

## *Note to the Reader*

In this work, although I speak of church membership, I make no attempt to delineate my fully-worked out position on this subject. There is a huge spectrum of views about the matter: what it is; even, whether it should exist; and, if it does, what is required for ‘membership’; whether it should be formal, credal, confessional; how ‘members’ are recognised; what level of commitment is required; whether the arrangement should be covenantal; how and why and when discipline works; how decisions are reached; and so on. All these things combined – the principles and practice of church membership (however such a thing is defined) – demands a work of its own. And I really do mean ‘demands’, because current practice (much of which has an over-bearing weight of tradition behind it) seriously jeopardises the New Testament doctrine, practice and life of the *ekklēsia*.

But, as I say, dealing with that is not my purpose in this volume.