



## A Fellowship of Differents: Showing the World God's Design for Life Together

By Scot McKnight



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In this compelling book, Scot McKnight shares his personal experience in the church as well as his study of the Apostle Paul to answer this significant question: *What is the church supposed to be?*

For most of us the church is a place we go to on Sunday to hear a sermon or to participate in worship or to partake in communion or to fellowship with other Christians. *Church* is all contained within one or two hours on Sunday morning.

The church the Apostle Paul talks about is designed by God to be a fellowship of *difference*—how people differ socially—and *differents*—how people differ culturally. God did not design the church to be a two-hour experience on Sunday but a mixture of people from all across the map and spectrum: men and women, rich and poor, Caucasians or African Americans, and Mexican Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, and Indian Americans, and a mixture of people with varying personalities and tastes. The church McKnight grew up in was a fellowship of sames and likes. There was almost no variety in his church. White folks, same beliefs about everything, same tastes in music and worship and sermons and lifestyle. Because of his experience, he writes incisively and compellingly.

The church is *God's world-changing social experiment* of bringing unlikes and differents to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens we show to the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life together is designed by God to be. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Fifty years from now, pastors, scholars, and Christians from a wide variety of denominations will look back and say, "God used A Fellowship of Differents to change the church in America!" This is the most important book you may ever read outside of the Bible. The staff of Transformation Church will be reading this phenomenal book. -- Derwin L. Gray, lead pastor of Transformation Church; author, Limitless Life

I love this book! It's the theological mac to my social-psychological cheese. The pursuit of unity in the midst of difference is a trek across a minefield. With each step, we must contend with challenges that threaten to send us running back to the "safety" of similar others. That's why I'm so thankful for A Fellowship of Differents. McKnight draws from Paul's letters to give readers the robust foundation and action steps needed to keep pursuing unity at all costs. -- Christena Cleveland, author Disunity in Christ; associate professor of reconciliation studies, Bethel University

For over twenty-five years I've served as a church planter and pastor of churches that wrestled with being pots of stew (or "salad bowls," as Scot McKnight would put it). Pastors in my situation found ourselves --- sometimes unwittingly --- in conflict with the so-called "homogenous unit principle," that highly pragmatic perspective at work in megachurches whose explosive growth had many of us drooling and sitting at the feet of CEO-pastors. Yet I craved something else: a resource to encourage and challenge us from the Scriptures, affirming our work among people of various backgrounds, different races, ethnicities, genders, and economic groups. McKnight has blended his expertise in the NT and his passion as a life-long participant in the church to address just about every topic we can imagine! I enthusiastically recommend this book! -- Rev. Dennis R. Edwards, PhD, senior pastor of The Sanctuary Covenant Church in Minneapolis

Pour yourself a cup of coffee and settle into this timely, provocative, and challenging book on what it means to be the church. McKnight's conversational style and his perceptive insights to American Christian culture combine with his expert analysis of Scripture to illuminate God's design for Christian fellowship. An essential read for all who long for the church to live out its calling. -- Lynn Cohick, professor of New Testament, Wheaton College

A Fellowship of Differents echoes God's plea for true community: for the church to become the real deal embracing all of God's different kinds of people, to unite in a "wild revolution of equality" through Him, to bring visibility to the otherwise invisible. Most importantly, this book shows us how true unity is the only way to achieve Jesus' heart for his bride, the church. -- Bruxy Cavey, author of bestseller The End of Religion; teaching pastor at The Meeting House

At a moment when so many are questioning what the church is and wondering if it even matters, McKnight's claim --- that the way we follow Jesus is shaped by our local church more than any other source --- is a bold, prophetic, and compelling idea. Reading this book gave me a new vision for what my church is and what it could be. It was nothing short of a love affair with Jesus' bride all over again. -- John Mark Comer, Pastor of Teaching and Vision, Bridgetown: A Jesus Church

A Fellowship of Differents is an impressive achievement: it puts the church in conversation with today's most difficult differences and differentials --- and the church comes out making sense. Scot McKnight's work is precisely in step with Jesus' famous words: "I will build my church." We need this book because all of us

different people in the modern church are the ones Jesus has trusted with the keys to the kingdom! -- Anglican Bishop Todd Hunter, author, Giving Church Another Chance

Ever wonder what Paul would say to the Church today? This is it. Scot McKnight has captured the mind and heart of our beloved apostle, who spent his whole life pursuing one dream, preaching one gospel, sacrificing everything for one beautiful vision: that all people would believe in the Lord because the church --- this strange collection of humanity united by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit for one purpose --- is the very body of Christ. -- Rodney Reeves, professor of biblical studies, Southwest Baptist University

One of my life values is that uniqueness is better than conformity, firmly believing (though I realize this is strong) that conformity only leads to death. My work with church leaders shows me that healthy thriving churches are not only places of diversity, but they love that about themselves. A Fellowship of Differents will feel like a commendation to churches who already live in this tension, and like a loving and prophetic intervention for those who wrongly worship the god of sameness. -- Mark Oestreicher, partner, The Youth Cartel; Author, Hopecasting

Scot McKnight applies a professor's mind with a pastor's heart to one of the greatest enemies of God's plan for his church: disunity. Instead of being a "salad bowl" fellowship of difference and differents, we've segregated ourselves into homogeneous groups so remote that we are virtually invisible to each another. The author doesn't stop by describing this inconvenient truth, but identifies six themes of the Christian life that, when implemented in the church by God's grace, will help us to love one another and flourish as one people of God. No Christ-follower who cares about the beauty of Christ's bride, the church, should miss this masterful guide to creating a fellowship of differents! -- Dr. E Andrew McQuitty, senior pastor of Irving Bible Church, author of Notes from the Valley

The local church certainly has its failings and therefore, its critics. Most critics are just angry and few are helpful. Scot McKnight loves the local church and because he loves the local church, his words of criticism don't wound as much as they remind us -- of who we once were, of who we're called to be, and who we can yet become. Like a parent showing a child the child's baby picture, Scot McKnight, in his book, A Fellowship of Differents, calls us back to the original dreams of fellowship and transformational love Jesus first intended for us -- and still intends for us now. -- Mike Glenn, Senior Pastor, Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, TN

In the context of a rapidly changing world, our ecclesiology must go deeper. In a winsome manner, Scot McKnight brings the teachings of the apostle Paul to life so that we may rediscover what the church is supposed to be. A Fellowship of Differents provides a hopeful and an applicable ecclesiology for the twenty-first century that provides insight into the burden and joy of being the church. -- Dr. Soong-Chan Rah, Milton B. Engbretson Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism; author of The Next Evangelicalism

#### About the Author

Scot McKnight (PhD, Nottingham) is professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary, Lombard, Illinois. He is the author of numerous books, including the award-winning The Jesus Creed, The King Jesus Gospel, One.Life, and The Blue Parakeet, as well as Galatians and 1 Peter in the NIV Application Commentary series, and The Sermon on the Mount, in the Story of God Bible Commentary series. Website: [patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/](http://patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/)

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