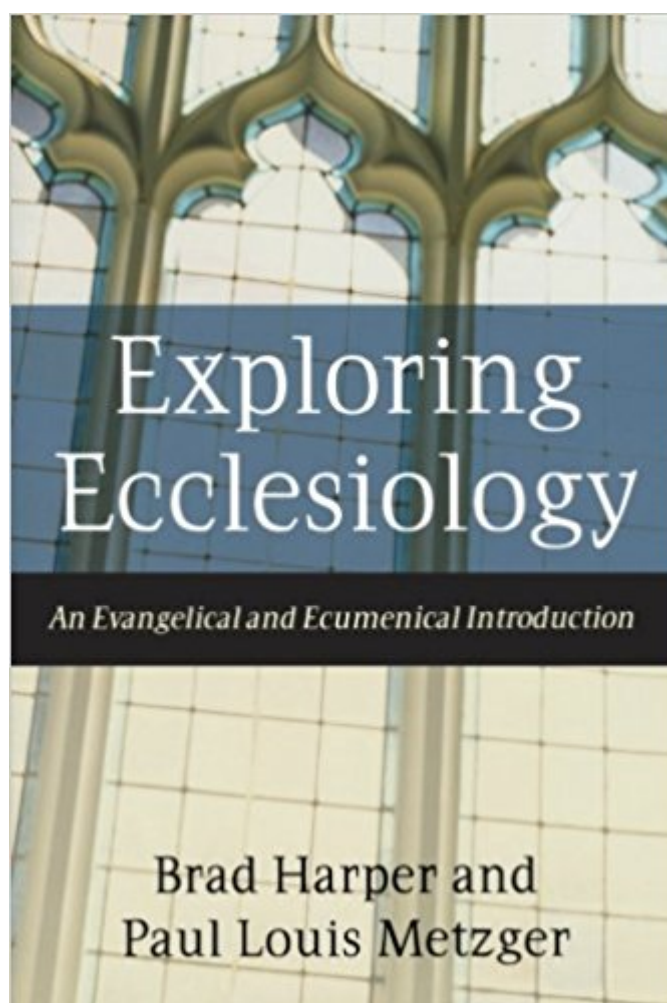




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# Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical And Ecumenical Introduction



## Synopsis

In this introduction to ecclesiology, respected scholars Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger offer a solidly evangelical yet ecumenical survey of the church in mission and doctrine. Combining biblical, historical, and cultural analysis, this comprehensive text explores the church as a Trinitarian, eschatological, worshiping, sacramental, serving, ordered, cultural, and missional community. It also offers practical application, addressing contemporary church life issues such as women in ministry, evangelism, social action, consumerism in church growth trends, ecumenism, and the church in postmodern culture. The book will appeal to all who are interested in church doctrine, particularly undergraduates and seminarians.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A marvelous volume on ecclesiology in the contemporary setting. I have not read a better introduction to ecclesiology and hope that it becomes a standard textbook in college and seminary classes as well as finding a wide readership outside of the academy. It is a splendid example of theology in service to the church."--John R. Franke, Yellowstone Theological Institute  
"This is an important new book. Evangelicals have often emphasized individual faith in Christ at the expense of the corporate character of the Christian community. This book shows why that dichotomy is false by pointing us toward a more holistic ecclesiology--the church biblical, trinitarian, sacramental, missional, and eschatological. This book needs to be read and heeded!"--Timothy George, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University  
"Harper and Metzger provide evangelical Protestants an ideal

entrÃfÂ©e into what has been the long-neglected stepsister of systematic theology in North America. A must-read for evangelicals who intuitively know that the church is not incidental or just instrumental to the Christian life."--Barry Harvey, Baylor University"Harper and Metzger have written an important evangelical and ecumenical introduction to ecclesiology. Being evangelicals themselves, they have managed to incorporate into their vision of the church important insights from both the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox theology and tradition. I believe that this is a book from which Orthodox students, theologians, and pastors have much to learn."--Rev. Dr. Demetrios Bathrellos, Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge"An evangelical ecclesiology that takes the counter-cultural notion of divine communio as its starting point merits reading. That this book also examines race, sacraments, and Christian art will really grab the attention of a serious and plentiful readership. Metzger and Harper deserve the highest praise for pushing the envelope."--Peter Casarella, DePaul University

Brad Harper (Ph.D., St. Louis University) is professor of theology at Multnomah University in Portland, Oregon. He is the college adviser for The Institute for Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins and the book review editor for Cultural Encounters: A Journal for the Theology of Culture. He has also worked as a pastor and church planter. Paul Louis Metzger (Ph.D., King's College London) is professor of Christian theology and theology of culture at Multnomah Biblical Seminary and director of its Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins. He is the editor of the journal Cultural Encounters and the author of Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church.

An excellent look at the doctrine of the church from an evangelical perspective. The text serves as a challenge to evangelical theology, in which ecclesiology is often an afterthought. I found the text to be provocative and challenging, while at the same time an excellent read. I highly recommend it.

This book is great...but I already knew it would be because it was written by my professor. I recommend this book to all and any who are in a church or are followers of Jesus but have a hard time with understanding church and why we must be a part of one and what that should look like.

good

it is excellent, It gives a great view from the trinitarian view of what being a church means. I would

suggest it for all those who want Jesus!

good

A brilliant look into the theological foundation of the Church, 'Exploring Ecclesiology' strikes at the heart of today's need for the church. Because the church does not simply bear witness to its community - it ultimately bears witness to its God - the need of today is a profound understanding of what it means to be Church. Too often theology and praxis are viewed as polar opposites, but if the Church is to be the 'proclaimer and hearer of the divine Word' it must attend to its Being so to understand its purpose. Karl Barth once wrote that the critical task of theology is to refer the message of the Church back to its source, 'the Church could not ever be exempt from seeking after the Word and asking for the Holy Spirit which alone leads it to all truth.' (Theology and Church, 295). A strong need exists today to better understand what it means to be the Church. Whilst Metzger and Harper claim their book simply 'explores' ecclesiology, the utter reality is that this book is a brilliant engagement with the core of what the Church is. The book disbands the ever-present dichotomy of practical and academic through its thorough engagement and fleshing out of such issues as leadership, community, individualism, cultural influences, missional life of the Church and the like. 'Exploring Ecclesiology' is an important read for today's theology as it not only illuminates the drama of the Bible but calls for the community of Christ to realize how it is to participate in Christ through the Spirit. Such participation enters the world's stage for humanity's performance in its salvation, reconciliation, and redemption through the building of the Kingdom of God here and now. As Metzger and Harper write, 'we must concern ourselves with bearing authentic witness to the biblical drama centered in Christ.' (232). A Christocentric understanding of the Church is essential. As Lesslie Newbigin writes, 'It is not sufficient for the Church to point to itself and say, "Here is the Body of the Messiah." It must point beyond itself to Him who is sole Judge and Saviour, both of the Church and of the world. And yet the Church is not merely the witness to Christ; it is also the Body of Christ. It is not merely the reporter of divine acts of redemption; it is also itself the bearer of God's redeeming grace, itself part of the story of redemption which is the burden of its message.' (The Household of God, 103.) From such witness the Church shall come to embody the hope poured out from the Triune God, thereby 'removing all divisions in the body,' providing the strength and sustenance needed not only to serve the church and society, but more importantly realizing that the Church is 'still Christ's bride and, as such will be more beautiful than we could ever imagine then and there.' (Exploring Ecclesiology, 284). This is a must read for the Bride as well as all those who

have ever wondered why Jesus is so enticing.

I really enjoyed and appreciated this book. I am a pastor, and I have been wrestling through some of the evangelical church's recent failings and wanderings. I find Harper and Metzger very helpful in thinking through a deeper way for the church to function. I was especially struck by the sections that spoke of the church as an "eschatological community." There tends to be so much pragmatism in the evangelical church these days. "How do we get people in the doors?" "What do people want out of this church?" These questions are not simply consumeristic, but they also undermine the church as a witness to the kingdom of God. The church should be a bit of culture shock (in a good way) for all of us. The church is a witness to the future fulfillment of the kingdom. We are all brought together as one, and we reach out with Christ's love to the needy and hurting. Just as a note, I don't agree with Harper and Metzger on their Egalitarian (I am Complementarian), but I do agree with the need to barriers to be broken within the church. People will be enabled to witness God's powerful work of unity and love in the church, and this will testify to what is to come. I recommend this book as a thoughtful and challenging vision of how the evangelical church can combat harmful consumerism and present a true vision of the gospel to the world.

Book arrived on time and looks great.

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