

rupts and a point is reached at which the corruption is irreversible. However, God, in his goodness, values our libertarian freedom so highly that he will allow us to damn ourselves eternally. (Ch. 2).

Hall is at her best in her critique of Swinburne where she exposes significant problems in his account (Ch. 3). Although freewill defences of hell are popular today they are far more fragile than is often realised.

Having rejected freewill defences of hell Hall moves on to examine the work of John Hick (Ch. 4). She focuses on his earlier, more Christian, phase and outlines his case for Christian universalism. This grows out of a foundational belief in God's universal love. Because not all are ready for salvation by the time they die Hick postulates many future lives in which people can continue the journey towards becoming children of God. Hell, for Hick, would be the ultimate failure by God to achieve his purposes. Scripture, thinks Hick, teaches both universalism and eternal hell but the universalism is more in accord with its central message. Hick's wholly inadequate discussion of biblical teaching cannot but send a shiver down any evangelical spine. Hall, whilst recognising inadequacies in Hick's argument, is largely sympathetic in her evaluation of Hick and defends him against various critics (Ch. 5).

Finally Hall sets out her own version of Christian universalism. God loves and desires to save all and freedom is no impediment to the achievement of this goal. Hall claims that she believes in compatibilist and not libertarian freedom. However, it is here that one of my main criticisms of the book lies. Hall objects to Swinburne's libertarian account of freedom and embraces a modified version of what she sees as Hick's compatibilism. The main difference between the two accounts of freedom is that compatibilists see human freedom as compatible with determinism whilst libertarians do not. But that would make both Swinburne and Hick libertarians and *it would also make Hall a libertarian* because she clearly believes that determinism is incompatible with the human freedom we possess. This confusion runs throughout the book and is further shown by the central role she gives to middle knowledge in making freedom and providence compatible. Hall uses it to argue that our freedom is compatible with universalism. That may well be so but middle knowledge is unnecessary if one is a compatibilist because God could save everyone without compromising freedom anyway. Thus I think that when Hall says that she is a 'compatibilist' she uses the term in an idiosyncratic way – what she means is that God has created all people with a desire to love him that will *strongly influence* (though not determine) the choices we make when we encounter God after death. At some point in the life (or afterlife) of each individual they will God 'face to face'. This will induce remorse and will lead people to embrace fulfilment of their humanity in a relationship with Yahweh through Christ. Hall thinks that universalism is compatible with Scripture.

There is much useful material in this book for those

interested in the topics under discussion and some helpful insights in the interaction with Swinburne and Hick. Her final position is not without merit, yet there remains a serious theological weakness in her account of final judgement. For Hall final judgement is about suffering 'shame and remorse' and 'judging ourselves' when we encounter God 'face to face' and enter into salvation (p. 208). But this sounds very unlike the consistent accounts of last judgement found in the Bible and the Christian tradition. For that reason Hall's account cannot be accepted as it stands.

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Church Leaders Handbook

Harold Rowdon (ed.)

Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002, published for Partnership.
xxiii + 390 pp. p/b, £14.99, ISBN 0-900128-26-7

SUMMARY

The present volume is a helpful resource for church leaders. Its background and perspective is that of the Open Brethren Movement in Britain. Its fifty-one contributions survey issues of church leadership, church activities, church management, pastoral matters and legal, financial and practical issues. It is of interest to lay-leaders and ministers of other denominations as well, especially with its refreshing and challenging absence of an assumption of the pre-dominance of full-time ordained ministry. It provides insight into the current state and character of one section of the British Brethren movement.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band ist eine hilfreiche Arbeitshilfe für Gemeindeführer. Sein Hintergrund und seine Perspektive ist die der offenen Brüderbewegung in Großbritannien. Seine einundfünfzig Beiträge untersuchen Sachfragen zur Leiterschaft einer Gemeinde, zu Gemeindeaktivitäten, zu Gemeindeführung, zu pastoralen sowie juristischen, finanziellen und praktischen Angelegenheiten. Es ist auch für Laien in Leitungsverantwortung und Pastoren anderer Denominationen von Interesse, besonders im Hinblick auf die erfrischende und herausfordernde Abwesenheit der Annahme der Vorherrschaft des vollzeitlichen, ordinierten Dienstes. Das Buch bietet Einsicht in die gegenwärtige Situation und den Charakter eines Teiles der britischen Brüderbewegung.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici un livre utile pour les responsables d'Église. Il est rédigé dans le contexte du mouvement des Frères Larges en Grande Bretagne. En cinquante et un essais sont abordées des questions de direction d'Église, d'activités d'Église, de ministère pastoral et divers aspects légaux, financiers et pratiques. Il intéressera les responsables laïques et les pasteurs d'autres dénominations. On notera en particulier l'absence de toute idée préconçue selon

laquelle le ministère pastoral à plein temps devrait prédominer et ceci donne à réfléchir. L'ouvrage permet aussi de mieux connaître la physionomie et la condition actuelle de l'une des composantes du mouvement des Frères en Grande Bretagne.

* * * *

There have been many handbooks for ministers in the various denominations, the most famous perhaps still being Richard Baxter's (1615-91) *The Reformed Pastor* (1656). There have been countless, often small, booklets for elders and office-bearers in various denominations, particularly in the Reformed tradition (for an evangelical contribution cf. e.g. *The Eldership: A Training Manual*; Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997, 62 pp.). And there have been a few specialised more comprehensive studies on elders and eldership in the NT and in today's churches (e.g. R. A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, Studies of the NT and Its World; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994; A. D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers*, First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids, Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000; cf. my review in *EQ* 75, 2003, 282-86; A. Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*; Littleton: Lewis & Roth, 1995).

The first category mentioned won't do for the Brethren movement as they do not have and usually do not want to have ministers for their congregations. The second category mentioned above often presupposes a minister in the church and describes the role of the elders in relation to full-time ordained ministry. The third category of studies often deals aptly with issues of eldership and at times church leadership but leaves untouched a lot of the crucial issues all church leaders are faced with. To address this need *Partnership: Serving and encouraging local churches*, a ministry within the British Open Brethren (cf. www.partnershipuk.org, including links to *Partnership* publications) tradition has produced this comprehensive, helpful guide. This *Church Leaders Handbook* addresses primarily the concerns, needs and convictions of the (Open) Brethren movement, but it will also be of good use in many other denominations.

The volume opens with a foreword by I. Coffey (ix-xi; "I am not alone in saying 'Thank God for the Brethren!' – for the debt owed by the wider church to this small but influential group is enormous. ... many men who have gone on to become outstanding preachers and Bible teachers first cut their teeth in Brethren assemblies. I have often wondered how a branch of the church can produce so many gifted people yet somehow fail to retain them all") and an introduction by A. Jamieson, outlining the development of the volume. This is followed by a presentation of the forty-four authors (ten of the Brethren actually being sisters!) of the fifty-one contributions.

The volume consists of five parts. *Part one* addresses "Church Leadership" (2-36; on this subject cf. also the

Partnership publication by N. Summerton, *A Noble Task: Eldership and Ministry in the Local Church*, rev. ed.; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994; cf. my review in *EJT* 6, 1997, 73f). H. Rowdon writes on "Leadership structures", J. Baigent on "Leadership: roles, tasks, qualifications and styles" (with two balanced pages on the issue of female leadership presenting the traditional, the equality and the favoured complementary view), J. Lamb on "The authority of leaders" and D. Clarkson on "Identifying and training new leaders". While briefly addressed in the other essays (e.g. on pp. 7f), there is no separate article on the issue of full-time-ministry (on this cf. *Partnership's* volume edited by A. Batchelor, *Don't Muzzle the Ox: Full-time Ministry in Local Churches*; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997, 100 pp. ISBN 0-900128-19-4). True to Brethren perspective, church leadership is not necessarily linked to full-time ministry.

Part two is devoted to "Church activities" (38-156) and contains A. Naismith and P. Cousins on "Providing balanced teaching" (expository preaching, teaching from the OT, teaching doctrine, ethical teaching, doctrinally balanced teaching and teaching by group Bible study); P. Cousins on "Teaching" (45-51; a contribution which does not appear on the table of contents on p. v); A. Noble, "The place of preaching", B. Mills, "Stimulating corporate prayer"; J. Baigent, "Baptism" (65-75; a survey of the NT evidence and pastoral and practical issues like: Who may be baptised? When should people be baptised? Is baptism essential for church membership? How should people be baptised? including notes for a baptismal service) and K. Barnard on "The Lord's Supper". Barnard concludes on this Brethren *proprium* (81):

For over 150 years, churches of our background, though sometimes petty and restrictive, quoting 'New Testament Principles' as a kind of Corban, have succeeded in holding together the centrality of the Lord's Supper in worship with the priesthood of all believers. If we look afresh into our Bibles, we shall find the same principles, but the Lord Jesus will guide us into new expressions of our worship around this table, which will continue to honour him in a new generation.

Further articles are by N. Summerton, "Worship" (including some guidelines on leading services; though not a Brethren favourite, this could have been a contribution of its own); D. Bridge, "Discovering and using spiritual gifts" (I missed M. Turner's *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts Then and Now* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996] in the "Further reading" for this subject); M. Donald, "The place of music"; G. Poland, "Small groups"; A. Simmons, "Evangelism in a post-modern world"; D. Palmer, "Church-based evangelism"; F. Beckett, "Serving the community"; B. Baigent, "Stimulating involvement in world mission" and P. Maiden, "Commendation for Service" (preparation for short-term work, for periods of a year or for long-term service). There is no separate

essay on the publicity of a church, i.e. how to use news letters, the local press and radio station or the internet.

Part four deals with "Church management" (158-217). This includes A. Purss on "Church membership" (beginning with the Brethren question "Is formal membership of the local church a human invention of a biblical concept? followed by a fine outline of the process of becoming a formal member in the local church), D. Bridge on "Church discipline", M. Thomas on "Vision building and goal setting", P. Godfrey on "Handling differences and managing change". P. Poland writes on "Handling growth", R. Rowe on "Reversing decline", S. Jamieson on "Knowing when to close" (197-200, a hard question boldly addressed!), P. Sands on theological and practical issues in "Planting a new church" and B. Dickson on "Inter-church activities" (including a directory of useful addresses). There is no separate contribution on the unity of the local church (including the overcoming of divisions, theological or pneumatological differences or the healing of a church split).

"Pastoral matters" are discussed in *part four* (220-51), namely P. Cousins, "Encouraging godly living", G. Purdie, "General principles of pastoral care"; M. Sinclair, "Pastoral care of men", J. Short, "Pastoral care of women", C. Summerton and D. Black, "Pastoral care of young people" (including a helpful self-evaluation schedule), P. Kimber, "Pastoral care of children" (250-54, surprisingly the whole issue of child abuse is not addressed), J. Redfern, "Pastoral care of leaders and their wives (255-58, a often neglected topic and practice and treated too briefly in a handbook directed at church leaders!)", B. Gilmour, "Pastoral care of older people", D. and J. Short "Home visiting"; P. Summerton, "Pastoral care of the ill and dying" (with excellent discussion of pre-natal death, stillbirth, cot deaths, etc.); B. Tripney, "The funeral service" (good guidelines for the pre-funeral visit, the actual service and the committal); M. Ford, "Bereavement counselling"; R. Blacker, "Depression" (286-90, I wonder if a general survey of mental problems and the challenge they pose for pastoral counselling might have been more helpful; there is no separate contribution on the value and dangers of psychotherapy in counselling); B. Tripney, "Marriage preparation" (providing a practical outline for four sessions); G. and E. West, "The marriage service"; T. Hobbs and E. Pratt, "Marriage enrichment" (313-26, by two male authors – it would have been helpful to also have the perspective of a spouse); D. Short, "Divorce and remarriage" (327-34; cf. on this thorny and tragic subject the recent contributions of D. Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remar-*

riage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context; Grand Rapids, Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2002 and *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church: Biblical Solutions for Pastoral Realities*; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003, also available online at www.divorce-remarriage.com); D. Short on "Homosexuality" (cf. also the excellent evangelical treatment in R. A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001; cf. my forthcoming review in *EQ*). K. Tondeur writes on counselling regarding "Wealth, poverty and debt" and G. Purdie on "Addiction" (348-51; too short in view of the complexity of the subject and the variety of addictions which require different approaches).

The *fifth part* covers legal, financial and practical issues (354-77). G. West writes on "Trusts and Trusteeship", on "Church accounts" and comprehensively on "Church premises", while H. Walker contributes a survey of "Social care legislation". The volume closes with an eleven page subject index, allowing its use as a reference tool (while there is a curious picture of a foot-washing on the front-cover, foot-washing does not appear in the index).

Each contribution ends with a recommendation of select titles for further reading. Some suggestions are rather traditional, in other sections references are made to Willow Creek and Saddleback.

Needless to say that not all elders and (all types of) assemblies (and other Christians) will agree with all the positions taken here on disputed issues, though there is a tremendous amount to learn. This book has great potential to guide all church leaders, to inspire and also to challenge them to rethinking and to action. As it broadens their horizon, this is also a stimulating volume for church leaders from other traditions and from other countries.

As this is not a volume written by professors of practical theology, by ministers (while many of the contributors are engaged in some form of full-time ministry few of them have formal theological training) or by the ministerial committee of a denominational synod it reflects the viewpoints and experiences of those actually doing the work and of those simply considered lay-people elsewhere. Many a denomination (and its ministers!) would be greatly enriched by listening carefully to them. At the same time this handbook offers a good insight into the present state and character of – at least a section of – the British Brethren movement today, holding on to its basic convictions while having abandoned some peculiarities of the past.

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