

# The Church to Be In

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*God's purpose is to sum up all things in Christ, and this is achieved through an ever-growing understanding of Christ's fullness.*

**Scripture:** John 16:13, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 1:16, Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 3:8-10, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 12:2

**Topics:** "The Fullness of Christ", "The Purpose of the Church"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that God's ultimate purpose is to sum up all things in Christ, who embodies greatness and fullness. He stresses the importance of continually growing in our understanding of Christ's majesty and glory, as this was the foundation of the early Church's power and effectiveness. The spontaneous formation of churches was a result of the Holy Spirit's work, centered around the preaching of Christ. Sparks argues that Christ should be the guiding principle for gathering as a Church, especially in today's complex world. The ongoing revelation of Christ is essential for believers to experience the fullness of God's purpose.

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## Transcript

God's purpose is to sum up all things in Christ. It is a Person filled full, enlarged, and all-comprehending. The greatness, the magnificence, the universal fullness of Christ is God's goal. Again, it is not sufficient that we see the purpose, basic as that is, but that we see in an ever growing way the fullness of Christ. There must be an initial seeing of this greatness, this majesty, this glory, this universality. It was such a seeing that accounted for the power, effectiveness, and glory of the Church's first days. That was the meaning of "Pentecost". It was such a seeing that made the Apostles the men that they were. Paul owed everything to God's revealing of His Son in him. But that seeing must go on. It must become ever fuller.

We must not just date our seeing of Christ to some past experience. It is the Lord's will that we shall so live in and walk by the Spirit that we are able to say that what we see of Christ today is infinitely greater and more wonderful than ever it has been. That is only in line with God's purpose, and it is so for all who have truly come into a spiritual apprehension thereof.

We must then see that the Apostles never set out with any plan to form churches. That was the spontaneous result of the Holy Spirit's work in every place. Christ was preached and accepted, and relatedness spontaneously followed (see Acts 2:42). That which decides churches is Christ.

This is the solution of and the answer to many of the problems and questions which arise, especially in this Western world in these peculiarly complicated times. What is to be our guiding and deciding principle in gathering together? It is to be Christ! We meet on that ground alone. Where God's end is most fully in view, and what provides most fully for its attainment the fullness of Christ decides where we ought to be, and no one ought to quarrel with that.

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