

# Dulles models of the church essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Compare and contrast any two Dulles models of the church suggesting one that might help the church today? There is five Avery Dulles models in which make up the Church today with a sixth be added later. It's what's make the Church up today. Each performs a different function in its own right and the Church in which we can indirectly grow in our understanding of the Church. The models which make up the Church are the Church as an institution, as a Mystical Communion, as a Sacrament, as a Herald and Servant with the Eschatology later added as the sixth.

In each case these models form views on the Church role, audience and the goal of the Church. The models portray the strengths and weakness of the Church along with the understanding of divine revelation. There is models of the Church in which share the same traits but also have a different opinion on other matters. There are models in which benefit the Church more today with the changing of peoples opinion over time. The Church of Christ does not exist in the world without an organization or structure. The models help see the Church as a servant which helps humanity achieve its full potential in God's history.

The institutional model and Mystical models of the Church both different but both serve the Church in different ways. Their strengths while help the Church also can be their weakness. The Church as an institution emphasizes the hierarchy of the Church. The Church is essentially a single society having a constitution which has set rules, a governing body with members who follow the set rules and constitution<sup>1</sup>. The institution vision of the Church defines the Church in the way of visible structures along with the power of its

officers . The Church as mystical communion portrays the Church as the community nature of the Church.

Its gives the notion that the Church is a parish and is more than a building. The parish is a community of believes which exists in order to share the love of Christ<sup>2</sup>. While it has a sense of belonging it can also lack direction and structure. These two models of the Church share the same traits but also are very much different to each other. The institution way sees the Church as visible structures, whereas the Communion way sees the Church more than a building and more of a community and not just buildings<sup>3</sup>. The functions of the Church as an institution are divided into three sections teaching, sanctifying and governing.

The teaching function is to pass down the teachings of Christ, to pass on the doctrine of Christ. Bishops are considered to possess a special “ charism of truth” and the faithful are in conscience to believe what the bishops declare<sup>4</sup>. Sanctifying is where the Pope and bishops assisted by the deacons and priests are an essential attribute to the Church. The governing function of the Church is to guide people of the Church like a flock with pastoral authority<sup>5</sup>. These functions show how the Church is the school with the bishops being the teachers and sanctifies through the Sacraments, which in turn is guided by the hierarchy.

This model of the Church is solely based on leadership which is in contrast to the model of mystical Communion. In the mystical Communion it is emphasize on the believers to the Holy Spirit which in turn directs the Church. In the mystical Communion it is portrayed that the bishops authority

must be exercised in communion with the whole Church under the guidance of the Pope,” the Power which they exercise personally in the name of Christ, is proper, ordinary, and immediate, although its exercise is ultimately controlled but the supreme authority of the Church” 6 .

Both the institution and mystical communion models of the Church have both different aspects in how they work. The institution model is based on visible structures to oppose that that of the mystical of which is a parish or community. The institution sees bishops as teachers of the school and the faithful must believe what they declare. This is in contrast to the mystical model as its sees the bishops must exercise authority with the guidance of the Pope. Both models of the Church have strengths and weakness but yet the strengths of one differ to the other. The institution model focuses more on the understanding of right and wrong.

It gives more clear guidelines for the living the faith passed down from the bishops who are the teachers and govern. The institution model is a visible structure and corporate identity. Being part of the Catholic Church was a clear representative of who you were and what you stood for. The model provides the continuity with Christian’s origins giving important links between an uncertain present and esteemed religious past<sup>7</sup>. The mystical model while not a visible structure is the creation of a strong sense of belonging. The coming together of people, the emphasis on the shared life of mutual fellowship in a loving community.

“ Christian commonly experience the Church more as a companionship of fellow travellers on the same journey than as union of lovers in the same

home” 8. Both strengths differ to each other as the mystical does not need the visible structures of the Church to be a part of it the mystical model gives people a sense of belonging which not having to see the presence of the Church to be a part of it. While both models have strengths there is weaknesses in which arise in the institution model and the mystical models with the problems being very much in contrast to each other.

These weaknesses stem from their own structure with the institution model being an example of an authority figure. Institutions function through the action of individuals in playing their roles and identifying with them. Any refusal to accept the allotted role in the Church to act as a layman or cleric is an attack on the institution<sup>9</sup>. Another weakness would be the difficulty against the institutional model is that it raises obstacles to a creative and fruitful theology. It binds theology too exclusively to the defence of current officials which in turn damages critical and exploratory thinking<sup>10</sup>.

The weakness in which affect the mystical communion model of the Church is different, as it lacks the law and structural presence that we see in the institution model. The community model can seem to have a no sense of purpose or direction. It fails to give Christians a clear sense of their identity of mission thus the motivation for the Christian mission is left obscure<sup>11</sup>. The institutional model can become rigid and conformist while the mystical communion model could lead to false expectations and demands not within its reach<sup>12</sup>.

In suggesting which model would benefit the Church today this can be seen as the most important model of the Church is the Sacramental model. It

preserves the value of the institutional elements because the Church gives it clear and visible outlines. It combines the two values of the institutional and mystical models to preserve to community value and structure value as well. It emphasizes the human and spiritual sides of the Church which is seen in the institutional and mystical models. The human being the bishops being the teachers of the Church and ensures they only pass down under the guidance of the Pope.

Both those models portray the visible and invisible sides. The Church becomes the visible way the Christ works in the world. The Sacramental model preserves the worldly service and without this the Church would not be seen as a sign of Christ the servant<sup>13</sup>. This model promotes the motives for a strong loyalty to the Church while keeping to the rules and discipline in which it has set out. The model to criticism as a way of moving forward and thus is seen as the best model for the Church today.

It takes a different approach from that of the institutional model in a more dynamic way and not a closed way not open to opinion. The institutional model and mystical models of the Church are very much different to each other. One is the visible side of the Church and the other is the invisible side. While both serve the Church neither models benefit the today as much as the Sacramental model does. The mystical model focus more on the community or parish of people, it gives a sense of belonging to a community. It promotes the sharing of love of Christ without the structures of the institutional model needed.

The institutional is the main structure of the Church, the buildings the hierarchy in which governs the Church. The constitution of the Church is set forth from the institutional model. Both models of the Church have strengths and weaknesses, as the institutional model is seen as a cooperate model which can be recognised, it's a clear representative of you are and your belief. The mystical model does not need the structures of the institutional model as it is a sense of belonging for a community or parish. It gives the notion that a parish is family and no one is alone.

While both have strengths they also have weaknesses as the mystical model is about community which in turn lack structure can lead to no sense of purpose of direction. The mission of Christ can then left obscure and communion model not in reach of its demands. The difficulty against the institutional model is that it raises obstacles to a creative and fruitful theology. The Sacramental model can be seen as the best model in which it can help the Church today. it combines both the models strengths but at the same time it is open to criticism in a way that benefits the Church.