

# Being Church

## The Shape of Vital Congregations

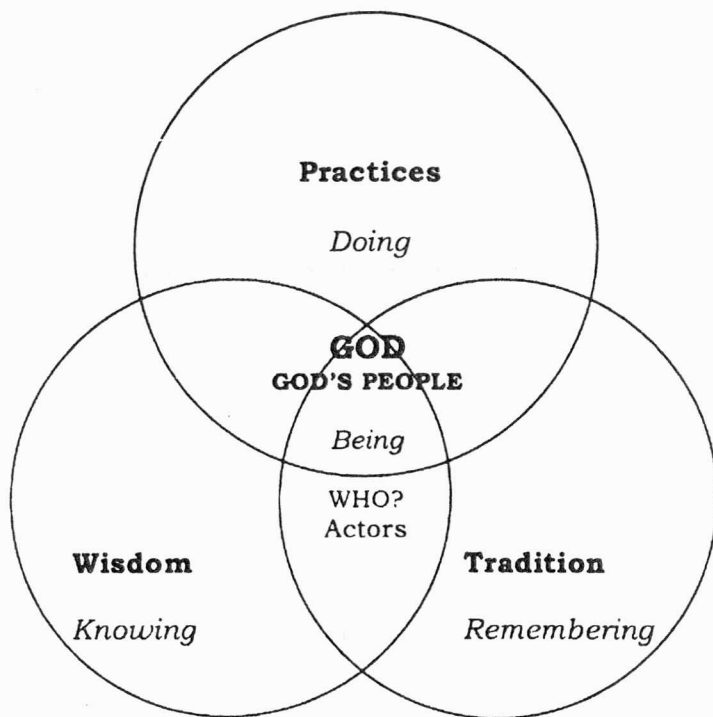
Although the congregations in *Christianity for the Rest of Us* were quite distinctive,\* they all demonstrated an integrated internal pattern of practice, tradition, and wisdom. This pattern represents *one possible form* of emerging, post-modern church—the form that seems to be most naturally developing in mainline denominations.

**Vibrant congregations are the places WHERE (Geography)  
God's people gather in the Spirit to intentionally become:**

### A Community of Practice

Shadow: Programmatic Burnout

WHAT?  
Action



### A Community of Mission (or Justice)

Shadow: Self-Congratulation, Inactivity

### A Community of Memory

Shadow: Loss of Creativity

c. Diana Butler Bass, 2008  
[www.dianabutlerbass.com](http://www.dianabutlerbass.com)

\**Christianity for the Rest of Us* (HarperOne, 2006) is primarily a description the practice field. My next book, *A People's History of Christianity* (HarperOne, forthcoming, 2009) will explore the field of tradition.

All three fields are briefly mentioned in Chapter 3 of *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. Some material on tradition is already available in Diana Butler Bass, *The Practicing Congregation* (Alban, 2004).