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How much space is enough? That's a question that some builders are asking about homes. While the trend has been to build bigger and bigger houses over the past several decades, lately there has been a trend to build smaller homes. Several decades ago, the tiny-home moment began, focusing on simplicity and smaller homes. Rather than 2000 to 3000 square feet or more of typical homes today, most tiny homes are between 100 and 300 square feet. It's enough room for a few people to live, with a small kitchen and storage. Some homes may have bathrooms and running water, while others are located in a community with common bathrooms.

Some cities began seeing this home as a solution for those who are homeless, and now tiny-home villages are springing up from Seattle to New York, Michigan to Texas.¹ The movement has even arrived nearby, for 12 tiny homes are in construction in Elkhart. A student construction team led by Central Christian's Duffy helps students learn construction skills while also preparing small shelters for those homeless individuals who can't

stay in traditional shelters. "They each will contain a toilet, sink, bed chair and storage space and will be emergency housing; one night stay or brief stay determined on a case-by-case basis."²

Although the tiny-home movement may seem like a novel idea, God came up with the idea a long time ago, as noted in Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth. This large seaport city played a significant role in that area, and here Paul made multiple visits and spent several years. As he observed the corruption and moral decay in this large city, he later wrote to the church in this community, encouraging them to trust in God in the midst of their struggles in this large city.

"We never give up," he wrote them. "Our bodies are gradually dying, but we ourselves are being made stronger each day." And then he made an interesting comparison, "Our bodies are like tents that we live in here on earth. But when these tents are destroyed, we know that God will give each of us a place to live. These homes will not be buildings that someone has made, but they are in heaven and will last forever" (2 Cor. 4:16, 5:1, CEV). In a sense, we are tiny temporary homes, which Paul called tents, that even when

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destroyed, we continue to live on in some mysterious way. Have you ever thought of yourself as a tiny home, a temporary place where your mind and soul dwell? Even after death, when this tiny home decays, God will continue to give us a place to dwell.

Earlier in this letter Paul wrote, “We are like clay jars in which this treasure is stored. The real power comes from God and not from us. We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don’t know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again” (4:7-9, CEV).

Have you ever felt knocked down? Crushed? As though you are a fragile clay jar, ready to fall apart at any moment? Sometimes we feel so vulnerable, especially when faced with the violence of the world.

I was saddened this week when I read a news story about violence against those who are vulnerable. Remains of 215 children buried in unmarked graves were discovered at a former residential school in Canada. At one time

indigenous children were taken from their homes and forced to live in these schools as an attempt to assimilate them into society and with religious views. For years stories floated around about children disappearing, and with the discovery of this mass grave, many mourn the loss of these children.³

The tiny homes of our bodies are so vulnerable to the violent forces around us, but God remains with us, no matter what happens, always helping us find our way, even when we feel lost and confused.

In one of her books, author Anne Lamott tells the story of a 7-year-old girl who got lost in the large town where she lived. A police officer stopped to help. He put her in his squad car and slowly drove her through several nearby neighborhoods, hoping she’d spot a familiar landmark.

Suddenly the girl pointed to a church. “You can let me out now,” she said.

“Are you sure?”

She answered, “This is my church, and I can always find my way home from here.”⁴

There’s something about church that grounds us, that helps us when we feel lost, that helps us feel at home. Even in our older years, we find that the church

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is our place, our home. Disciples preacher Fred Craddock told about a daughter trying to encourage her mother to move:

The daughter said, as she prepared to go back to San Francisco, “Now mother, get your things together. You’re going home with us.”

And the mother said, “No.”

The daughter said, “Well, now that dad is dead, there’s nothing holding you here. We’ve all moved away, and I don’t want you staying here by yourself.”

“I’m not by myself.”

“Mother, I don’t want to hear anything about it. Get your stuff together, we’ll arrange the furniture later, but you’re coming home.”

“No, no, no. I’ll stay here. I have my church, and I have my friends, and I have my memories, and this is my place.”⁵

Maybe it’s because we know that the church is God’s tiny home, and when we find our way here,

we’re reminded that we’re a part of God’s larger home, that God is in this place; we’re not alone.

Paul reminded us of this bigger picture in his first letter to the Corinthians when he wrote, “You surely know that your body is a temple where the Holy Spirit lives. The Spirit is in you and is a gift from God” (6:19, CEV). Paul suggests that God’s Spirit lives within us, that you and I are tiny homes for God’s Spirit. Isn’t that amazing?! That God’s Spirit would come to live within us? No matter what comes our way, God remains within us, guiding us, giving us options, helping us to see the Way. The next time you encounter one of those hard times in life, come to this place, the church, knowing that God is here; but also remember that God is within you, for you are a tiny home for God’s Spirit, who lives within you each and every day.

¹ <https://archive.curbed.com/maps/tiny-houses-for-the-homeless-villages>

² www.elkharttruth.com/news/students-partner-with-nonprofit-to-build-tiny-shelters/article_db2ab32a-c75a-55c7-8d2a-ce8c6afb3493.html

³ www.nbcnews.com/news/world/canada-pressured-find-all-unmarked-indigenous-graves-after-children-s-n1269456

⁴ www.homileticsonline.com.

⁵ Fred B. Craddock; Mike Graves; Richard F. Ward. Craddock Stories (Kindle Locations 1225-1229). Kindle Edition.