WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH???
What do we mean when we say “Church?”

“Little c” church – local parochial community or Christian community; physical structure that serves as a meeting place for believers of a particular faith tradition

“Big C” Church – universal, incorruptible, united “Body of Christ” established by Jesus in the scriptures
What do we mean when we say “Church?”

We often present our experiences with a church (little “c”) as experiences with the Church (big “C”). In the same breath, we present our experiences with the Church as experiences within a particular tradition or generalize our experiences with a particular tradition as something reflective of the whole of a particular denomination.
Millennials leaving church in droves, study finds

By Daniel Burke, CNN Religion Editor

Updated 4:14 PM ET, Thu May 14, 2015

“Oh my goodness, our kids are leaving the Church!!”

“...the Christian percentage of the population dropping precipitously, to 70.6%. In 2007, the last time Pew conducted a similar survey, 78.4% of American adults called themselves Christian.”

“More than one-third of millennials now say they are unaffiliated with any faith, up 10 percentage points since 2007.”

“Just 3% of the "nones" call themselves atheists, a small bump from 2007, when 1.5% did the same. Four percent say they are agnostic, meaning they don't know if God exists, a gain of 1.6 percentage points from seven years ago.”

http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/12/living/pew-religion-study/
Church
The Destination
Google Maps
church
There is today a dramatic reexamination of structure, authority, dogma -- indeed, every aspect of the life of the Church is held up to scrutiny. Welcoming this as a sign of vitality, Avery Dulles has carefully studied the writings of contemporary Protestant and Catholic ecclesiologists and sifted out six major approaches, or "models," through which the Church's character can be understood.

-Arazon.com Summary

Models of the Church by Avery Cardinal Dulles | ISBN-10: 0385133685
Church
The Destination
Google Maps
church
Models of the Church

1. Church as **INSTITUTION** | *Mt 16:18* - “You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.”

The Church is designed after the hierarchical brilliance of the administration of the Roman Empire (*Roman Catholic Church, get it*?). In that sense, the Church is efficient and accountable for three functions: **teaching, governing, and sanctifying**. If the Church is to be efficient and accountable for these three functions, there has to be a system of individuals who take the responsibility of administering these functions (i.e. priests, deacons, bishops ...).

**GOOD IDEA** – Accountability and Authority

**BAD IDEA** – Rigid and limiting

2. Church as **COMMUNITY** | *Rom 12:3-5* - “… so we, though many, are one body in Christ …”

The Church expresses the **fellowship of persons with God and with one another**, a model that stems from the organization of and intimate relationships between those followers and believers of Christ during the early years of what would become Christianity. As “the Body of Christ,” the Church is **organic** and **growing** (alive, vibrant).

**GOOD IDEA** – Relationship with God grows through relationship with others

**BAD IDEA** – Social club, “Faith what now...?”
Models of the Church

3. Church as SACRAMENT | 1 Pet 2:9-10 - “But you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, so that you may announce the praises’ of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

The Church is a visible manifestation of God’s action (grace, mercy, love) in our world (Sacrament – a visible sign of an invisible grace). As a Sacrament, the Church is also efficacious (produces what it signifies), meaning that if the Body of Christ is to be a visible sign of God’s grace, the Church produces men and women who express God’s grace through their lives in communion with one another.

**GOOD IDEA** – The “job description” of the Church
**BAD IDEA** – “Plenty Good Room” for ambiguity

4. Church as HERALD | Mt 28:19-20 - “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

The Church gives prominence to a “theology of the Word of God,” giving a clear message for its members to evangelize – hear the Good News (Gospel) and pass it on.

**GOOD IDEA** – Unifies us, claims for us an identity we do not fully possess
**BAD IDEA** – can lose context, dismiss tradition as form of revelation, “Faith w/o works...”
Models of the Church

5. Church as **SERVANT** | Jn 13:13-17 - “... I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

The Church is exists to serve God by serving those trapped in the all-encompassing darkness within the world. Also reinforces within us Christ’s call for us to love one another as he loved us.

**GOOD IDEA** – creation of Church-sponsored institutions (hospitals, orphanages, etc.) and prophetic voices against rampant injustices

**BAD IDEA** – Caught up “in” the world by serving it, can serve without spiritual foundation for serving

6. **Church as SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP**

The Church not only *informs* a person, but *forms and transforms* them as well. As agents of change, the Church educates and prepares us to spread the Good News, ultimately playing an integral role in our human and spiritual development.

**GOOD IDEA** – “Salvation” is an on-going process

**BAD IDEA** – “Forgetting your audience”
When the Models of the Church come together, we’re closer on our journey towards living as the Body of Christ that Jesus talked about in the Scriptures.

Frustration occurs when only *one* of those models are emphasized heavily when we are in or at *church*.

TIME TO TALK!!!