

# churches to lead and good news to share

Leadership and CPAS go back a long way. Historically you'll find it in our roots. When CPAS was founded in 1836 it provided grants to help fund gospel workers and church leaders in the growing urban areas of England.

Over the decades CPAS has invested in leadership, both existing and emerging, through its resources, training, patronage, holiday camps and consultancy. And now we have sharpened our focus on leadership around a series of strategic aims. But why? Why is an evangelical Anglican mission agency focused on leadership?

Leadership is a part of life. On one level anyone who exercises influence over another individual is exercising leadership, for good or bad. At another level we offer people positions of leadership, more formally recognising their role of influence over others. And the Church is no different. Whether we think of the threefold ministry of deacon, presbyter and bishop captured in the New Testament (and brilliantly explored in Steve Croft's book *Ministry in Three Dimensions*), or the practical realities of leadership exercised in a

local church through minister, church wardens, youth leaders and so on, there is no denying the existence of leadership. Of course, some of it will be good, some poor. But that conversation is for another time. The question I want to ask is this: for what purpose? What is leadership in the Bible all about?

Thankfully the answer is clear. Biblical leadership is not about the leader. It is not meant to be self-serving, self-glorifying, self-promoting. It is about the priorities of the king and his kingdom. In the Old Testament the people of God are constantly ushered back into relationship with God not simply that they might be right with him, but because they are called to be a blessing to the nations. This is the heart of the covenant agreement between God and his people. God loves his world and chooses a people to represent his love to the world. He chooses a leader to take the people back to God when they have once again wandered from his purposes and priorities.



In the New Testament Jesus models this commitment to the world in both his teaching ('For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' Mark 10:45) and his actions (his revolutionary acceptance of the marginalised, ostracised, disadvantaged). He models a type of leadership that was unique amongst his contemporaries (see Andrew Watson, *The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus*), and this leadership is exercised so others may come to know God.

The early church got it. They were clear that the church existed to fulfil the great commandment and the great commission (Acts 2:42-47).

As the church grew they identified leaders to facilitate growth (Acts 7). Therefore the spiritual gift of leadership referred to in Romans 12:8 is given to enable the body to be all that God wants it to be, an outpost of the kingdom committed to reaching those who don't know Christ.

This is church leadership: serving the body of Christ to help it serve the purposes of the king and the priorities of the kingdom. Here at CPAS our interest isn't in leadership for its own ends. Our mission is to help people hear and discover the good news about Jesus. And all the research shows that leadership is a key to that happening in churches. Leaders growing in Christ-likeness, competent to lead, with a commitment to reaching those who as yet don't know Christ. Leaders who will equip God's people to show and share the faith in their daily lives. Bible-centred, Spirit-filled, mission-focused leaders.

In a world where leadership is discredited and where evangelism is often thought of as inappropriate, our evangelical forebears encourage us not to lose our nerve. There is good news to share and there are churches to lead. The two are inextricably linked. A group of evangelical Christians in 1836 believed that so passionately they established CPAS. The baton is now handed to the Church of our day. May we not be found wanting.

**James Lawrence**  
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**Further Reading:**

Steve Croft *Ministry in Three Dimensions: A Theological Foundation for Local Church Leadership* Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd (1999)

Andrew Watson *The Fourfold Leadership of Jesus* Bible Reading Fellowship (2008)