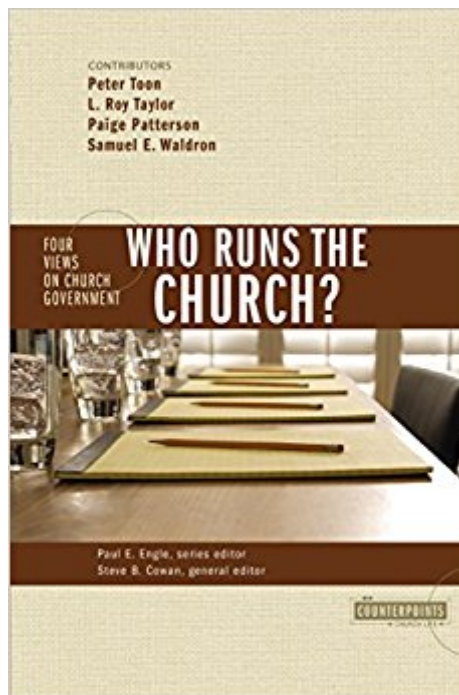




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Who Runs The Church?: 4 Views On Church Government (Counterpoints: Church Life)



Synopsis

Churches have split and denominations have formed over the issue of church government. Yet while many Christians can explain their particular church's form of rule and may staunchly uphold it, few have a truly biblical understanding of it. What model for governing the church does the Bible provide? Is there room for different methods? Or is just one way the right way? In *Who Runs the Church?* Four predominant approaches to church government are presented by respected proponents: Episcopalians (Peter Toon) Presbyterians (L. Roy Taylor) Single-Elder Congregationalism (Paige Patterson) Plural-Elder Congregationalism (Samuel E. Waldron). As in other Counterpoints books, each view is followed by critiques from the other contributors, and its advocate then responds. The interactive and fair-minded nature of the Counterpoints format allows the reader to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each view and draw informed, personal conclusions.

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Customer Reviews

Churches have split and denominations have formed over the issue of church government. Yet while many Christians can explain their particular church's form of rule and may staunchly uphold it, few have a truly biblical understanding of it. What model for governing the church does the Bible provide? Is there room for different methods? Or is just one way the right way? In *Who Runs the Church?* Four predominant approaches to church government are presented by respected

proponents: * Episcopalianism (Peter Toon) * Presbyterianism (L. Roy Taylor) * Single-Elder Congregationalism (Paige Patterson) * Plural-Elder Congregationalism (Samuel E. Waldron). As in other Counterpoints books, each view is followed by critiques from the other contributors, and its advocate then responds. The interactive and fair-minded nature of the Counterpoints format allows the reader to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each view and draw informed, personal conclusions.

Stanley N. Gundry is executive vice president and editor-in-chief for the Zondervan Corporation. He has been an influential figure in the Evangelical Theological Society, serving as president of ETS and on its executive committee, and is adjunct professor of Historical Theology at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. He is the author of seven books and has written many articles appearing in popular and academic periodicals. Steven B. Cowan (M.Div.; Ph.D.) is associate professor of Philosophy and Apologetics at Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, AL. Peter Toon (Ph.D., Oxford University) is rector of Christ Church, Biddulph Moor, Diocese of Lichfield, in the Church of England. Dr. L. Roy Taylor is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. He has served as a Presbyterian Churches in America (PCA) pastor for sixteen years, as a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary for ten years, and as stated clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA since 1998. He has written various article and is the author of several books, including Four Views on Church Government (Counterpoints series, Zondervan). He and his wife, Donna, have two children and five grandchildren. Paige Patterson (Th.D., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) is president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, TX. Samuel E. Waldron is currently a PhD candidate in systematic theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY.

This book is good for pastors to read. It's also good for those who are considering a denominational change. If you are a young pastor, this book will help you understand church government and the model that best fits your leadership style. Each scholar articulates his position well, and all four views are supported by Scripture. No one view appears to be against Scripture. Churches in the First and Second Century may have varied in their approaches, according to the authors. And it's obvious that God uses all four models today. The four are described here but may be summarized in three. Episcopalian is "hierarchical" with the bishop ordaining each priest or rector in the local church. This model includes churches such as the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Episcopalian Church, the United Methodist Church, and some Lutheran groups. Presbyterian is "representative"

with presbyters or elders providing the oversight of local churches and pastors. This model includes the Presbyterian Church (USA), Christian Reformed Church, the Assemblies of God, and others. Congregational is "independent" with the pastor providing the oversight of the local church without any external ecclesiastical authority (or regional district) as found in the other two models. This model includes churches such as the Southern Baptists, General Baptists, Churches of Christ, and other independent churches. (The fourth view is an offshoot of this model but with a plurality of pastors as the authority instead of a single pastor). If you are considering a denominational change, particularly for leadership reasons, then this book is a must read. It gives insight into how denominations function and why. It will confirm which model best fits your style and goals. Some pastors enjoy climbing ecclesiastical ladders within a denomination, while others enjoy their exclusive focus on the local church. It may save some pastors years of frustration fighting red tape, while birthing vision in others who desire to oversee a region of churches. It is well written and researched.

The author could have been a bit more forthcoming had he identified by title and introduction the fact that he was NOT really interested in answering the question, "Who Runs the Church?", but instead is compiling four accounts, only one of which he concedes is correct. He should have just stuck to an explanation of his own beliefs, and just titled the book, "The Way the Church Should Be Run, According to Me."

Very good book on differing church government. I really enjoyed the comprehensive and biblical treatment by Doctor Patterson.

Just getting started. So far, so good.

If you only wanted to read one of the two possible "4 or 5 Views" on church government, this one or the "Perspectives on Church Government", get this one (the Zondervan) for sure. The other one is kind sloppy and just not nearly as complete as this one edited by Cowan.

This book was read with a critical eye. I found it to be very informative and insightful. The comparing and contrasting of the different structures in the protestant churches and how they justify their theologies; how they are more in line with the mind of God as opposed to the Eastern Orthodox was very interesting.

this is a very good overview of the four views presented. the format is helpful, but a bit redundant. If you are just starting to study the subject, consider beginning here and then looking for more in-depth resources.

This book is a great overview of different forms of church governance from practitioners of the various forms presented. Each section has great discussion and debate. Great book, I highly recommend it.

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