

James Lawrence

who's got the map?

There are so many resources on the topic of 'discerning direction' that it's easy to succumb to 'choice paralysis'. To complicate matters, many of them vary in their definitions of 'vision' and in their understanding of how to discern it. With a wise warning on the importance of 'agreeing terms, James Lawrence offers a personal selection of key titles.

Books

The Because Approach,

Andrew Baughen, (Paternoster).

'*The Because Approach* is a series of step-by-step resources that study groups and individuals can use to develop clear biblical, contextual and intentional plans for their churches.' This complete guide to strategy comes from a former management consultant who is now a vicar of a church in central London.

Memories, Hopes and Conversations

– *Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change*,

Mark Lau Branson, (The Alban Institute).

'Appreciative inquiry' is an approach to discerning direction based on story telling, asking 'good' questions, and learning from the past. Written from an American perspective, this is one of the clearest introductions to 'appreciative inquiry' on the market. It also tells the story of how the approach worked in a particular church.

Advanced Strategic Planning,

Aubrey Malphurs, (Baker).

This offers a highly programmatic approach with great insights and including useful questionnaires. Reading this book calls for perseverance, but it repays the effort – don't miss the gems that it contains.

Growing Leaders, James Lawrence,

(CPAS/BRF) chapter 10.

Chapter 10 contains the origins of the approach outlined on pages 4-5 of this issue of CL.

Courageous Leadership,

Bill Hybels, (Zondervan).

Chapters 2-3 show Hybels on top form, passionate about gaining and implementing vision. The book includes thoughtful insights on how to communicate a vision.



Whenever possible, please support your local Christian bookshop.



James Lawrence is director of the CPAS development team and of the *Arrow Leadership Programme*.

Relational Leadership – a Biblical Model for Leadership and Service,
Walter Wright, (Paternoster).

Using his organisational experience, Wright gives a ten-step approach, including key questions to help define vision. Wright ‘asserts that leadership is not an assigned role, but a way of living that suffuses everything we do and are. Its goal is to empower others to contribute to achieving the mission of the organisations with which they are involved.’

Creative Church Leadership,

John Nelson, John Adair (editors), (Canterbury Press).

Elisabeth Welch contributes an excellent chapter on ‘vision rooted in God’.

Coming up Trumps,

Peter Brierley, (Authentic).

Brierley’s rather complex, technical approach offers four primary methods for discerning vision (‘horizon mission methodology’, ‘relating and delegating’, ‘vision building’, ‘military model’). Its great strength is that it introduces the reader to varied ways of thinking about vision discernment.

Leadership that Works,

Leith Anderson, (Bethany House).

Anderson takes a very down-to-earth approach, full of common sense. I liked this book for its simplicity and honesty. Scary statistic: 60% of discerned visions are never implemented!

Transforming Leadership,

Leighton Ford, (IVP).

In this extended study of Mark’s Gospel, Ford reflects (chapter 6) on the place of vision in Jesus’ ministry. He engages with the secular material on vision whilst reflecting theologically on Jesus, developing a biblical understanding of vision.

For more ideas and for live links to all the websites listed here, please check the *CL* subscribers’ website.

Practical guides

Healthy Churches Handbook,

Robert Warren, (CHP).

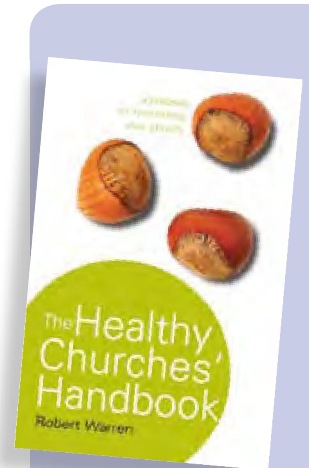
Developed from the Natural Church Development material, Warren uses methods that engage both left and right brain. The handbook includes everything you need to run the programme in a local church.

www.churchmaps.co.uk

A guide to mission action-planning within the Church of England, with theological reflection, resources and samples of what churches have done.

www.planware.org

A very ‘different’ website with materials from the business world on planning and direction. Helpful tools are available as free downloads.



Advice

CPAS has a team of regional leadership development advisers. Many churches have found practical benefit in having an external ‘facilitator’ to help them when they are working on ‘vision discernment’ – the presence of an experienced, impartial adviser can make all the difference. See page 3.

Some churches have members with highly relevant workplace experience in this field. They may be able to offer appropriate advice and support to church leaders.

Several independent consultants work with churches in this area. Two to recommend are:

- Bryn Hughes (www.church-matters.co.uk)
- John Truscott (www.john-truscott.co.uk).

Towards healthier churches

Turn to the back cover for news of a new ‘leadership audit’ resource from CPAS.

