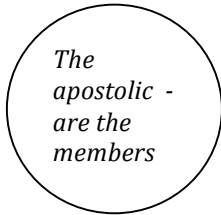


The Parish Church: three images

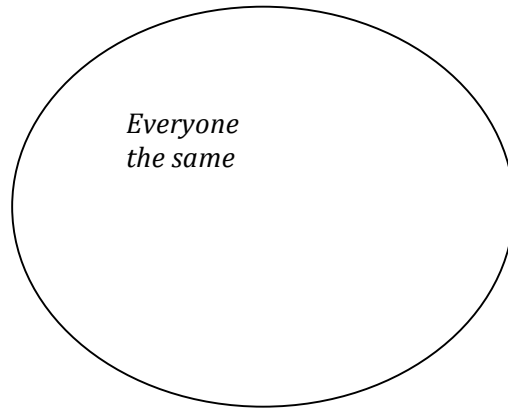
Parish as cult



Everyone else –
not members

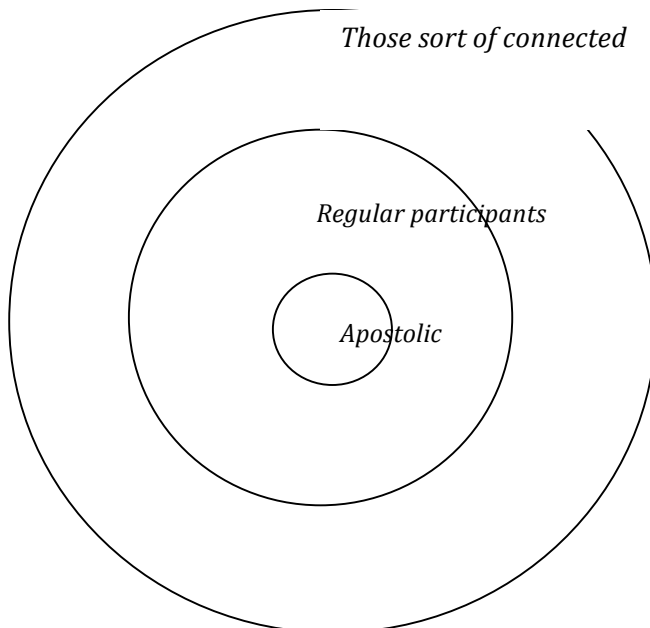
Tends toward: arcane elite; self-deception and illusion. Henri Nouwen wrote: *Confrontation without receptivity leads to an oppressive aggression which hurts everybody.*

Parish as multitude



Tends toward: conformity and conventional religion; little spiritual growth, self-deception and illusion. Henri Nouwen wrote: *Receptivity without confrontation leads to a bland neutrality that serves nobody.*

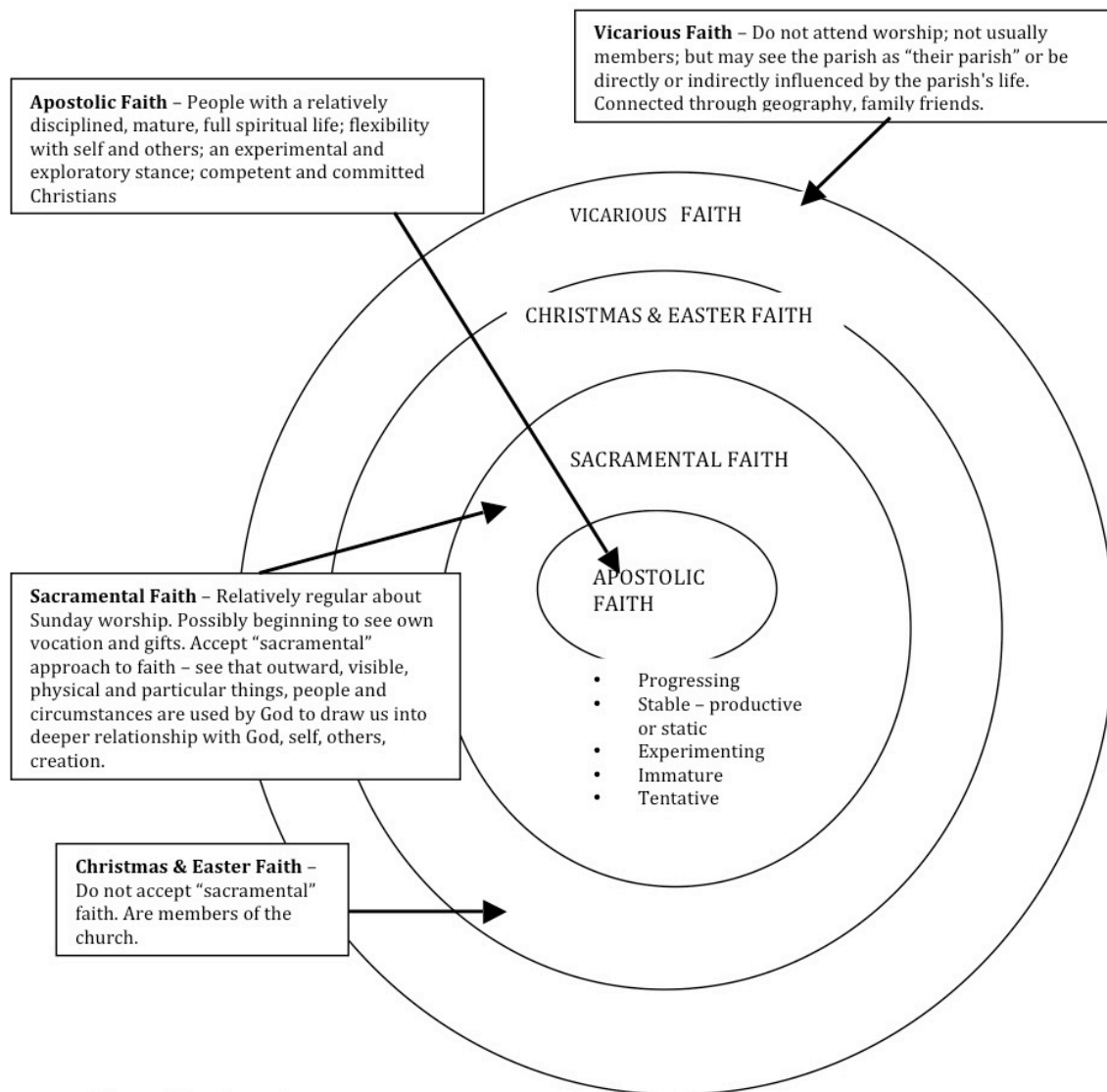
Parish as a mixed body



An Anglican pastoral theology

- The church is for all. There is a place for our Anglican humanism.
- The fully apostolic life is lived by few in each parish. There is a place for our Anglican stress on holiness.
- The practice of our faith involves discipline, and growth; both acceptance as we are and an invitation/challenge to mature and grow. There is both receptivity and confrontation.
- Our Lord obviously cared for the crowd, the multitude. He also spent most of his energies in the formation of a small group of disciples.
- How is a parish to live in such a way that it is *for* all while at the same time it forms us for holiness? Our tradition suggests an acceptance of the many with the fuzzy boundaries that accompany such a stance *and* an intentional nurturing of those ready to go deeper.

The Shape of the Parish



The model can be used:

- To assess the health of a parish, and
- In developing a strategy that deepens the parish's spiritual life, while staying open the various places people are in their faith journey.

From *Fill All Things: The Spiritual Dynamics of the Parish Church*, Robert A Gallagher Copyright 2008
 "Shape of the Parish" Diagram -- Robert A. Gallagher/Mary Anne Mann, 1983; Revised RAG 1999, 2003