outer and the inner frame, encompass and focus our attention on a most remarkable scene:

We see, first, images of destruction and violence:

- There is a shattered wall, once erected to separate the chosen from the rejected, and now demolished
- There is a torn fence, so carefully erected to keep what is holy, holy
- We see a cross, still in that day the supreme emblem of state terrorism. There was as yet no romance to the cross. Instead of a cherished "old and rugged" cross, soon to grace beautiful buildings and hang from beautiful ears and around gorgeous necks, people then knew it as terrifying, sadistic state terror, pure and simple—Abu Graib, not the church steeple. Here it stands in all its horror at the centre of this painting.
- There is even an act of murder. Yes, we see the murder of the messiah, as the cross signifies. I am referring, however, to the messiah's own act of murder. Precisely at the moment of his own death at the hands of his enemies, he commits the murder of enmity itself. Some of you will have to give your mind's eye full freedom to imagine this most remarkable irony—one at the very heart of atonement. I love the taunting phrase in Bach's Easter cantata, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* [Cantata #4]: "*Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg, wo ein Tod den anderen frass*" ("It was a most strange war, when one death gobbled up the other").

Christ's embrace of humanity in his death is, it must be stated emphatically, not to be divorced from the embracing he did with his life, his teaching, his proclamation of the gospel of peace, as our passage puts it. The cross was in that sense a consequence of his breaking down the walls of division, of his stepping out to the high ways and byways with his invitation to the banquet of God, to Wisdom's feast, of his confronting a world of injustice, impoverishment, marginalization, and disease with the promise and threat of the kingdom of God. But the tenacity of God's loving embrace is seen in the fact that the spurning of that embrace—the cross—became itself, in God's finally untraceable ingenuity, the final assault on fear and hostility. Jesus' ultimate act of self-disarming turns out to be a lethal attack on the enmity that keeps us from God and from each other, that keeps us in the grip of fear and terror, fear of each other, fear of God. We are reminded of Eph 4:8, where Christ the victorious warrior takes captivity itself captive, by coming down from the mountain and offering gifts, a most astonishing reversal of Psalm 68:18.

But look again. In the midst of this carnage, right in the middle of this violence, we see images of peace, of reconciliation, of the birth of a new humanity.

- the reconciling of enemies, of “you” and “we”
- the reconciling of both of us together to God,
- more, the creation within Christ of the new human, the new Adam. In Christ, or through Jesus, God is starting all over again with humanity, and is doing so *not* by the elimination of godless enemies, but by the costly process of forging bonds of oneness for those who were prisoners of enmity, whose hostilities were forged over centuries, not least on the anvil of piety.

It's all here! Atonement, new creation, reconciliation with God, reconciliation among enemies—the whole gospel from beginning to end, distilled in one remarkably dense and intense picture. No wonder it forms the centre piece in this gallery.

From picture to hymn, from painting to poetry

Let me switch from one kind of art to another, from imagining a painting of this scene, to what is actually the case here, namely, hymnody or poetry. As we saw last night, much of our Christological understanding, our conceptualizations, our language, comes from early hymnody: John 1, Phil 2:6-11, and Col 1:15-20.

Many, I include myself, see in verses 14-16—the very centre of this chiasm—a hymn, celebrating Christ not only as peacemaker and peace evangelist, as we saw in the inner frame, but as the very peace he came to announce. “Peace” is here a Christological title. So, to the answer to Jesus' question: “You are Wisdom!” we can add “You are Peace!”

While the hymn may originally have celebrated the overcoming of divisions in the cosmos in general, in its present form it invites the singers to sing this song in relation to a very specific division, that between *Jews and Gentiles*, one so deep that our text refers to it simply as “the enmity,” or “the hostility.” Jesus is confessed as “our peace” because through his ministry and his death the division between the accepted and the rejected, between the loved and the unloved, the chosen and the ignored, has been crushed, demolished, murdered. More, “in him” a new humanity is being born out of erstwhile

enemies, out of those once thought to be beyond God's care. In and through this Christ "you" and "we," the far and the near, Jews and Gentiles, old enemies, have access to God—not by ourselves, not with those just like us, but together with those we remember as the rejected and hostile "other." Peace, indeed!

That is what has captured the poet's imagination. For this you need art. Here we can stand and stare for a great long time, or sit and listen with eyes closed, and never adequately plumb the depths.

The art work produced by "our peace"

Let me return to what I called earlier the "frames" of this glorious depiction. You will recall that the particular passage begins in verse 11 with an invitation to *remember* the ways things once were. Such remembering serves to highlight the full extent of what "our Peace" has wrought, something we see on the other side of the hymn, in verses 17-22.

First, onetime enemies have together been given access to their common father, as we see in verses 17-18. We don't live in a world of temples, with their limited access, nor of a world of palaces, where access is only allowed the most intimate or highly placed persons. Such spaces were, however, ubiquitous in the first century. Temples generally, but especially the temple in Jerusalem, limited access with increasing severity the closer you got, symbolically, to the deity.

More, as comes to expression most dramatically in the final image of the passage in verses 19-22, in what I earlier called the "outer frame," not only have old enemies been given access to the "Father" together through the Spirit, itself a powerful witness to the consequence of and purpose of what "our Peace" has brought about, but together these erstwhile enemies now provide a home for God. Our imaginations are invited to move from reconciled relationships to the architectural image of building. Evidently mixing metaphors was not a sin yet.

I wish us to notice that the temple of the most high God is made of the very stones ones rejected. The stones with which this temple is being constructed are taken not only from the quarry of faithful community, the "we" in this passage, but more dramatically from the land-fill site of rejected stones, the "you" in this passage. God's home is a massive recycling project, we might say. This temple is a powerful witness to God's grace precisely in the way it is made up of recycled building materials, in the very way it is unfinished, rough, in the way it takes bits and pieces of broken but now retrieved and rescued humanity and makes them a part of the face of the temple to the world. In its very existence this temple is a subversive presence in a culture of fear and suspicion, a profound and sociologically visible witness to the one who is our peace. If new walls go up in its construction, and they will and still do, they witness, in the very way they are constructed, in the very building materials used, to the radical hospitality of the one who is "our Peace." Yes, there are in this temple's porous walls beautifully crafted stones, strong stones, but many, many more chipped, broken, once rejected but now retrieved building materials, the kinds of building materials no one constructing a temple for God would utilize. But therein lies its peerless beauty; therein precisely lies its perfection.

A few years ago I was asked to write some biblical studies for Mennonite Church Canada's *Season of Prayer*. (*Built to Last: Jesus Christ as Ground and Goal*, 2007;

<http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/FileDownload/7969>). I began to imagine the temple, God's home, visually. It was a remarkable experience. Someday I'll try to paint it. On the other hand, may not. Like the images in John's Revelation, this dream won't sit still, as it never should. Here is what I saw:

It [this temple, this home of God] is sort of like a giant pyramid or ziggurat, those marvelous ancient human made mountains of adoration, except that this one dwarfs the biggest of them. It reaches high into the heavens, and beyond the horizon, a wondrous living pile of interconnected buildings—soaring cathedral towers, mud huts with roofs made of thatch or corrugated tin, gymnasiums and multipurpose halls, ordinary houses with large enough court yards or living rooms for people to meet, caves and catacombs, small wooden church buildings, store front churches, tiny black steeples with red neon crosses on top, grand monasteries and convents and baked mud cells in which monks spend their days and nights in prayer. Sometimes one can discern patterns in the building styles, depending on age and location, but the more one moves up the holy mountain the greater, the more bewildering, but also the more exciting the diversity of building efforts, many still clearly in the early stages of construction. Maybe we should think of this more as the “City of God” than as a temple. It hardly matters. The point is that this temple or this city (Rev 21:2-4) is where God is at home.

...this is a home under constant construction and renovation. I dare say that the sounds most pleasing to God's ears, if we may speak in human terms, are the sounds of building, to stay with the metaphor, of hammers, saws, drills, of shouts of direction and encouragement, and, yes, urgent correction. Building each other up and building the temple is music to God's ears.

Observations and implications

As a good museum guide, or musicologist, let me draw out some of the distinctive features in this passage that have special relevance to how we think about confessing Jesus in our time and place.

1. First, this euphoric hymn, psalm, or poem, together with its frames, places peace at the very center of the confession. Some of you are already squirming. Are we not reducing Jesus once again to one of our favourite Mennonite Anabaptist themes? I share some of your discomfort. I too sometimes tire of the rhetoric of peace, even though we have for the most part still not learned to live it. And we're not the first to be uncomfortable with easy talk of peace. Jeremiah already lamented the ease with which people talk peace when there is no peace, no justice, no faithfulness to God, only the calm that continues to benefit the callous, the powerful and privileged. Well, whatever discomfort we have with how peace is talked about in our world and in our circles, this text makes it absolutely clear that peace is located at the very core of a faithful confession of Jesus. Peace is essential to the confession of all who name the name of Christ. It is *not* an Anabaptist distinctive, and we must not allow it to become our calling card, our ticket to the roundtable of the wider church. Should other traditions within that wider body of

Christ not accord it centrality, that's not a vindication of our uniqueness and specialness, but an invitation for us to pick a good argument with our sisters and brothers.

That said, we should not be smug. Anabaptists, Mennonites, are in grave danger of domesticating peace, rendering it either, as I just indicated, as "our thing," or, on the other, as a political or social goal, too often loosening it from its holistic tether in the confession of Jesus. Yes, we might still connect it with Jesus, but too often only with Jesus as a model of non-violence. We are in danger of then landing up with a Christology that sees Jesus as a volunteer on permanent assignment. That is not yet the answer Jesus is looking for when he asks us: Who do you say that I am? This passage thus challenges us to the highest possible Christology with the most comprehensive understanding of peace possible, one that exposes both a Christless peace and a peaceless Christ as falling far short of the confession Jesus is wishing to hear from us.

2. Secondly, this confessional hymn celebrates Christ as "our" peace. This might at first blush sound selfish and smug, however spiritual and pious. Until you realize that the chiasmic structure of 2:11-22 forces us to recognize that the "our" in "our Peace" is made up of "you" and "us", the far and the near, strangers and old family members, Jews and Gentiles, us *and* our enemies!

What kind of an imagination composes a passage such as this? It is the kind of imagination gripped by gratitude for the inexpressible grace of God. Remember, at the time of the composition of this grand psalm of peace we do not yet have "Christianity", "orthodoxy," "Nicaea", let alone 2000 years of being the dominant religion in the West. What we have is Jews who have beheld the shocking wonder of God's embrace of enemies, God's enemies, their enemies, and befriended them at the very moment when their rejection of God's messiah was most intense. What we have is the wonder of the peace of God that opens doors to enemies and welcomes them in as lost family members to become a part of creation all over again. What we see in Ephesians, as in so many other places in the letters of Paul, a willingness on the part of Jews with a deep sense of pedigree to place themselves with those they once considered outside the circle of God's care. Observe this act of humility and hospitality at work at the beginning of this second chapter of Ephesians:

- 1 And YOU (who were)
 - dead in your trespasses and sins
 - 2 in which YOU once walked
 - according to the aeon of this world
 - according to the ruler of the authority of the air
 - the spirit now at work among the sons [and daughters] of disobedience
 - 3 among whom also WE all once walked in the desires of our flesh
 - performing the wishes of the flesh and of the mind
 - and WE were by nature children of wrath as all the rest,
- 4 BUT GOD
 - being rich in mercy
 - because of his great love with which he loved US
 - 5 and WE being dead in trespasses
 - made US alive together with (through) Christ

6 —by grace YOU have been saved—
 and raised US together
 and seated US together in the heavenlies in (with) Christ
(my own very literal translation of the Greek, preserving the structure and grammar of the Greek)

To confess Christ as “our” peace is a confession we do not make alone. Jesus is confessed alongside those we would just as soon keep at arm’s length, who threaten or disturb our “personal space”, our “comfort zone”, our manageable realities. To be “born again” is never a solitary experience. We are born *together* into the new human, as our passage has it, together with our enemies, with the “other,” the “stranger.” So be careful when you confess! You never know alongside whom you’re going to do that. The bond or chain of peace, as Eph 4:3 puts it, has us chained alongside the most unlikely companions.

Just as you never know with whom you will confess that Christ is “our” peace, so you never know before whom you make the confession. What does it mean for us to confess Christ as our peace and the peace of the other, the enemy, in a world in which Christians are losing their privileged place, their control of the levers of power? What does it mean to confess that in face of indifference and even ridicule? What does it mean to confess that before those who have their own faith? In other words, what does it mean to say Christ is “our” peace, knowing that that peace is intended to reach to the other, the different, the stranger, the enemy?

Sadly, we must also contemplate how we make that confession before our sisters and brothers in the wider body of Christ who do not easily sing this song, who have made the peace of Christ a personal individual matter that leaves the enmities and hostilities of this world in place, or worse, that takes the gift of peace with Christ and makes it a means of stoking the enmities and hostilities that mark our world. Just as true, we confess this Jesus to be our peace also before those who are hardly conscious of the need for peace with God, who have reduced this wondrous all-embracing peace to a social and political program.

The answer to how we confess this before “others” must remain always just out of reach, and always open. Because such a confession represents a stance of radical hospitality, born of a deep conviction that we all, you and we, the far and the near, the same and the different, are together being “gathered into Christ,” as 1:10 has it, brought within the circle of peace Christ constitutes. Such a confession summons us to participate in the pursuit of the stranger with love (as Rom 12:13 is carefully translated). Such a confession summons us to participate in the love of enemies. That is how, as Jesus puts it in Matthew 5:43, we show that we are indeed sons and daughters of our Father in heaven. Such a confession summons us to participate in the birthing of a new humanity.

You know why I care about getting this confession right? Why I care about “orthodoxy”? Why I care about fidelity to Scripture? Because I do not want us to forget this wall-shattering, boundary-transgressing, new-humanity-creating peace that is ours in Christ Jesus. Any orthodoxy that leaves our enmities in place, or even, God forbid, stokes them, has precious little if anything to do with the one we confess to be “our peace.” It is heresy, pure and simple.

Such a confession will stir up trouble, as it did for our forebears in the faith. For us to sing this song together, in relation to the real world which contains not only differences, but also genuine enmities, will create arguments amongst us about which

walls should be broken down and which hold up the temple. The building site that is the home of God is a noisy construction site, indeed. Helmets are sometimes in order. We will have vigorous differences of opinion precisely *because* Jesus is “our Peace.” We should carry those arguments on consciously in the presence of Jesus, as I suggested at the beginning of my first presentation, with an ear open for the directions of the Spirit pervading the building site. We should never disparage the urge toward peace, the desire to bind together, the desire to break down walls—that is an impulse generated by the Spirit of the one whom we confess to be “our Peace.” That insight makes the arguments no less necessary. Birth is, as I have observed from the side as a father in the making, seldom if ever without struggle and pain. Such is the birthing this confession invites.

3. So we have work to do. One challenge we have, if our confession of Jesus is to have integrity in our day, is how to find the language with which the peace of Christ, in cross and new creation, can once again be uttered so as to undermine real enmities, bring about reconciliation between us and our enemies, and together with them, with God. We need the poets, the hymn writers, the composers, the novelists, the painters, just as we need the life experience of every one of us, to give birth to the language that names the birth of the new humanity, in which all the families of earth and heaven are gathered up in Christ, as Ephesians envisions it.

What will such language look like? What will it mean for us to sing the Lord’s song, as it were, with the same courage to apply the peace of Christ to the enmities, estrangements, brokenness, borders and walls, we know in our day? We must not assume we can know. The language will vary, no doubt, just as the wisdom of God is manifold, just as the enmities of our world are manifold, just as the cultures of those who have been and are being brought together by the one who is peace are manifold. How to be open to, encouraging of, and deeply committed to such diversity all the while being anchored in the one who is our peace? For that we need art, creativity, a desire to communicate that comes from sharing the passion of God for befriending enemies with each other and himself. One thing is certain: singing the Lord’s song faithfully, confessing Jesus faithfully, will be confessing a God who loves this world enough to give his own son for its liberation, who gives himself as an act of peace, precisely at the moment of humanity’s most intense rebellion. Our creativity must never diminish that confession; it must emerge out of it. We need to insist on the singularity of Christ’s peace precisely in order to shatter the borders, walls, fences, and traditions that keep us from entering into God’s presence together with the other, the stranger, the enemy.

This is no easy song to sing, no easy confession to make. Because to confess this Christ is to invite the enemy in, to chase down the stranger with love, as Paul puts it in Romans 12:13, to chain ourselves to the stranger far away and the sister near at hand, as Eph 4:3 has it. To do that is to enter a peace process fraught with struggle and conflict. It will change us, as it did the early community of faith as it moved out of Palestine into the Gentile regions of the Roman empire. But the church is and has always been a risky enterprise, most especially when it has been faithful to its confession. Risk is at the very core of peace. We rehearse the risk God took in Christ every Good Friday. In its very visible existence, in its brokenness and unfaithfulness, the church testifies to the degree to which Christ took a real risk in breaking down the protective wall.

Our museum tour has ended for now. We have observed art deeply informed by the raw materials of the story of divine love for humanity, of the creator going the distance to the point of his own death at the hands of hostile and rebellious humanity, to make peace with precisely that humanity, and in the process bringing about a community of peace, a community made up of those who should not be able to get along, and who often don't, but who, chained as they are to each other in the chains of peace, offer in their worship a home for God.

I hope this picture will continue to work its magic in our imaginations, and bring us back to the museum for repeat visits.

Chart #1

CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS 1-3

A	Eulogy—in praise of God	1:3-14
B	Thanksgiving and Prayer for church	1:15-23
C	Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles	2:1-10
D	CHRIST IS OUR PEACE	2:11-22
C ¹	Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles	3:1-13
B ¹	Prayer for church resumed	3:14-19
A ¹	Doxology—in praise of God	3:20-21

Chart #2

Ephesians 2:11-22 (NRSV)

11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"-a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands- 12 remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. 15 He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

