

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.



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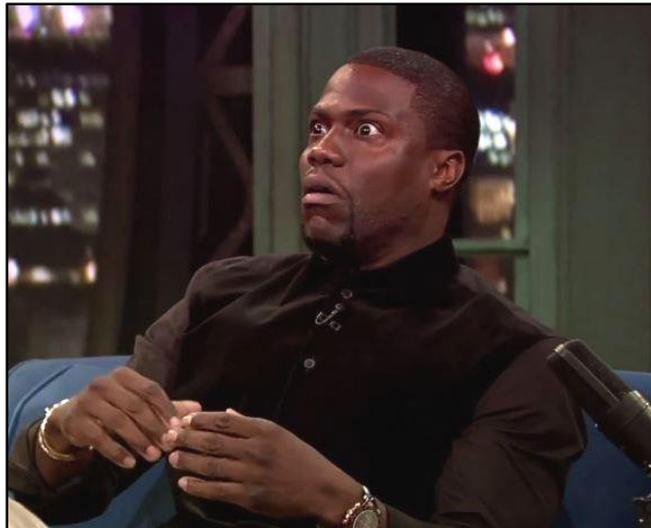
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Millennials leaving church in droves, study finds

By **Daniel Burke**, CNN Religion Editor

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



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

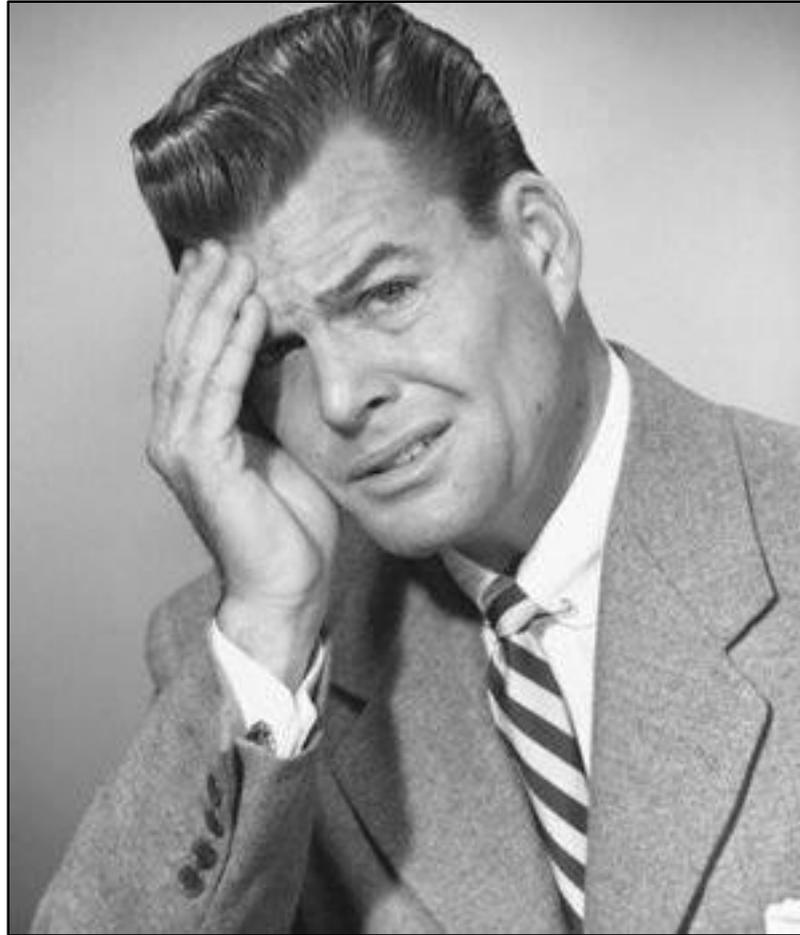
“...the Christian percentage of the population dropping precipitously, to 70.6%. In 2007, the last time Pew conducted a similar survey, 78.4% of American adults called themselves Christian.”

“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/>

CONFUSED???



GOOD.

Church

The Destination



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Models of the Church

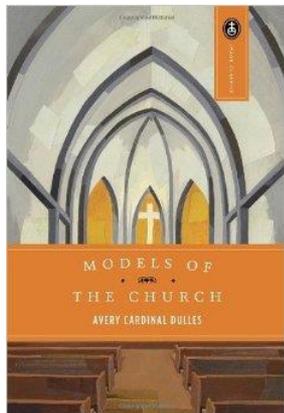


Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.

August 24, 1918 – December 12, 2008

“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.”

- Amazon.com Summary



Models of the Church by Avery Cardinal Dulles | **ISBN-10: 0385133685**

Church

The Destination



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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 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!!!