

Background is the world and everything going on in it

The circles are people

Some are grey some are coloured.

People are grey without Jesus, lonely, affected by the world

You can hardly see some of the people because they are so lost to the world.

Ps 68:6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

We are in the world, not of it

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

Jesus lights us up; colours us in

Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.

He came to give us life in abundance.

What defines shape of church?

The people in it.

Who defines shape of church?

God — it is Him that brought us together.

Each circle is a different colour; all needed

Romans 12:4-8 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Key: find your gift and use it, don't try to be what you think you should be; instead be who God wants you to be.

Which ones are the leaders?

Can't tell; no difference in the sense that leaders are just members of the church who are using their gift, in the same way as a prophet/teacher/evangelist would use theirs

1 Peter 5: To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; **not lording it over those entrusted to you**, but being examples to the flock.

Harmonious and clashing colours

Some colours are harmonious; others clash. Red/green, yellow/purple, orange/blue are opposites and may clash, but God wants both red and green people. And when you put red next to green the red looks even redder.

1 Cor 12: The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

None of the circles is perfect, so bear with one another

Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

There are grey circles close to and among the colour circles

Non-Christians amongst us.

Missionaries

There are some colour circles bottom right that are a bit separated from the main body. These could be missionaries.

Some colours have a bit of the background showing through

Careful not to have the world showing through us.

Further thoughts added by members of the church after seeing the painting:

The newly lit up circle is brighter than all the others. We need to be careful to keep lit up by the Holy Spirit and not to lose our colour and brightness.

The circles are circles (not blobs as we referred to them) because they are 'circles of light'

Please let Graham know any other thoughts/observations so we can add them in for everyone to benefit from.

Xmas meal – best illustration of church

Some people are particularly lonely at Christmas

We should do something about that

Let's give up our own Christmas meal and put one on for people who have no-one.

I'll organise it; we need people to do all sorts of things

I'll cook, I'll wash up, I'll serve the meals, I'll provide some entertainment

Let's give gifts as well, I'll wrap them

I can't come on the day but we need to pray about it — I'll do that
I'll decorate the tree, I'll provide the food, I'll pay for the gifts.

People who come say: why are you doing this?

Someone tells them it's because God loves us and them as well.

They want to know more, so they come along to Alpha and hear about how Jesus
lights up lives

They choose to be part of it
They choose to join our family
They choose to be coloured in
They choose Jesus.

And another grey person is lit up by Jesus; the church has a new colour; and the
church is a new shape.