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# Sacred Differences

Diversity, unity and reconciliation  
in the Kingdom of God



**SETTING UP**

# OPENING TEXTS

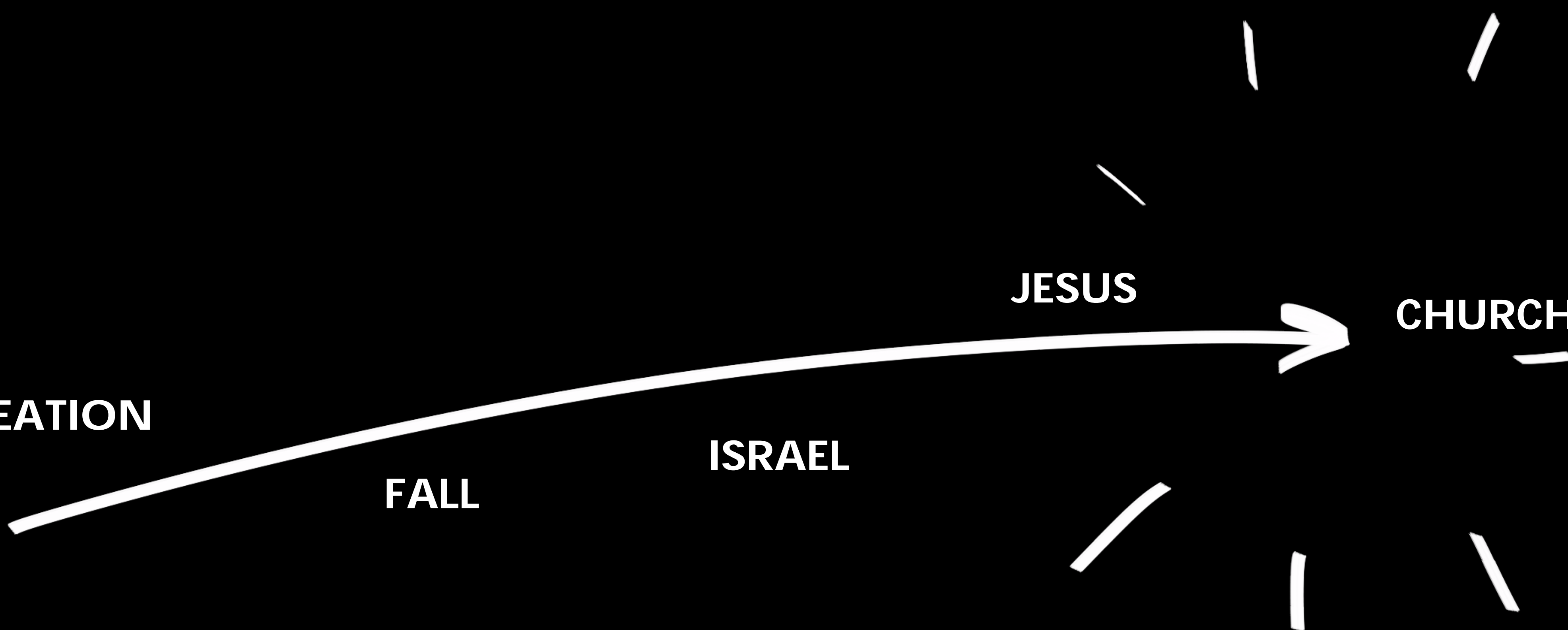
**CREATION**

**FALL**

**ISRAEL**

**JESUS**

**CHURCH**



**PRE-ACTS 2 : THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD**  
**POST-ACTS 2: THE DIVERSE PEOPLE OF GOD**

# THIS MOVEMENT

—

Acts : The story of the Spirit birthing the diverse Church

Romans – Jude : Letters which address issues of diversity convergence and exhort the believers to live in love

Revelation : An image of a diverse humanity worshipping God

**WHAT WAS 'CHURCH' LIKE IN THIS MOVEMENT?**

# IN A CHURCH OF THIS MOVEMENT...

—

**Cultural difference:**

Jewish and Gentile

**Societal difference:**

Elite family and their slaves, the street's prostitute, a successful goodstrader and his worker, a labourer, a widow..

**Generational difference:**

The adults and their kids, young leaders being instructed and trained by older, elderly in need of help

**Gifting difference:**

A teacher teaching, a host hosting, a prophet prophesying

**Gender difference:**

Priscilla and Aquila

**Functional difference**

Eat together, talk together, share together, pray together..



# **WE HAVE A PROBLEM**

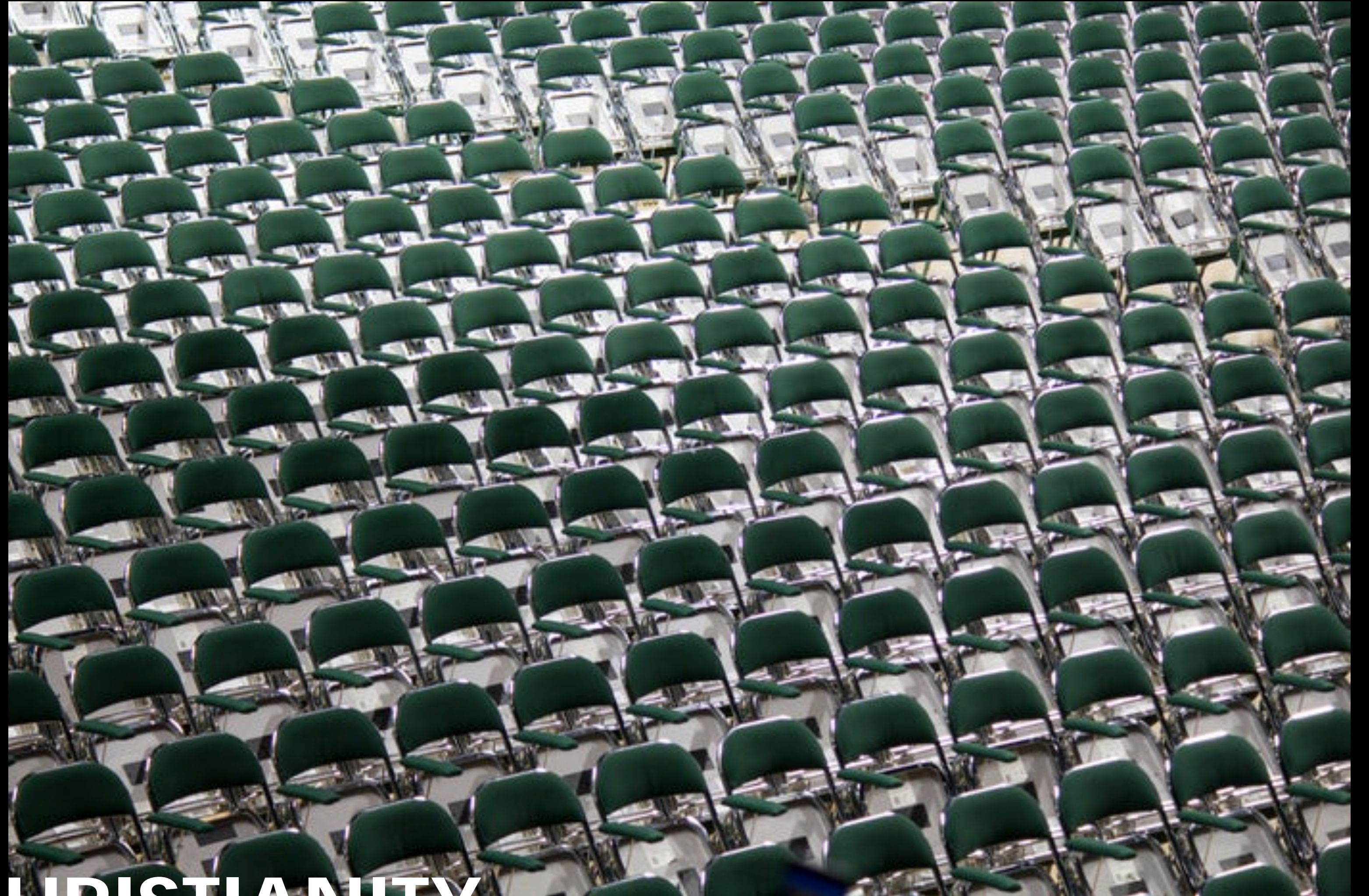
**FAST FORWARD TWO-THOUSAND YEARS AND  
THE CHURCH IS A VERY DIVERSE GLOBAL CHURCH,  
BUT MOST LOCAL CHURCHES ARE NOT AS  
DIVERSELY GENEROUS AS THIS ORIGINAL VISION.**



**SEGMENTED-CHURCH**

# **UNCOMFORTABLE REALITY-CHECK**

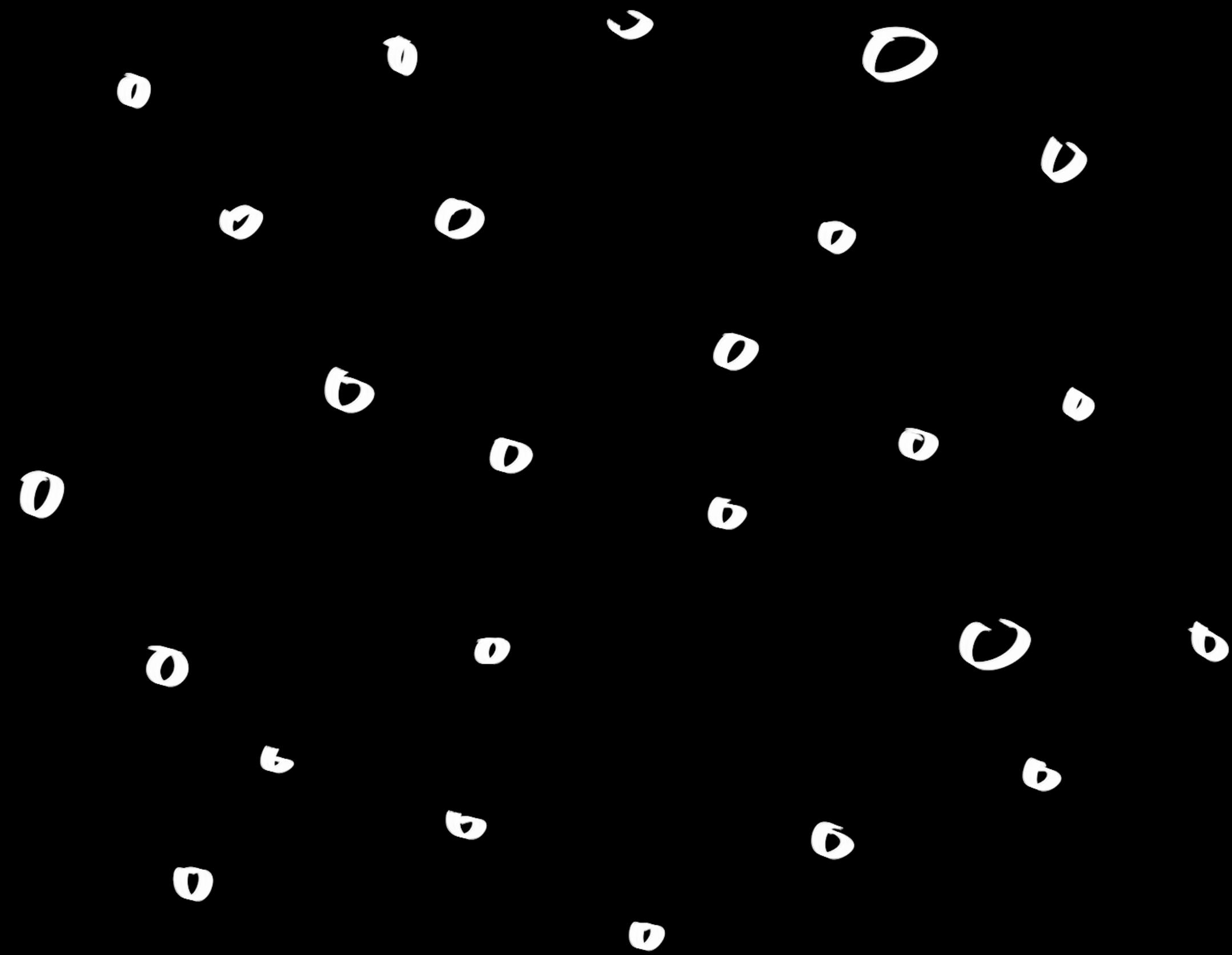
**SO OFTEN, OUR VISION OF A DREAM CHURCH IS A  
DREAM OF MORE PEOPLE LIKE US.**



**CONFORMITY-CHRISTIANITY  
(CONSUMERISTIC CULTURE)**

**IS THIS KIND OF SAMENESS REALLY THE VISION OF  
LIFE TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD?**

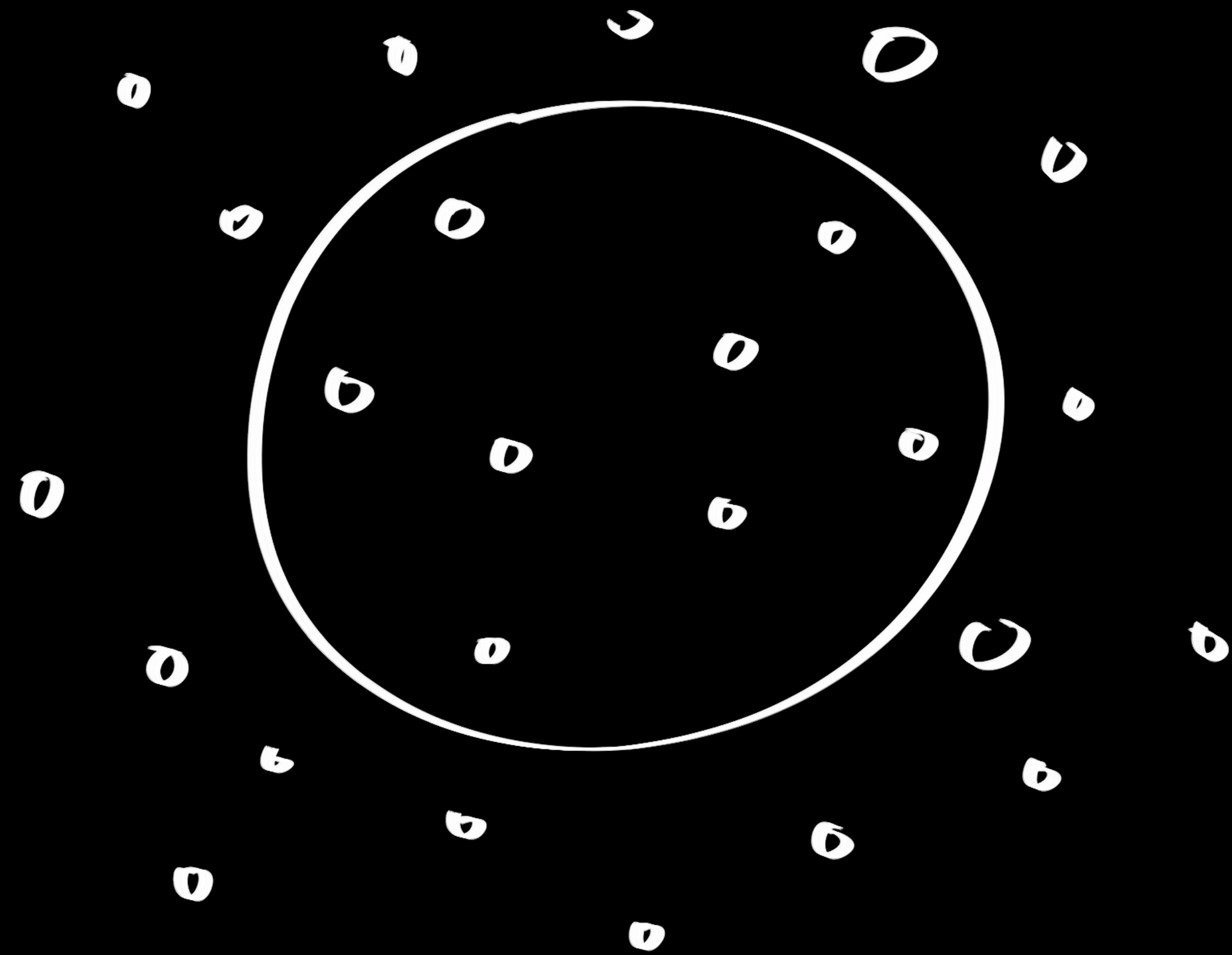
**SO, HOW CAN WE CHANGE THIS STORY?**



## FUZZY-SET

Diverse but not unified

Feels like: Chaos and anarchy, lack of rules

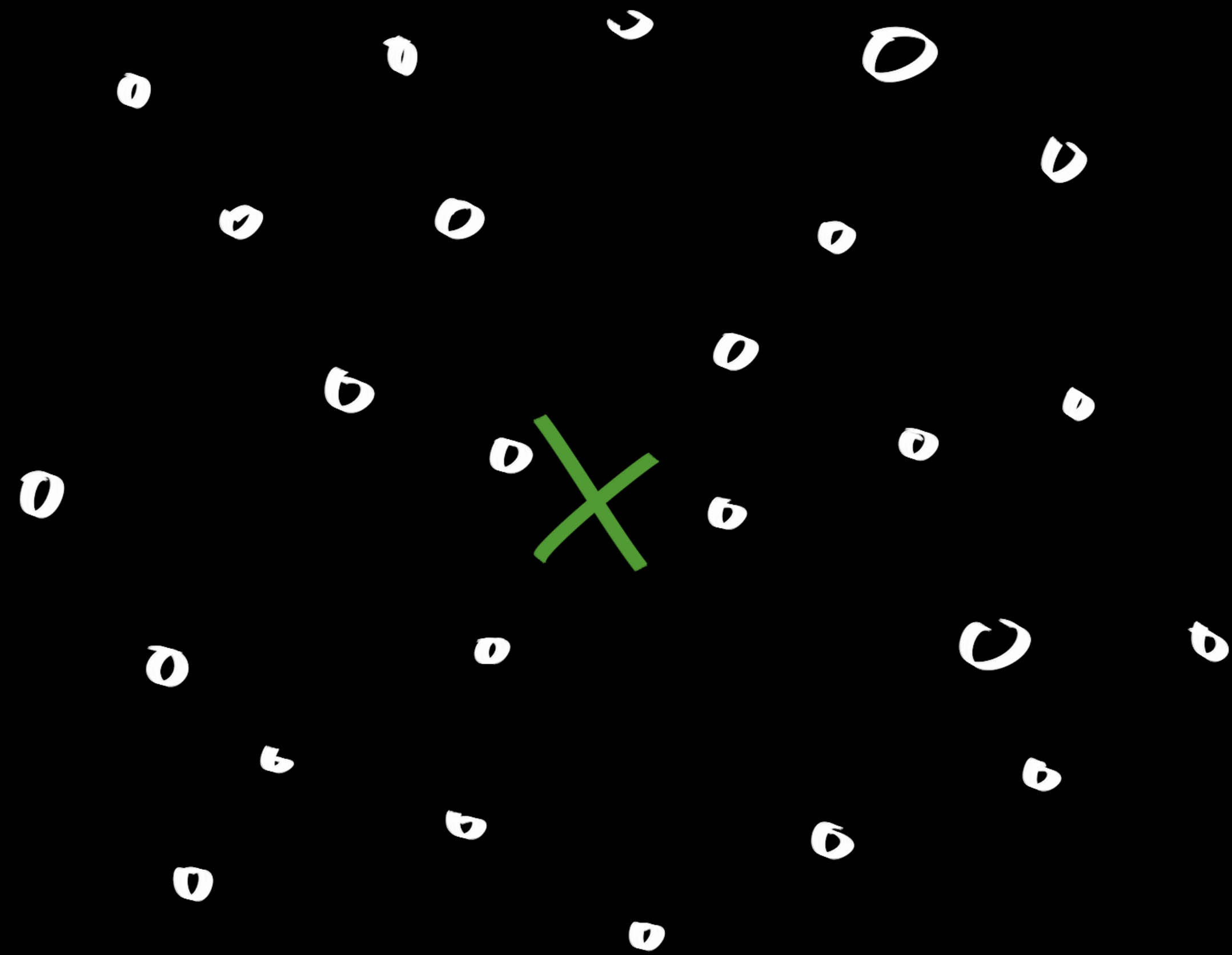


## BOUNDED-SET

Unified but not diverse

Feels like: Us/them, controlling and conforming

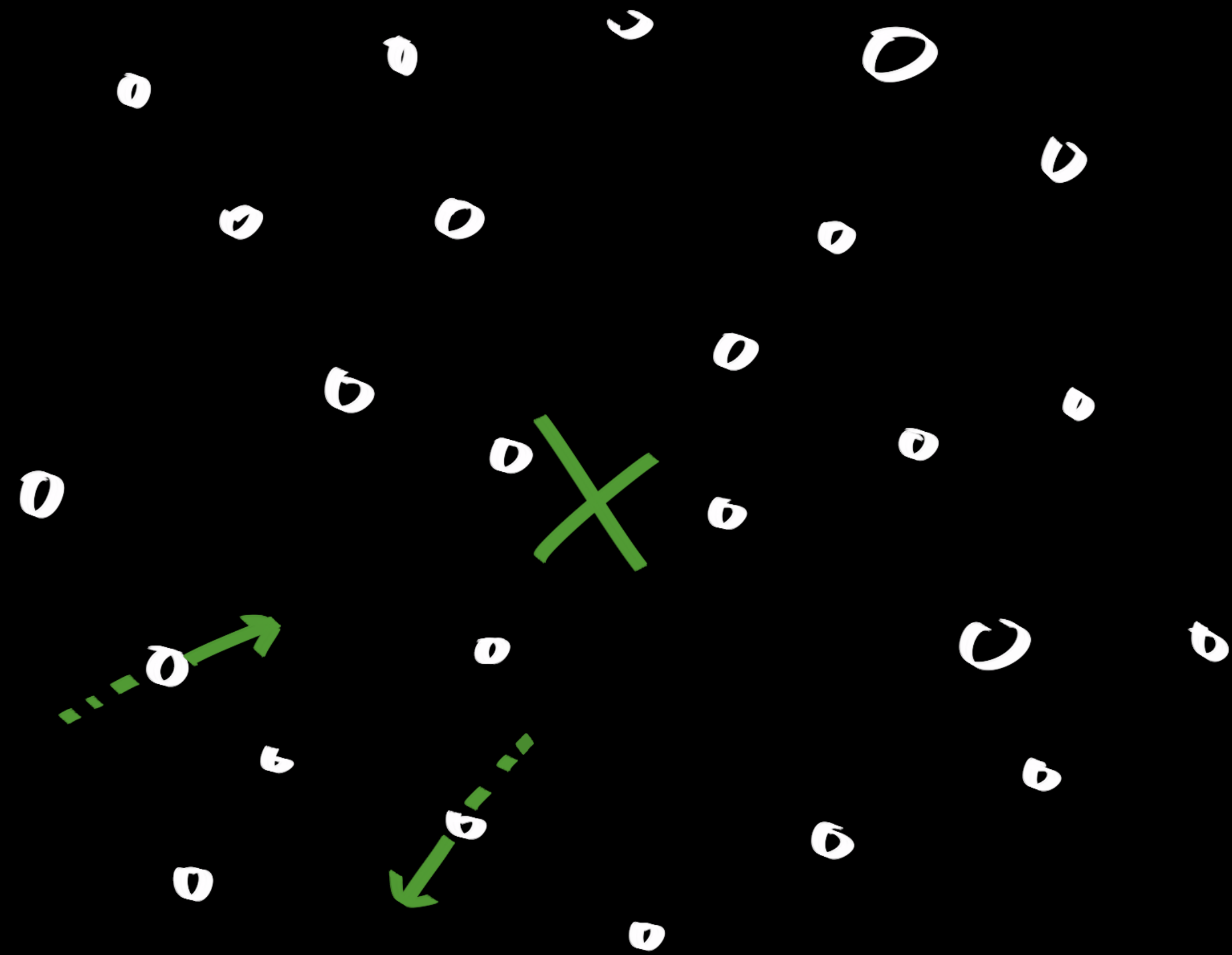




## CENTRED-SET

Diverse with unifier

Feels like: Orientation matters, unity in unifier, diversity is maintained



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diversity is maintained

**WHICH ONE IS IMPORTANT TO CENTRAL VINEYARD?**

**(THE HINT IS IN THE NAME)**

# TO BE PEOPLE OF A CENTRED-SET MEANS

—

We are meant to have a diverse spread (so we keep checking we are not clumped tightly)

We have a unifier (but is not the us/them lines – it's Jesus)

We repeatedly have to ask: "what is the orientation of my heart?"

## REVELATION 7:9-10

—

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb.”



**ALL DIVERSE, YET ALL ORIENTED ON JESUS.**

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# **THREE PASTORAL WORDS**

# 1. MOTIVE

—

The motive is not about scarcity or ticking-a-box; this is about God's invitation to us to discover something of His heart for us.

Q.

Are you willing to come discover something new too?

## 2. IT'S OK TO BE DIFFERENT

—

We want to welcome and celebrate difference in a generous Kingdom way - not just our culture's way.

Scott McKnight: *A fellowship of differents*

"Difference is the biblical normal. Community is not about conformity toward sameness. The Church is God's world changing social experiment for bringing all sorts of different people together. Differences are not to be despised but welcomed. Alternatives should be celebrated."

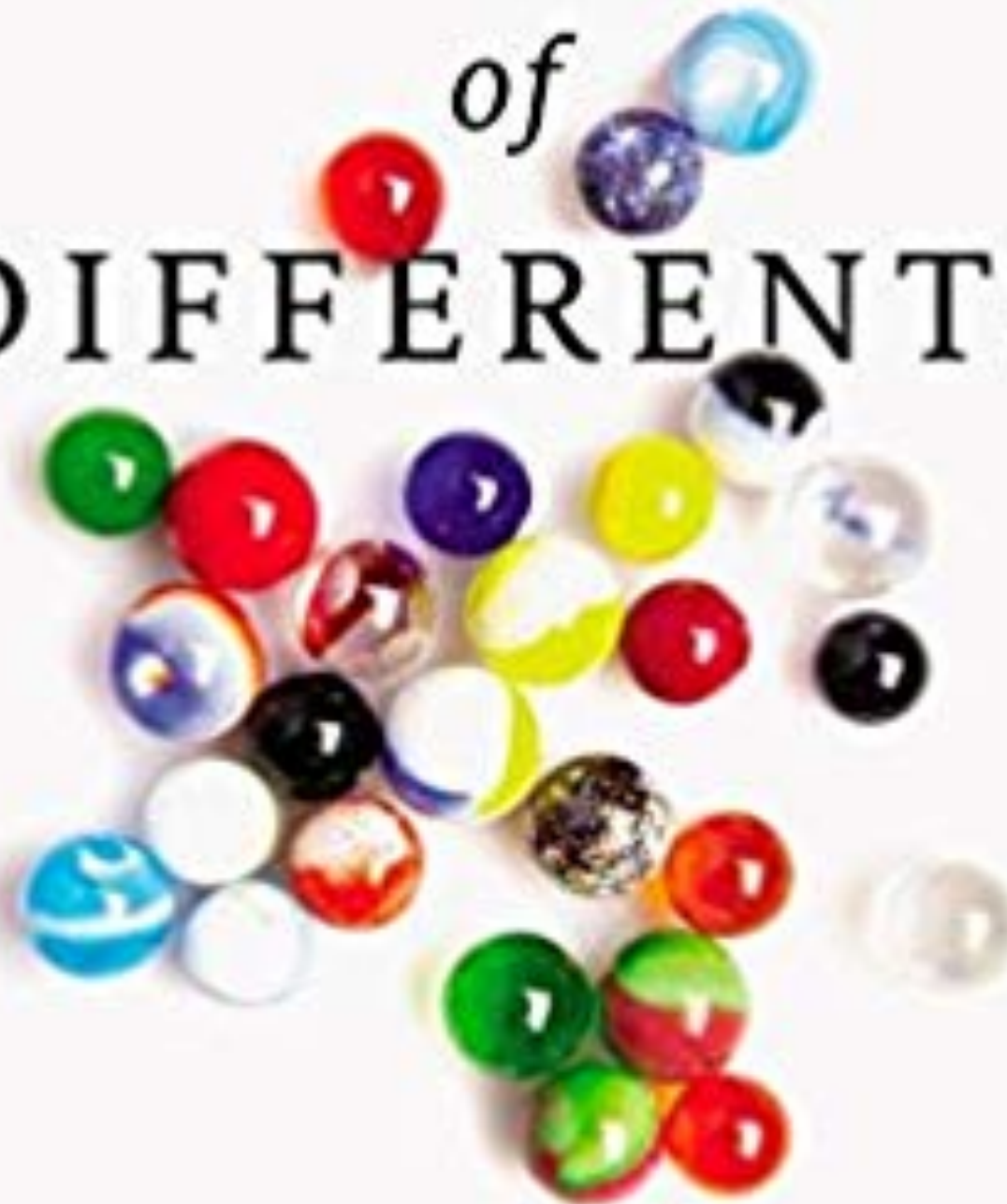
Q.

Are you willing to become more generous in your view of humanity, the church and God's work?

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SHOWING *the* WORLD  
GOD'S DESIGN *for* LIFE TOGETHER

A  
FELLOWSHIP  
*of*  
DIFFERENTS



SCOT MCKNIGHT

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### 3. GREATER LOVE

—

Let us prepare ourselves for greater love. Love is not just knowing and intention, love is presence and proximity.

McKnight:

"For in Christ, we learn that love is about 1) rugged commitment with a person; 2) commitment to a person; 3) commitment for a person; and 4) commitment unto that person. These four prepositions provide a direction in which we can love people different from us. Love works for a community of different. Love also shares and aims to benefit others."

Q.

Are you willing to love and extend grace to another?



**“THE GRACE AND PEACE OF THE LORD BE WITH YOU”**

**“AND ALSO WITH YOU.”**