

and argument gives this book a bit of a “lighter” tone.

This book is first and foremost relevant for all those who are familiar with apologetics. It is not written as an introduction to apologetics, so I presume that mostly it would be read by those who are willing to expand their knowledge of Christian apologetics. Furthermore, in the book we can find an author’s discussion about the “philosophy of literature and arts” which adds to the value of this book. For students, this book will probably be listed as secondary literature in their syllabi, but nevertheless a valuable source for their study.

Ervin Budiselić

Tom Houston

### **My Story with Governance**

Oxford, UK, Regnum Books International, 2014, 106 p.

The book, “My Story with Governance,” by the author Tom Houston, analyzes biblically the concept of governance in a very simple and reader-friendly way. The basic thesis of the book is to explore the importance of governance while subjecting it to thorough and systematic Biblical reflection. In what could be described as a homiletical style of writing, the author intertwines the central premise with his personal life experience, Biblical encounters, and governance situations; and effectively drives the argument to closure with the analyses of Jesus’ church from the perspective of Paul and Peter, in comparison to the governance failures in the nation of Israel. Governance is not a term we can encounter frequently in everyday colloquial church speech, despite the fact that the New Testament discourse often mentions governors. The author of this book is convinced that a closer insight into this topic in the light of God’s Word can be a useful tool in Christian leadership.

The author of this book, Tom Houston, served as a pastor in several churches in Europe and Africa, and also in leadership positions of a few larger, widely known Christian organizations. His broad and practical experience in the field of Christian leadership, in both church and parachurch environments, adds everyday perspective to the Biblical message on governance, and represents a wide range of applicable experiences. The publisher of this book is Regnum Books International, a publishing house under the wing of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, which has undoubtedly recognized the importance of addressing efficient and Biblically based concepts of governance, as well as the possible implications they could have in understanding and reflecting on Christian leadership.

In the first chapter of the book, the author gives a short overview of his ex-

perience in different positions that required and shaped his understanding of practical governance and leadership; varying from pastoral ministries which he performed in England and Africa; through academic postings which he held in different institutions; and also in executive roles in committees of large Christian organizations. Each of these positions required the author to possess governance skills, and each position carried with itself different challenges and problems driven by the conditions and leadership type. The author offers his insight and short review of his own encounter with these different governance models. This chapter offers the presentation of different governance models in local organizations, as well as global enterprises whose influence and mission field crosses continental borders. This chapter also appears useful as a reference of the author's expertise in the field, given his experience in the field of governance.

In the first part of the second chapter, in which the book takes a strong turn into Biblical reflection, Houston deals with the sons of Zebedee (the brothers John and James), and a well-known event in which their mother intervenes with Jesus to secure her sons the best possible positions in the coming kingdom. The event described is rich with important lessons in governance and the author uses it to bring the reader closer to the trains of thought and expectations of the main characters. He uses this Biblical event to warn of obstacles in familial ties and the effect it has on the Kingdom of God. Other, often unexplored, topics in this chapter include potential and rivalry, while the chapter ends with clear and unequivocal confirmation of the importance of servant leadership, which Houston depicts through the story of Moses.

The third chapter of the book is the climax of the author's argument; it refers to the church from Jesus' perspective. Houston here introduces an interesting presumption that Jesus' "church talk" in Matthew 16 is in fact the alternative to the failed governance that the nation of Israel displayed, and which consequently drove them to a defeated and subordinate state in which they find themselves in that moment of time. Houston presents Jesus' idea of a personal model of church, based on the relationship of its members, which is the reason He mentions Peter as the bearer of this personal element, while the term church brings a collective and institutional element that resounds with Israel as God's people. Jesus sets these foundations and the apostles Paul and Peter later shed more light on the idea. Houston proceeds with the analysis of "Jesus' kind of church" through the writings of Peter, and ideas such as one nation, reconciliation, inheritance, and the priesthood of all believers. He then continues in the same tone through Paul's experience of "Jesus' kind of church" in illustrations such as one Body with many members that need each other, with many gifts, and a body that characterizes growth. This whole chapter is imbued with the author's personal experiences, encounters, and anecdotes that additionally illustrate and follow the Biblical ar-

gument and the author's thesis.

In the final chapter Houston analyzes the reasons of the failure of Judah and Israel as nations, in comparison to the Church in reflection to Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem in the 19th chapter of Luke's Gospel, with special emphasis on the words, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!" The author's thesis is that there are specific reasons Israel and Judah failed as nations and that analyzing these reasons can give concrete guidelines and warnings of possible problems in governance. The whole chapter is a comprehensive 4-point analysis of these main reasons to which the author is referring. They are: Play-Acting Religion, Economic Selfishness, Unavailable Justice, and finally, Exclusive Ethnicity. Through these four elements the author argues the fall of Israel, and draws a parallel with the Church today, while examining similar questions and problems the Body of Christ faces today. In the twofold appendix Houston adds a short Biblical analysis of the word "leader," with all Biblical synonyms, and also the chronological overview of his experience in governance and management.

The book, "My Story with Governance," easily follows the flow of the author's thesis, and is an interesting read for anyone in a position of church or secular leadership, as well as for those simply interested in an applicable, lively, and Biblical approach to this important topic. Houston examines Jesus' important lessons on governance and leadership in a very interesting and systematic way, through encounters and interaction with the disciples, and practically connects these elements to the needs of the Church today. The book is written in a very concise, populist style that leans heavily on Biblical discourse, as well as the life experience of the author in the field of leadership. As such, this book is a good investment of time for anyone looking to spend a quality afternoon reflecting on Christ's Church, leadership, and governance.

Filip Grujić