



# Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church

*By Gregg R. Allison*

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**What is a church?** This can be a difficult question to answer and Christians have offered a variety of perspectives. Gregg Allison thus explores and synthesizes all that Scripture affirms about the new covenant people of God, capturing a full picture of the biblical church. He covers the topics of the church's identity and characteristics; its growth through purity, unity, and discipline; its offices and leadership structures; its ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and its ministries. Here is a rich approach to ecclesiology consisting of sustained doctrinal reflection and wise, practical application.

Part of the Foundations of Evangelical Theology series.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

“I believe that the doctrine of the church will be the most urgent locus of theological reflection over the next generation. In *Sojourners and Strangers*, Gregg Allison clears the ground by presenting a thoroughly biblical ecclesiology, at once comprehensive in scope and sensitive to nuance. A welcome addition to an important series.”

—**Timothy George**, Founding Dean, Beeson Divinity School; General Editor, Reformation Commentary on Scripture

“The doctrine of the church is one that continues to divide Christians, and especially Protestants, from one another. Dr. Gregg Allison has grasped this thorny nettle and produced a book that presents both the basic principles that unite us and the controversies that continue to produce different ecclesial formations. He maintains his own conservative, Reformed Baptist convictions while being fair to those who hold other views, making his book a valuable contribution to our understanding of this vitally important subject.”

—**Gerald Bray**, Research Professor of Divinity, History, and Doctrine, Beeson Divinity School; author, *God Is Love* and *God Has Spoken*

“I am a full-time pastor, and therefore I must be a full-time theologian. As a pastor, my highest calling is to honor Jesus by shepherding his flock. As a theologian, my highest calling is to laud Jesus publically as the hope of the world. Quite frankly, I need help as I deal with real life difficulties that I could not fictionally create. Dr. Allison’s work in *Sojourners and Strangers* is the most helpful, theologically driven manual for leading in the church. If you buy it, you’ll wear it out.”

—**Tyler Jones**, Lead Pastor, Vintage Church, Raleigh, North Carolina; Founder, Advance the Church

“Gregg Allison’s *Sojourners and Strangers* is historically informed, exegetically driven, and theological precise. Even more, this timely tour-de-force ecclesiology displays a love for the church and is written for the church!”

—**Christopher W. Morgan**, Dean and Professor of Theology, California Baptist University

“No longer can one regard ‘evangelical ecclesiology’ as a contradiction in terms. Among the many recent evangelical volumes on the doctrine of the church, Allison’s will undoubtedly prove to be the standard treatment for years to come. This excellent book is biblically faithful, historically informed, and pastorally relevant. One need not agree with Allison on every point of interpretation to profit immensely from his insights. I struggle to think of another volume on the subject that combines both theological depth and practical wisdom in such readable fashion as does Allison. I cannot recommend it too highly.”

—**Sam Storms**, Lead Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bridgeway Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

“Dr. Gregg Allison has done a masterful job of writing a thorough yet practical analysis of the church. This volume is a ‘must read’ for any serious pastor or theologian who desires to look into the heart of evangelical ecclesiology. As a conservative Christian and pastor of a local church I am too quick to recommend or make decisions regarding the ‘practice’ of the local church with little thought of accountability or connectedness to the church both universal or historical. Allison brings such breadth and depth to the beauty of the church by tracing every section through the early church, Catholic Church, Reformation, and into our contemporary culture and times. I especially appreciated Gregg’s willingness to address prominent issues churches are

currently struggling with—such as church governance or the ‘multisite’ movement. This book fills the void that has long existed in most evangelicals’ libraries!”

—**Jeffrey T. Gilmore**, Executive Teaching Pastor, Parkview Evangelical Free Church, Iowa City, Iowa

“Writing an evangelical ecclesiology is a difficult task, due to the fact that evangelicals differ on many aspects of ecclesiology. All will not agree with the positions taken by Gregg Allison in *Sojourners and Strangers*, but all will profit from his detailed study. He is especially thorough in his treatment of polity and the ordinances, and goes down some seldom-explored paths in his opening sections. At points, his arguments require careful reading, but often open up new perspectives. I commend it to students of ecclesiology.”

—**John S. Hammett**, Associate Dean for Theological Studies, Professor of Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; author *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*

“In this comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of the church, Gregg Allison brings a depth of doctrinal reflection, scriptural understanding, and practical wisdom to bear. Interacting with various ecclesiological perspectives throughout church history and today, he provides a balanced, biblical, and up-to-date treatment of topics from the characteristics of the church, to church government, to church ministry—all informed by his understanding of the paradoxical nature of the church as both part of the world and yet looking to another Kingdom. This work will make a major theological contribution to the expanding literature on the doctrine of the church.”

—**Justin S. Holcomb**, Episcopal Priest; Professor of Christian Thought, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; coauthor, *Rid of My Disgrace* and *Is It My Fault?*

“Gregg Allison has done evangelicals a great service with a true theology of the church. In the endless stream of books and blogs on technique and pragmatics of doing church, *Sojourners and Strangers* gives an answer to the question ‘what is a church?’ that is superbly written, soundly biblical, theologically coherent, and practically applicable. His expertise in historical theology and his experience in leadership in a variety of types of churches enrich his profound biblical insights. It is a must read for all who are serious about leadership in the church of Jesus Christ.”

—**Gerry Breshears**, Professor of Theology and Chair of the Center for Biblical and Theological Studies, Western Seminary; coauthor, *Death by Love: Letters from the Cross*

## About the Author

**Gregg R. Allison** (PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is secretary of the Evangelical Theological Society, a book review editor for the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, an elder at Sojourn Community Church, and a theological strategist for Sojourn Network. Allison has taught at several colleges and seminaries, including Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and is the author of numerous books, including *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, and *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment*.

**John S. Feinberg** (PhD, University of Chicago) is department chair and professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is the author of *Ethics for a Brave New World* (with Paul D. Feinberg) and is general editor of Crossway’s Foundations of Evangelical Theology series.

## Users Review

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**Robert Nguyen:**

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**Herman Pruitt:**

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