

The Church (6) Congregational Polity

Introduction:

Let us read together the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to Titus. Here we read of the Apostle Paul's instruction to Titus, a young minister of Jesus Christ, to whom he gave instruction to strengthen churches on the island of Crete. By sending Titus, Paul was extending his own apostolic ministry to Gentile churches, churches that needed his ministry, but to which He could not visit.

¹Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

⁴To Titus, a true son in our common faith:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

⁵For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— ⁶if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. ⁷For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

¹⁰For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. ¹⁵To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

The Apostle Paul was responsible for "all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). This was a heavy task for one who could not be in every place at all times. He needed to entrust others to represent him in his apostolic work. There were churches on the island of Crete, of which Paul was responsible, but apparently he was unable to visit in person. He sent Titus, a young man in the faith, to further establish and strengthen these churches. One aspect of his work was to set in order the polity, or the government, of the churches so that they would be able to be healthy, functioning churches, that would be able to withstand those forces and evil men that would pervert their faith and practice. Paul told Titus to "set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you." The churches were to be led by elders.

Now this structuring of the churches by Titus may seem to conflict with what we have been advocating as the New Testament teaching that local churches of Jesus Christ are to be chiefly congregational in their church government. Today I would like us to continue to consider further the New Testament teaching regarding congregational church government, but we will also introduce into our discussion the need and importance for the local church to be led by a plurality of elders.

And so, today we will continue to show what the Holy Scriptures teach regarding the nature and function of the local church. We showed last week that the great authority that our Lord has conferred upon His churches should lead us to have a high regard and respect for every biblical church of Jesus Christ. Our Lord has granted to His churches a great and responsible role in this fallen world. As we affirmed last week and we have asserted many times in the past, the local church is the only institution that our Lord Jesus began, established, and commissioned to announce and expand His kingdom in the world. And we believe that the historic baptistic view of *congregational church government* is taught and prescribed in the New Testament Scriptures. This congregational understanding of church government has had the highest view of the dignity and authority of the local church than any other form of church government that churches or denominations have espoused and practiced through church history. Baptist understanding is that God's Word sets forth a high regard for the congregation of the saints, true believers in Jesus Christ. The Lord has entrusted the local church with the capability and responsibility to govern itself and to fulfil the mission that He has entrusted to her.

Let us rehearse some of the great responsibilities that the Lord has entrusted to local church assemblies. The Lord has given the local church body...

1. The authority to receive, discipline, and exclude its members.

This is not authority granted to the pastor or to the elders, or to the deacons, but to the church body as a whole. We saw last week that in Matthew 18 the Lord Jesus told His disciples that the final court of appeal in matters of discipline with an unrepentant member was the church. He said of their dealings with the unrepentant man,

“And if he refuses to hear them, *tell it to the church*. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 18:17f)

We also see this practice set forth in the Apostle Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth when disciplining a church member who was sinning egregiously.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor. 5:4f)

The church was to deal with this sinning man by excommunicating him from church membership. Under the Old Testament economy in ancient Israel, transgressors of the covenant were “cut off”, or executed by the covenant community. But under the new covenant, thankfully, the church is not required to execute capital punishment upon a rebellious member of the community, rather, the church is simply to put him out formally from membership in their body. Without the spiritual protection that the church affords him, he will suffer the consequences of his sin, hopefully bringing him to repentance and restoration to the fellowship of the body.

Apparently the church at Corinth took this action that the apostle prescribed to them. This man did come to repentance as a result of the church excommunicating him from its membership. We read of this in 2 Corinthians. But the church had failed to receive the man back into their membership upon his repentance. They were first faulted for tolerating the egregious sin this man was committing while a member. They were later condemned for not forgiving this man and receiving him back into their fellowship after he had repented of his sin. In Paul's discussion of this matter in 2 Corinthians, we learn further the nature of congregational government in excluding and restoring this man. Paul wrote to this church:

“This punishment which was inflicted *by the majority* is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, *you* (2nd person plural) ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you (2nd person plural) to reaffirm your love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you (2nd person plural) to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you (2nd person plural) forgive anything, I also forgive.” (2 Cor. 2:6-10)

Paul was writing to the church collectively, as a congregation. It had acted to dismiss this sinning member--“by the majority.” The church was also collectively to forgive him and restore him to their fellowship. This action is consistent only with congregational church government, the church as a whole agrees to take action to exclude and to embrace one into its church membership.

Paul had instructed the church at Thessalonica collectively that they were to shun those among them who were walking in a disorderly manner. “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us” (2 Thess. 3:6). This would involve collective agreement, announcement and action on the part of the church body. This reflects congregational church government and action.

And then we have the instruction of the Lord Jesus that He have to the seven individual churches in Asia Minor. This is recorded in Revelation 2 and 3. Here is a strong argument for congregational church government. One described these seven letters to seven local churches in this way:

The Lord, in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, clearly holds each church as a whole responsible for its doctrine and discipline; but had these churches been organized Episcopally or Presbyterially, the rebukes for unsound doctrine and life would have been directed to the session or the presbytery or the bench of bishops, and not, as they are, to the congregation. But it is evident that the right of discipline, exclusion, and restoration, thus clearly govern to the whole assembly of the church, involves also the right of admission. For no church could rightfully be held responsible for its own character and acts if it did not control the door of entrance.¹

2. The authority to elect its own leaders.

The selection of the apostle Matthias suggests congregational polity. We read in Acts 1 that the 120 disciples gathered in Jerusalem selected Matthias who would replace Judas Iscariot, after he had denied the Lord and had died. We read that the 120 disciples, which would have constituted the church at Jerusalem before Pentecost, corporately determined who the replacement of Judas would be. “And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26).

The selection of the seven men to oversee the ministry to the Christian widows in Jerusalem reflect congregational church government. We read on a problem that emerged in the church at Jerusalem and how the church resolved the matter. We read in Acts 6:1ff these words:

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ²Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ⁵And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and

¹ Hezekiah Harvey, *The Church: Its Polity and Ordinances* (Backus Book Publishers, 1982, orig. 1879), p. 40.

Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. (Acts 6:1-6)

The apostles instructed the church collectively to select seven men whom the apostles would appoint over this ministry. “They”, the disciples in the church, selected seven men. They brought these men before the apostles whom the apostles appointed over this ministry. The church as a whole made the selection. This is consistent with congregational church government.

The selection of delegates to accompany the apostles to Jerusalem is consistent with congregational church government. The Apostle Paul had raised a rather significant amount of money from the Gentile churches to send to Jerusalem to buy food for the Christians there, who had been suffering under a severe famine. In advance to Paul coming through Corinth, he wrote to the church to have the collection gathered before his arrival. He also instructed the church to select delegates who would join with his party to escort the offering to Jerusalem. We read in the first verses of 1 Corinthians 16:1ff:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ²On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³And when I come, ***whomever you approve by your letters*** I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me. ⁵Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). ⁶And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. (1 Cor. 16:1-6)

This passage not only shows that the church was to select those who would represent their church and escort Paul and his companions, but it also shows that the congregation of the church at Corinth had congregational responsibility over its collection of money and its distribution. The congregational form of church government is clearly illustrated here.

The selection of elders, or bishops to the churches was through congregational deliberation. We read in Acts 14:23 of the apostles’ ordination of elders in the churches that they started on their first missionary journey. There we read, “

²¹And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” ²³***So when they had appointed elders in every church***, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:21-23)

It may appear that this passage indicates that Paul and those in his ministry team had chosen the elders, not the churches. But it has been argued that this passage reflects what is found elsewhere, that Paul had appointed or ordained the elders that the church had itself selected from among them. One Greek commentator wrote:

There is “no reason for departing from the usual meaning of electing by show of hands. The apostles may have admitted to ordination those presbyters whom the churches elected.”²

Similarly, Lang says, “The expression suggests the thought that the apostles may have appointed and superintended a congregational election. And this view is supported by the circumstances related (ch. Vi.

² Ibid. p. 41.

2), where the twelve directed that the election of the seven should be held.”³ And Harvey wrote, “All the early English translations previous to King James’s, which was prepared under the influence of prelacy, translate, ‘Ordnained them elders by election in every congregation.’”⁴

Here is a summary of this matter:

It seems clear, therefore, that the selection of officers of the congregation was the established principle of procedure; in those instances, therefore, where the apostles or evangelists are said to ordain elders, the presumption is that, as in the more fully related cases, they ordained men previously selected by the people. Indeed, in a voluntary body, the right to choose its own officers is inherent; unless, therefore, it is expressly ordained otherwise, this right remains in the church; but there is in Scripture neither record nor intimation of a different principle of selection.⁵

3. The local church sent out missionaries to the mission field.

The local church at Jerusalem was the first church to send forth a missionary. It was not Paul, but rather Barnabas, whom the church sent forth on its behalf. We read of this in Acts 11.

¹⁹Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. ²⁰But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. ²²***Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.*** ²³When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and (Acts 11:19-23)

The church collectively sent Barnabas on its behalf.

We read of the first missionary journey of the apostle Paul originating in the church at Antioch. We read in Acts 13:1ff this account:

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³***Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*** ⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13:1-4)

The Lord used this church to call and send out the first missionaries to the Gentile world. This church had in its midst “certain prophets and teachers.” The Holy Spirit spoke to them of His intention to send forth Paul and Barnabas. But it would seem that the church as a whole recognized these men, commissioned them in their work and sent them forth. It should be the members of the church, or the elders of the church representing all the members of the church, that “having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

Later we read of the return of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:26ff. Their first action was to report to the gathered church the results of the mission to which the local church had sent them.

³ Ibid. p. 42.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

²⁶From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. ²⁷Now *when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them*, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸So they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (Acts 14:26-28)

Here we see the centrality and the role of the local church at Antioch. This church had initially sent these men out on their mission. When their mission was complete, they reported back to the church that had sent them.

4. The local church sent delegates to the church at Jerusalem for counsel regarding a problem in their church.

The congregation of the church of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem in order to consult the Apostles about the matter of Gentile conversions to Jesus Christ. We read of this in Acts 15:1ff.

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ²Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. ³So, being sent on their way *by the church*, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. ⁴And when they had come to Jerusalem, *they were received by the church* and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. (Act 15:1 NKJ)

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from Jerusalem, they delivered the recommendation of the church at Jerusalem to the gathered church at Antioch.

“So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and *when they had gathered the multitude together*, they delivered the letter.” (Acts 15:30).

The church local church received counsel from the church at Jerusalem. The church at Antioch accepted the advice given to them. We see the pre-eminence of the local church in resolving these matters in the congregation. The church at Antioch did not send their delegates to a presbytery or a synod, or for that matter, to a bishop or a cardinal, in order to obtain a directive from a higher authority. The church at Antioch sent representatives of their church to another, more mature church--the church at Jerusalem, in order to receive their counsel as to what they should do. The church of Jerusalem did not send an edict or command to the church at Antioch, but rather it made known to the other church the results of its own deliberation of the matter. The members of the church in Jerusalem gave their opinion of the matter, an opinion derived from their wisdom and experience. Each local church was independent and governed itself. Each church recognized and respect the independence of the other church. This passage reflects congregational church government.

Not much later after this event Paul determined to begin his second missionary journey in order to follow up on the churches that he had begun on his first missionary journey. But he did not simply launch out on his own. We read of this in Acts 15:39ff.

And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, *being commended by the brethren to the grace of God*. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:39-41)

Paul had brought his desire and intention before his local church and they once again sent him forth on his mission. This is consistent with congregational church government.

4. The dominant place the local church occupies in the New Testament Scriptures.

We find in the New Testament great attention and direction given to the institution and order of the local church. All of the epistles were either written directly to a church or the content of the epistle addressed the doctrine, practice, or ministry of the local church. Even Paul's epistle to Philemon regarding his relationship to his runaway slave, Onesimus, was addressed to Philemon and "to the church" in his house. We read the opening words of this epistle,

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer, ²to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, *and to the church in your house:* (Philemon 1:1f)

As we had said before,

When we consider all of the interaction and the activities of the congregations, we see that these could only take place in churches that operated with a congregational form of church government. The decisions that the churches made could only take place in a church setting in which there was corporate deliberation, due consideration by the members, and perhaps even debate taking place (Cf. Gal. 2:5). The decisions these churches made and the actions these churches took would involve interaction with one another with perhaps appeals being made, persuasive arguments put forth, and then a collective decision and unified action resulting.

5. The wise administration of local church government

What we have shown to be the New Testament teaching on congregational church government will find various forms of expression in different settings. Depending on the nature of any one congregation and the personality and character of its leadership, there may be varying degrees to which the congregation will be involved in corporate decisions. We have not as yet addressed the nature of leadership within the local church, only of the authority that the Lord has invested in the entire body.

It might be assumed that the nature of congregational church government is that of a democracy. This is only partly right. Indeed, the government of Baptist churches has been recognized by some as a stellar illustration of democracy. I believe that it was Thomas Jefferson who said of the Baptist churches of his day that they were finest examples of pure democracy on display in the colonies. But actually the term democracy is not actually true to our practice. For we are governed not by whose view or opinion garners the most votes that gives direction to our church, but rather it is the collective effort to assess the will of the Lord in any matter before us. The 19th century Baptist theologian, **Augustus Strong** expressed it this way:

Should not the majority rule in a Baptist church? No, not a bare majority, when there are opposing convictions on the part of a large minority. What should rule is the mind of the Spirit. What indicates his mind is the gradual unification of conviction and opinion on the part of the whole body in support of some definite plan, so that the whole church moves together. The large church has the advantage over the small church in that the single crotchety member cannot do much harm. One man in a small boat can easily upset it, but not so in a great ship. Patient waiting, persuasion, and prayer, will ordinarily win over the recalcitrant. It is not to be denied, however, that patience may have its limits, and that unity may sometimes need to be purchased by secession and the forming of a new local church whose members can work harmoniously together.⁶

⁶ Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (The Judson Press, 1907, 1969 printing), 909-911.

Some churches have tried to operate on the principle that 100% of the membership must agree to a proposal or it is not acted upon. They argue that a complete consensus is the way to determine the will of God. This is unreasonable and unwise. I had a friend in seminary who was called to pastor a Baptist church in the town of Folsom, California. But he was not the church's first choice. The congregation had voted on a man before him. But the bylaws declared that 100% approval was required to call a man. When the church meeting was conducted and a vote taken for the calling of a man, all voted in favor of doing so, except for one rather mentally-challenged middle-aged lady church member. She was the lone vote in opposition, when she raised her hand. My friend, Larry, would not been called also, but when the vote was taken for him, someone was sitting next to this woman and distracted her in a timely manner that prevented her "no" vote. They called Larry to pastor their church.

But some Baptist churches carry forward this matter of congregational church government in unhealthy and unwise ways. The congregation votes on virtually every decision and action that occurs in the life of the church. This is needless and troublesome. Years ago I heard of a Baptist church down south that could not agree on the color of the carpet. They had two different colors of carpet in the sanctuary, which was divided down the center aisle. No, this is a poor way to govern a church. For clearly the New Testament shows that every church selects leaders, both elders and deacons, to help manage and govern the church. They serve at the behest of the congregation. The congregation entrusts them with clearly defined responsibilities. Those leaders are then entrusted by the local church body with responsibility to manage and make decisions on behalf of the congregation, that is on those issues that do not rise to the level of importance requiring a congregational vote. The congregation submits to their leadership. Congregational church government chooses its own leaders to whom the congregation then submits to those leaders in the manner and the degree that the church has entrusted to them. This is consistent with what the New Testament puts forward as congregational church government.

There are differences of opinion between good people about the degree to which authority should be granted to its leaders. I have a book entitled, *Who Runs the Church; For Views on Church Government*.⁷ The four views presented by various advocates of each and then each presentation is critiqued by the other three. The four views include: Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Single-Elder Congregationalism, and Plural-Elder Congregationalism. The last position reflects our own understanding and is set forward by Samuel Waldron, a good reformed Baptist (whom I have met in the past). In his presentation he explains the tension between some who advocate what he terms a radical democracy and elder-led congregationalism. Here is an extended portion of his discussion:

In the second place, plural-elder congregationalism is plural elder church government. Plural-elder church government means that each local church should be led, under normal circumstances, by a plurality of elders. It is clear that here I agree with my Presbyterian brother and disagree with my Baptist brother. Presbyterian churches on a local level are led by a plurality of elders. Single-elder Congregationalist churches, of course, are not.

But this is not the whole story. For here we confront the problem of congregationalism (in the sense of democratic rule) versus rule by elders in the local church. Many evangelicals toady have discovered in their New Testament that local churches should have (and, thus be led by) elders. This renewed interest in elders has created a reaction against the radical, democratic form of government practiced in many evangelical churches. It is common for those who have discovered the biblical teaching about elders to say that they believe in rule by elders and not congregationalism (in the sense of democracy).

I suspect that most who say this only believe in rule by elders in comparison (or as relative) to the congregational democracy with which they have been acquainted. The rule of elders in the Reformed tradition makes the decisions of the eldership authoritative regardless of the consent of the

⁷ Steven Cowen, gen. ed., *Who Runs the Church; Four Views on Church Government* (Zondervan, 2004.), pp. 320.

church as a whole. James Bannerman, a respected Presbyterian author, makes clear what rule by elder has meant historically for presbyterians:

The system of Presbyterianism requires that every proper means be employed, in the way of explanation, persuasion, and instruction, to secure the concurrence of the members in the acts and proceedings of the rulers of Christian society. But Presbyterians do not, like Independents, hold that this consent is a condition upon which the lawfulness of the acts of the office-bearers is suspended, or as much a necessary element in any judgment of the ecclesiastical body as the consent of the rulers themselves. On the contrary, the consent of the members is, upon the Presbyterian theory, a consent added to the authoritative decision of the office-bearers, not entering into it as an element necessary to its validity, without which it would be neither lawful or binding.

When I defend the leadership of the plurality of elders in the local church, I do not intend to defend the Presbyterian view on this matter.

Of course, this does not mean that I am happy with the typical, democratic congregationalism of most independent churches today. Furthermore, it seems to me that a biblical appreciation of a plurality of elders in the local churches must logically and practically tend to modify and restrain the radical democratic tendencies of many evangelical churches today. Even if we reject the presbyterian version of elder rule, there is a kind of tension between a democratic view of church government and a plural-elder view of church government.⁸

How plural-elder congregationalism plays out in a local church setting will vary somewhat in different congregations. The nature of any one congregation as well as the spirit and personality of the pastor and elders will affect how these churches function. But it is clearly scriptural that local churches should be led by elders even as they function according to a congregational form of government. We will address this next Lord's Day, Lord willing.

Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things!
And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen and Amen.
(Psa. 72:18f)

⁸ Steven Cowen, gen. ed., *Who Runs the Church; Four Views on Church Government* (Zondervan, 2004.), pp. 187f.