



The Church according to Paul: Rediscovering the Community Conformed to Christ

James W. Thompson

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"Always with one foot planted firmly in the academy and the other in the church, James Thompson has given us a highly insightful, theologically rich, and timely study of the apostle Paul's view of the church--one of the best Pauline ecclesiologies in print. Thompson argues compellingly that Paul's first-century vision of the church as a distinctive community speaks clearly to the twenty-first century. This excellent volume should be studied not only by students of Paul but also by all who are (rightly) concerned about the identity and mission of the church today."

--**Michael J. Gorman**, St. Mary's Seminary & University, Baltimore, Maryland

"*The Church according to Paul* is as challenging as it is clever. It is clever because Thompson takes contemporary visions of the church and replaces the language of their proponents with Paul's own language, thereby upturning today's categories. It is challenging because it virtually dares those who are concerned with the state of the church today to rethink the church according to the mind of Paul. All in all, *The Church according to Paul* is a useful and quite valuable read for anyone interested in either the church or the Bible, perhaps even both."

--**Raymond F. Collins**, Brown University

"Diagnoses of the church's problems and prescriptions for its flourishing abound. As James Thompson wisely observes, however, most contemporary discussion of the church shows little evidence of engagement with the letters of Paul. In this careful volume, Thompson studies the church in Paul's words and his work, in the hope that Paul's rich wisdom might have its rightful place in contemporary Christian reflection."

--**Beverly Roberts Gaventa**, Baylor University

"In this stunning and much-needed study of Pauline ecclesiology, Thompson offers far more than careful historical scholarship concerning the apostle's understanding of church. While his analysis provides a first-class treatment of Paul's letters as first-century documents, he also rediscovers ideas that speak to the contemporary church. The result of Thompson's work is that rare learned book that is grounded in sure-footed and careful biblical scholarship yet speaks powerfully to the church today about its role and outreach to modern society. A scintillating achievement that is vital for the church as it seeks to understand its continuing role in the wider secular culture."

--**Paul Foster**, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh

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