

**BOOK REVIEW**

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

*Two valuable resources are reviewed by John Baigent*

**LEARNING TO LEAD: Next Generation**

By David Clarkson & Stephen McQuoid

(OPAL Trust, 2013) ISBN 978-1-907098-15-4

182 pages. Obtainable from the GLO Bookshop, Motherwell:

Single book £6.99 + £1.00 p&p; single CD-ROM £4.99 + £1.00 p&p.

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Over a period of several years, David Clarkson, working at Tilsley College, Motherwell, Scotland, has been designing, developing and running a very effective leadership training course. Now we have the ripe fruits of all his hard work in the form of a CD-ROM, supplemented by a new book largely written with the help of Stephen McQuoid, General Director of Gospel Literature Outreach (UK and Europe).

The CD-ROM is intended primarily to enable the existing leaders of a church (or a group of churches in one area) to develop and train future leaders—not just ‘elders’ but all kinds of leaders of activities in the local church. On the assumption that many aspiring leaders are busy people, the course covers just five sessions of two hours each. It can also be used as a self-help course by any committed individual. (Incidentally, I was unable to open the CD-ROM on my MacBook, but found that if I opened it on a PC and then emailed the separate sessions as attachments to myself, my Mac could read them.)

After a general introduction to the course, there is a very important and valuable set of guidelines on teaching and training. This is vital for anyone who intends to train others and does not have a grasp of educational principles. The five main sessions are (my summary) as follows: (1) Leadership & Mentoring; (2) Vision & Goals; (3) Working in Teams; (4) Dealing with Conflict; (5) Handling Change. It is important to notice that the provision of an on-going mentoring relationship for each student is an integral part of this course. Throughout, reference is made to relevant biblical passages (my only gripe is that the authors perpetuate the misuse of Proverbs 29:18 which in the KJV seems to support the modern idea of ‘vision’ – perhaps an illustration of the dangers of proof-texting!).

Each unit contains the following materials: (a) teacher notes outlining the programme for the session with advice on content and methodology; (b) a PowerPoint presentation relating to the programme; and (c) a set of notes for students. The slides are not only well-designed and easy to follow but they can also be adapted to suit the teacher.

Both the CD-ROM and the book are better taken together, but they can be used independently. The book has been specifically written for this project and contains a lot of new material. The stories and examples used to illustrate particular points are based on the writers’ personal experiences and form an interesting and helpful part of the book. The main chapters cover similar topics to those on the CD-ROM course, but with additional discussion of leadership issues. Each chapter closes with questions for reflection. The Appendix provides a very valuable Mentoring Guide with suggestions and questions for 12 sessions.

The future life and health of our churches will depend (under God) very largely on the quality of their leaders. These two resources could contribute to the provision of good, godly people, well equipped to lead their church into its next phase. But this will happen only if the present leaders make use of materials like these and put the training of leaders as a priority. This course is particularly suitable for people in the kind of churches linked with Partnership: I cannot recommend it too highly.

It should be obvious, however, that a course like this is only a beginning. It needs to be followed by courses in such areas as biblical interpretation, biblical and systematic theology, preaching and teaching, and pastoral care. GLO, OPAL Trust and Partnership are discussing an extension on these lines.

*NB. More information about this course and the services provided by Tilsley College may be obtained from:* Allison Hill, GLO Centre, 78 Muir Street, Motherwell, ML1 1BN, Scotland, or atahill@glo-europe.org