

*A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership*  
(Library of New Testament Studies)

Andrew D. Clarke

Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2007, 224 pp., £65.00, hb,  
ISBN 978-0-567-04560-7

SUMMARY

While always paying close attention to the social context of the early Pauline communities, this book collates Paul's fundamental teachings on church leadership. The author begins with a detailed discussion of theological method and modern hermeneutics. The book then shifts to define and differentiate between the titles used for leaders in the Pauline literature, primarily the roles of overseers, elders, and deacons. Clarke then proceeds to address the hierarchical status of church leaders in relation to their congregations and evaluates Paul's exercise of apostolic power in light of modern social theory. Finally, the author surveys the fundamental tasks of leaders before examining the necessary tools for ministry. Clarke's theological analysis of Pauline leadership is recommended for anybody interested in the topic.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch trägt die grundlegenden paulinischen Lehren über die Leitung der Kirche zusammen und achtet dabei immer auf den sozialen Kontext der frühen paulinischen Gemeinden. Der Autor beginnt mit einer detaillierten Diskussion der theologischen Methoden und moderner Hermeneutik. Das Buch wendet sich dann der Definition und Unterscheidung von Titeln zu, die in der paulinischen Literatur für Leiter verwendet werden. Hauptsächlich werden die Rollen der Aufseher, Ältesten und Diakone angeschaut. Clark widmet sich dann dem hierarchischen Status der Kirchenleiter in Beziehung zu ihren Gemeinden und bewertet Paulus' eigene Ausübung apostolischer Macht im Lichte moderner Sozialtheorie. Abschließend gibt der Autor einen Überblick über die grundlegenden Aufgaben der Leiter, bevor er die für den Dienst notwendigen Werkzeuge begutachtet. Ich empfehle Clarkes theologische Analyse der Leiterschaft bei Paulus allen, die an dem Thema interessiert sind.

RÉSUMÉ

Tout en prêtant soigneusement attention au contexte social des communautés pauliniennes primitives, ce livre rassemble les enseignements fondamentaux de Paul sur la direction d'Église. L'auteur commence par une présentation détaillée de la méthode théologique et de l'herméneutique moderne. Il définit et distingue ensuite les titres employés pour les dirigeants d'Église dans la littérature paulinienne, principalement les évêques, les anciens et les diacres. Il poursuit en s'intéressant au statut hiérarchique des dirigeants dans leurs communautés et porte une évaluation sur l'exercice par Paul de son autorité apostolique à la lumière des théories sociales modernes. Finalement, l'auteur fait un survol des tâches fondamentales des dirigeants puis considère les outils nécessaires à l'exercice du ministère. Son

analyse théologique se recommande pour quiconque s'intéresse au sujet de la direction d'Église.

\* \* \* \*

*A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership* fills an important gap in contemporary scholarship by collating the fundamental teachings of Paul on an important ecclesiological theme. This treatise could be regarded as the theological counterpart to the author's prior, historically reconstructive works concerning the influences and actual practices of leadership in the early Pauline communities. Here Clarke consummates those publications by putting into somewhat systemized fashion the leadership ideals Paul sought (and struggled) to implement in his churches.

Chapters 1 and 2 frame the study by establishing its limits and laying the methodological groundwork for the chapters to follow. The scope of the data, as revealed in chapter 1, is particularly interesting considering the contemporary climate of Pauline studies. Although Clarke never proposes that Paul wrote all of the epistles attributed to him, he openly consults all thirteen explaining that the ecclesiological divergences often cited between the earlier and later epistles are not wide enough to eliminate the latter from consideration in this analysis. Chapter 2 then enters into a discussion of modern hermeneutics in order to argue for the viability of the present study.

Chapter 3 commences the body of the research by defining and differentiating between various *titles* used for leaders in the Pauline literature. Clarke pays closest attention to the roles of overseer, elder, and deacon. Based on Tit 1:5-7 and 1 Tim 5, he argues that overseers and elders were *not* synonymous terms. Rather, overseers were heads of households who individually led, managed, and taught house-churches, while elders formed a local body of leaders consisting of overseers and those additionally appointed to make decisions on behalf of a Christian community. Deacons then assisted overseers in the leadership of house-churches, though not necessarily in a servile manner as often assumed.

Chapter 4 examines the *status* of leaders within the Pauline communities. Clarke envisages a 'complex hierarchy of ranks' in these communities which is indicated by Paul's use of official titles and instructions to recognize and submit to leaders. Clarke then spends sufficient time rebutting the arguments in support of an egalitarian model of leadership before closing the chapter with a segment pertaining to 'servant leadership'.

Chapter 5 explores and evaluates Paul's exercise of *power* within his churches. Here Clarke enters into a complex discussion with modern social theorists regarding the nature of power. Clarke's primary goal, in addition to identifying how Paul exercised his apostolic power, is to defend Paul's method of persuasion. Whereas Elizabeth Castelli and other critics accuse Paul of abusing his power, Clarke maintains that Paul's references to his apostolic authority were intended to counter the claims of his opponents and protect his ministry.

Chapter 6 surveys the fundamental *tasks* performed by leaders. In recognizing the primary objective of leaders as 'building up' the church, Clarke draws upon two Pauline church metaphors suggestive of their duties. First, the church is a 'body' with many parts and, although some parts are more honorable than others, none are dispensable. Paul's early leaders were therefore responsible for recognizing and honoring all members of the church, as well as encouraging them to contribute to corporate up-building. The second metaphor is the 'household'. As fathers of God's household, Paul's leaders provided paternal guidance characterized by love; yet as slaves, they served the church sacrificially. Clarke also casts leaders as teachers who were responsible for instructing the church.

Chapter 7 examines the essential *tools* Paul prescribed for leading churches. Clarke specifically highlights two: *rhetoric* and *imitation*. Despite Paul's criticisms of rhetoric, Clarke asserts that the apostle, who was fully competent in the art of persuasion, frequently applied rhetoric to elicit emotional responses in his audiences. Furthermore, Paul's imitation motif served as an important instrument to illustrate Christian living. Thus, leaders were expected to exemplify the faith personally as they in turn emulated the life of Christ.

Clarke's compilation of Pauline leadership principles is an excellent contribution in many ways. His awareness of significant tensions within both the Pauline literature and contemporary scholarship deeply informs his theological queries. Moreover, Clarke's expertise in NT social history surfaces throughout as he illuminates many details pertaining to the original context of Paul's letters. Finally, Clarke's analyses of concepts such as power, rhetoric, and imitation demonstrate his attentiveness to the inner workings of the apostle, which have previously been overlooked in shallower theologies. Clarke's treatment, however, is by no means exhaustive. Certainly, more could have been said concerning both the role of Scripture as the leader's primary tool for directing and protecting the church, and Paul's teaching on the relationship between Scripture and authority. Clarke's theses might have also been clearer had he differentiated more consistently between apostolic and non-apostolic leadership privileges and responsibilities. Nevertheless, Clarke has produced an erudite and thought-provoking volume which will be a tremendous resource for any scholar, pastor, or student interested in this topic.

*John K. Goodrich, Durham, England*

## *Jesus: A Question of Identity*

J. L. Houlden

London/New York: Continuum, 2006, vii + 136pp.,  
\$19.95, pb, ISBN: 9780826489418.

### SUMMARY

In this book, Leslie Houlden weaves together history, biblical studies, theology and apologetics in an effort to explore what we can know about Jesus. He does not shy away from some of the hard questions and tensions involved in such a quest, but with humility and a non-technical style invites us to engage seriously with the question of Jesus' identity both as a historical figure and as the object of faith.

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch bringt Leslie Houlden Geschichtswissenschaft, Bibelwissenschaft, Theologie und Apologetik im Hinblick auf die Untersuchung dessen zusammen, was wir von Jesus wissen können. Er drückt sich nicht vor einigen der schwierigen Fragen und Spannungen, die so eine Suche beinhaltet. Mit Demut und in verständlicher Sprache lädt er uns ein, uns ernsthaft mit der Frage nach der Identität Jesu sowohl als historischer Figur als auch als Gegenstand des Glaubens zu befassen.

### RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce livre, Leslie Houlden explore ce que nous pouvons savoir de Jésus à l'aide de diverses approches, historique, biblique, théologique et apologetique. Il ne recule pas devant certaines des questions difficiles et des tensions que peut rencontrer une telle quête, mais, avec humilité et sans adopter un style technique, il nous invite à considérer sérieusement la question de l'identité de Jésus à la fois comme une figure historique et comme l'objet de la foi.

\* \* \* \*

At a time when the print run of new books seems to expire almost while the ink is still drying on the copies as they first arrive on the shelf, any volume that is still being republished fourteen years after its initial appearance probably ought to deservedly attract our attention.

In this primer, which grew out of lectures given at King's College, University of London, J. Leslie Houlden, Emeritus Professor of Theology at King's College, cogently interweaves together history, biblical studies, theology and apologetics in an effort to explore what we can know about Jesus. While not shying away from some of the perennial 'problems' and tensions involved in such a quest, Houlden, with eloquence, humility and non-technical style, invites his readers to engage seriously with the question of Jesus' identity, not only as a Galilean carpenter's son, but as God's; as not merely the object of cool enquiry but as the subject and centre of living faith. He asks: 'What are we now to make of Jesus, both as a historical figure and as involved with belief?' (pp. 8-9).

Houlden is acutely aware that with the history of Jesus, both as recorded in the centuries following his