August 30, 2026

ON THE WAY TOGETHER

Finding & Extending Belonging *in Jesus' Family*



SERMON: Belonging Across Culture
SPEAKER: Dorothy Pang
CORE SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:14-16; 3:10-11; Acts 2:1-6

WATCH SERMON | SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

In Ephesians 2:14–17 and 3:10, Paul writes about God's multi-ethnic family - one new people in Christ where cultural differences remain, but division is gone. Through the Spirit's gift of translation, intercultural belonging becomes a display of God's manifold wisdom to a watching world. In a divided and polarized world, the church's intercultural life together can become a sign of hope.

SHARE

Think of a time when you experienced a cultural misunderstanding—maybe like Dorothy's friend with the $20 bill story. What happened, and what did you learn about the "unspoken rules" operating in that situation?

READ

Read together as a group.

Ephesians 2:14-16
"For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death."

Ephesians 3:10-11
"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Acts 2:1-6
"On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was

a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers."

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In Ephesians 2:14-16, Paul says Christ "broke down the wall of hostility" and created "one new people from the two groups." What does this passage teach us theologically about how God views cultural differences within His Church? How does Paul's statement that "the differences remained, but the division is gone" shape our understanding of Christian unity?

3. Dorothy explained that difference is not a problem to be solved but "curriculum for learning." Where in your life (at work, in friendships, in your family, or here at Cornerstone) do you tend to default toward sameness because it feels simpler? How might you begin to see cultural difference as an opportunity for growth instead?

4. Looking at Acts 2:1-6, the miracle at Pentecost wasn't that everyone spoke the same language—it was that they could understand each other across their differences. How does the Holy Spirit enable intercultural understanding today? What role does the Spirit play in helping us move from multicultural coexistence to intercultural engagement?

5. Dorothy challenged insiders to bear the burden of crossing cultural distance, just as the apostles moved toward the diaspora Jews at Pentecost. When someone new enters your small group, workplace, or ministry team, whose responsibility is it to adjust? How can we, as "insiders" at Cornerstone, practice moving toward others and learning their cultural language?

6. Dorothy used the illustration of multicultural festivals (like crayons in a box) versus intercultural engagement (like art supplies creating something new together). Reflecting on this image, how would you describe Cornerstone right now? Are we more like a multicultural gathering or an intercultural community? What would it look like for us to move further toward intercultural life together?

7. Ephesians 3:10 says the Church is meant to "display God's wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities." How does the way we navigate cultural differences at Cornerstone reveal the Gospel to a watching world? What is one specific way our small group can better reflect this "manifold wisdom of God"?

NEXT STEPS

- **Practice Curiosity:** This week, when you encounter someone whose cultural assumptions differ from yours (in communication style, decision-making, or relationship-building), pause and ask a curious question instead of making a judgment. Treat the difference as curriculum for learning.
- **Move Toward Someone:** Identify someone in your life—at church, work, or in your neighborhood—who might feel like an outsider. Take the initiative to learn their "cultural language." Invite them for coffee, ask about their story, and listen deeply.
- **Welcome Others:** Be a Host Group as a group that is welcoming to have new members join the group. Sign up on the Registration link by clicking Host Group Registration
- **Reflect on Your Assumptions:** Spend time journaling or praying about the "unspoken rules" you bring into your interactions. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where you might be expecting others to adapt to your cultural norms rather than moving toward theirs.

PRAY

Take time to pray together as a group. Invite the Holy Spirit to:

- Help each person see cultural differences as gifts rather than problems.
- Give courage to those who feel like outsiders, that they would know they truly belong.
- Empower the "insiders" in our group to move toward others and bear the burden of crossing cultural distance.
- Transform our small group and Cornerstone into a community that displays God's manifold wisdom through our rich variety.
- Pray for specific people in your lives who might feel on the margins, and ask God to show you how to welcome them in ways that honor their authentic selves.

CONNECT

Stay connected with what's happening at Cornerstone! Check out **The Hub** for upcoming **community events**, **workshops and classes**, and opportunities to grow in intercultural competency. Be on the lookout for ways your small group can come alongside others in learning to navigate the beauty and complexity of intercultural life together.

CLOSING

As you go this week, remember: God didn't design His Church for sameness. He designed it for rich variety. The friction we experience isn't a sign of failure—it's a sign that intercultural life is happening. May we lean into the curriculum of difference, empowered by the Spirit, so that the world might see in us the Good News of Jesus Christ.