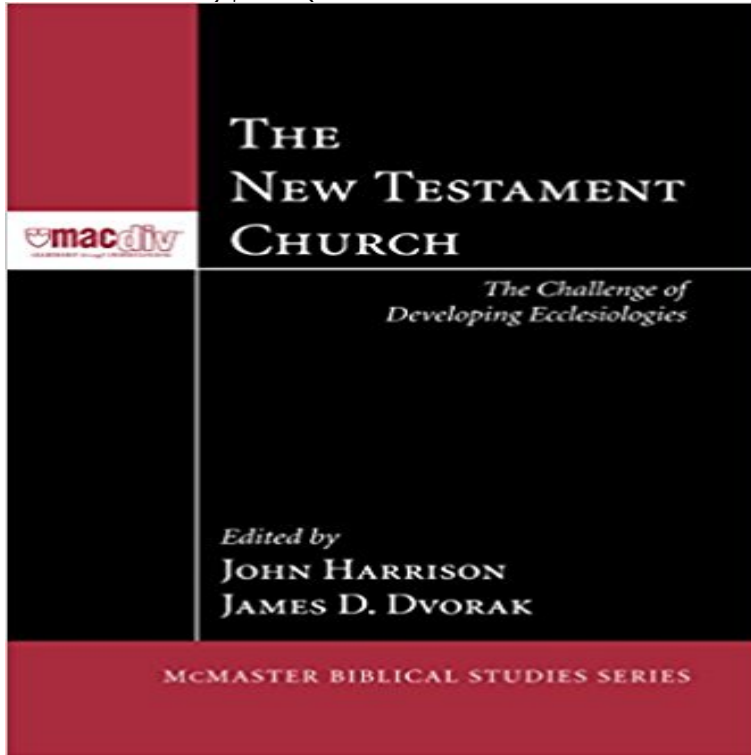


# The New Testament Church: The Challenge of Developing Ecclesiologies (McMaster Biblical Studies Series)



Christian communities today face enormous challenges in the new contexts and teachings that try to redefine what churches should be. Christians look to the New Testament for a pattern for the church, but the New Testament does not present a totally uniform picture of the structure, leadership, and sacraments practiced by first-century congregations. There was a unity of the Christian communities centered on the teaching that Jesus is the Christ, whom God has raised from the dead and has enthroned as Lord, yet not every assembly did exactly the same thing and saw themselves in exactly the same way. Rather, in the New Testament we find a collage of rich theological insights into what it means to be the church. When leaders of today see this diversity, they can look for New Testament ecclesiologies that are most relevant to the social and cultural context in which their community lives. This volume of essays, written with the latest scholarship, highlights the uniqueness of individual ecclesiologies of the various New Testament documents and their core unifying themes. These essays target early Christian views on church. They hit the bulls-eye by careful exegesis in dialogue with current scholarship. Chapters feature clear organization, attention to the text in its socio-historical background, and focus on empirical data rather than later tradition or current fashionable movements. Overall the book fills a gaping hole in current literature. Pastors, students, and scholars alike will gain new glimpses of the considerable diversity that lay behind the church of apostolic times --Robert W. Yarbrough Professor of New Testament Covenant Theological Seminary This collection of essays illustrates the important observation that even as there are multiple authors in the New Testament, so there are multiple views of the church seen in the New Testament documents. The

authors do a fine job of focusing our attention on those aspects of church life emphasized by particular New Testament authors for particular audiences. The result is a sharper picture of the diversity of descriptions of the church found in the New Testament. --Richard A. Wright Associate Professor of Bible Chair, Graduate School of Theology Oklahoma Christian University John P. Harrison is Professor of New Testament and Ministry, Oklahoma Christian University. James D. Dvorak is Associate Professor of Greek and New Testament, Oklahoma Christian University. He is the co-editor of *Baptism: Historical, Theological and Pastoral Perspectives* (Pickwick, 2010).

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