



Shorter reviews



Mervyn Davies and Graham Dodds, *Leadership in the Church for a People of Hope* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. ix +190. £18.99

Leadership in the Church for a People of Hope is not a practical manual, nor the result of a field survey on leadership. Rather, it offers a theology of Christian leadership particularly focused on the potentiality of the laity working in harmony with the ordained leadership. Mervyn Davies and Graham Dodds initially point out Will Hutton's 'relational capitalism', which diagnoses poverty and powerlessness as major issues for British cities, while the phenomena of secularism and the New Atheism provide the motivation for 'a privatization of values and beliefs' in this multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society (8). The past experiences of the Church of England, Methodism, Pentecostalism, and house church movements demonstrate a lack of vision in the church leadership when it comes to revelation, theological insight, experience about the contemporary church, and secular knowledge and authority.

In Chapter 2, Davies and Dodds understand ecclesiology and mission as having their roots in the idea of the Church's vocation to inhabit the secular world. Firstly, the concept of ecclesiological 'order' refers to the way a church expresses this vocation. Then Davies and Dodds adopt David Bosch's three paradigms of mission – Matthean, Lukan, and Pauline – to provide a definition of mission as 'being sent'. They then go on to consider the necessity of leadership in a postmodern church according to the categories of Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. (Although Niebuhr's categories of 'Christ against Culture', 'Christ with Culture', 'Christ above Culture', 'Christ and Culture in Polar Tension' and 'Christ as the Converter of Man' sound complicated if readers are not familiar with the theologies of Augustine, Aquinas, Christendom, Luther, and Calvin.)

By the end of Chapter 3, "Growing the People of God", readers have been led to the conclusion that church leadership in the twenty-first century should form a community of discernment, perception and courage which looks outwards at the society. The leadership of

the church is emphasized as a kind of ‘developmental dialogue and reflective practice being in the world but not of it’ (50). *Leadership in the Church for a People of Hope* dismisses the ‘pyramid’ model as inappropriate for church leadership, for its primary characteristics tend to perpetuate dependency and are only attractive in hierarchically structured churches. A better model is offered by the theological form of the ‘three offices’ of Christ, which encourages a balance between the roles of deacon, presbyter, and bishop. The authors argue that all three roles together might carry ‘functional and gift-related leadership’, although ‘ecclesially symbolic’ leadership is given to the ordained priest only.

Chapter 5, “Leadership in Change”, progressively challenges the readers with the need to change the current models of leadership. The theological work of Gilbert Rendle is used to describe two types of change that can take place in the church: ‘linear change’ is when something needs attention and replacement, or where rebuilding can solve the problem; ‘chaos change’ is when a whole-life reordering takes place – such as in the event of marriage, bereavement, or a paradigm shift. Chapter 6, “Re-Membering the Laity”, recalls the role of the lay people and their potential leadership. John Henry Newman is seen as one of the pioneers of lay leadership, believing as he did in the theology of the laity after Richard Hooker. Newman argued that ‘the marginalization of the laity is a failure in acknowledging their participation in Christ’ (105). Rather, Newman believed that lay people ‘have a corporate responsibility to participate in the defining of doctrine’ and that they ‘occupy a position of partnership with leaders in the witness of faith’ (118). Then in Chapter 7, “Breathing Together: Laity and Clergy Doing Theology and Mission”, the authors turn to the thoughts of Congar and Zizioulas on the relationship between Christology and pneumatology for a theology of the laity, in which lay people are both ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ the missionaries of the Church.

The authors consider Newman’s work *The Idea of a University* (1852/58), as a presentation of his ‘high view of laity’ alongside ‘a robust theology of education’. Newman’s main concern here was lay people’s understanding of faith. The authors also draw upon John M. Hull’s three categories of ideological stance (extra-ideological,

inter-ideological, and inner-ideological) to support the importance of lay leadership, and draw parallels with Nicola Slee's ecclesiological and eschatological insights on the theology of laypeople's education. The significance of time is also included, with the perspective that a Christian view of time is not only as a gift from God, but also as a gift that requires a skill. Time is depicted like money: 'one talks of spending time, wasting time, saving time, and giving time' (146). Ultimately, a model of church is suggested where the leaders can prioritise their time according to need, which model is designed to balance the traditional concepts of 'the Church as Sacrament', 'the Church as Herald', 'the Church as Servant', and 'the Church as Disciple'.

Although Davies and Dodds mostly follow the theological theory of Newman on the leadership of the laity, they do propose a new model of 'Resurrection Leadership' based on the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. The biblical scenes of the disciples' reactions to their Master become the source for ideas in building the leadership attributes of the laity. They postulate that the Johannine gospel writer reflects a holistic agenda in which the post-resurrection Jesus was with His disciples early morning in the garden (John 20:1–18), in the upper room (20:19–23), with Thomas (20:24–29), and at the seashore (21:1–19). The authors provide the Resurrection Leadership model as an example of leadership training that embraces theological principles.

Thus, *Leadership in the Church for a People of Hope* is a precious resource which surveys the historical teachings of the church on leadership, as well as proposing a fresh New Testament-based model. The book does reflect the particular denominational traditions of the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church, and the Methodist Church, but with careful consideration, the leadership theories are transferable to other church structures. This book is therefore a valuable resource for those who study leadership, ecclesiology and mission, who apply such theological principles in local church ministries, and who humbly pray for the future of the Church in this religio-plural era.

David W. Kim,
New College, University of Edinburgh