

## **Ephesians 2:11–22**

‘The Gentiles, said the Jews, were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell’. Hostility between different groups of people is nothing new! But ‘Jesus has succeeded in creating a new society ... in which alienation has given way to reconciliation, and hostility to peace’.

### **1 Read 2:11–12**

- a. What are the ‘Gentile disabilities’ mentioned here by Paul? Why does he encourage his readers to ‘remember’ (2:11) their previous state?

### **2 Read 2:13–18**

- a. ‘We need to exhort one another to avail ourselves of this privilege’. To what privilege does Paul refer? Why is this so important?
- b. Paul draws attention to the phrases ‘*in Christ Jesus*’ and ‘*in (or by) the blood of Christ*’ (2:13). What is the significance of these?
- c. ‘It is not a universal reconciliation that Christ achieved, or Paul proclaimed ...’. Why not? What is it then?

Look up Matthew 5:17. In the light of this, what does Paul mean by saying that Christ abolished the law (2:15)?

- e. The abolition of the law in this way had two consequences. What were they?
- f. On 2:17 ‘Jesus Christ is still preaching peace in the world today, through the lips of his followers. In what ways is this true of you?’
- g. How does this passage help us to have ‘no practical difficulty with the mystery of the eternal Trinity’?

### **3 Read 2:19–22**

- a. Paul now summarizes the difference that being in Christ has made to his Gentile readers. What pictures does he use and what is their significance?
- b. Paul focuses particularly on the picture of the church as a new temple (2:20–22). What does he say about it? How is what he writes relevant for us today?

- 4 In your experience, how far does the church live up to what Paul writes about? Discuss practical ways in which you can be part of the solution instead of making things worse.