

A Fresh Look at Church & Ministry

Church as Institution	Church as People of God
Church refers to a building or organization	Church refers to people of God
Clergy are “set apart” from laity	We gather together, all gifted and all needed
The Church is institutionally self-centered	The church is mission-centered and world-centered
Laity are <i>objects</i> of religious care and consumers of sacramental products	Christians are <i>agents</i> , the sign and bearers of God’s saving love
Officials legitimate and parcel out activities	Members experience spontaneous expansion and corporate witness
The Church consists of priest-centered ministries to troubled laity	The Church consists of Christ-centered people at work in a troubled world
Emphasis is on learned clergy	Emphasis is on an educated Church
Call as holy orders	Call as baptism
Churchy language	Common vernacular
Take care of people in church	Nourished people sent out
Church meets my needs	Church desires to meet God’s needs
Closed groups/guilds	Open/transparent, participatory
Gathered around a minister	Ministering community
Trickle down theology	Community doing its own theology
“Kingdom” after death	“Kingdom” now
Education as information	Education as transformation
Clergy deliver ministry	Clergy developers/animators/facilitators of ministry (without being condescending or patronizing)
Church’s mission	God’s mission

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“Father/Mother/Rev.” knows best	We all know together/learning
Restricted space	Open and welcome at center
Museum of relics	Interactive in church and world
Far-away hierarchy (diocesan leadership) chooses those to be educated, and how they must be educated	Local discernment and formation
Segregation by age	Education for all, with all
Separation	Incorporation/intergenerational
Hoarding	Hospitality
Christians only reflect on themselves	Living in a multi-religious and non-religious world
Spiritual realm separated from secular world	Everything belongs

Things to pay attention to:

- Where is the baptismal font? Is there water in it on days other than baptisms?
- How and when do we use titles? Are the ordained people named by title in bulletins, but non-ordained people listed by name?
- What do our baptismal certificates look like vs our ordination certificates?
- As ordained leaders, do we use possessive pronouns to refer to our community? “My” church, “My” vestry...
- Are there opportunities in worship for as many voices as possible to participate?

** Based on teachings of Fredrica Harris Thompsett 2009, Tom Ray (1934-2018), Jim Kelsey (1952-2007), Rayford Ray, Lydia Kelsey Bucklin*