



# SHAPING YOUR CHURCH FOR MISSION

## TOOLKIT

FOR USE IN THE DIOCESE OF COVENTRY



# Shaping your Church for Mission

## TOOLKIT



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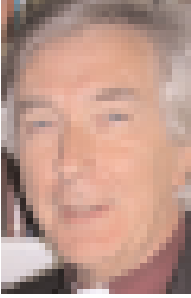
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# FOREWORD



## A letter from the Bishop

Like most organisations, the Church is expected to be clear about its core values. Without such clarity mission statements and strategies make little sense. Over the past year the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Synod have given some attention to this and have agreed on three priorities for our communal life:

- worshipping God,
- making new Christians and Disciples
- transforming communities

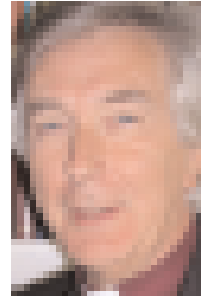
These priorities are about valuing God, valuing people and valuing society. The English word 'worship' points us to the idea of worth or value. God alone is worthy of our praise and adoration simply because of who he is, our creator, redeemer and friend. To invest our spiritual energies in those things that are not God is futile and ultimately idolatrous. It is, therefore, vitally important that the activity that we call public worship truly is God-centred and not merely a gathering of the like-minded who share certain cultural tastes in music and liturgy. Those charged with the conduct of public worship have a particularly awesome responsibility to be personally prepared and publicly competent in the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments.

A worshipping church is often a growing church.

If we are to value people then we must be prepared to share with individuals the good news that leads to a fully human experience, what Jesus called 'life in all its fullness'. Evangelism is not a specialist activity for the few. It is the humble sharing by all Christian people of the life of Jesus, classically described as one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. However, evangelism on its own is not enough.

# FOREWORD

## A letter from the Bishop



The command to 'go and make disciples' speaks of an ongoing process of lifelong learning so that people may become mature in Christ. The regular teaching ministry from the pulpit is vital but a short sermon is rarely enough to satisfy the deep needs of the heart and mind. Alpha courses are an excellent start but they only go so far. Even Lenten study groups can only scratch the surface. I believe we need a much more serious commitment to understanding our faith and to wrestling with some of the profound questions that discipleship in today's world raises. It is a great sadness to me that the recent round of central cuts has led to the loss of the adult learning officer. This post needs to be restored with some urgency.

To value communities implies that we take seriously the fact that God has called us to live together in society. To be involved in the transformation of communities will require us to measure the value systems by which we live against those of God's Kingdom, the kingdom of peace, justice and righteousness. Because politics is all about how we live together in society some political awareness and, indeed, action will always be on our agenda as Church. A gospel which has nothing to say to the poor and dispossessed can never be good news for the world since two thirds of humanity fall into that category. The ultimate vision of the New Testament is that our present power structures will one day become the Kingdom of God and of his Christ. We cannot be involved in God's transforming activity in society without meeting human need face to face in our neighbours.

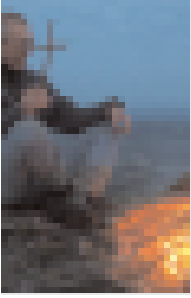
I commend this booklet most warmly to all churches in the diocese.

My hope is that it will stimulate reflection, encourage prayer and strengthen our corporate witness.

I look forward very much to learning of some of the outcomes of this process.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bishop [Name]', with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

# INTRODUCTION



## How to use the toolkit

'Shaping Your Church For Mission' was a report that was circulated to clergy and PCCs in the Summer of 2005.

In addition to some financial information, it contained a three-fold purpose statement declaring that the churches in the Diocese of Coventry are here to:

- Worship God
- Make new Christians and Disciples
- Transform Communities

'Shaping Your Church For Mission' also contained a list of eight questions that it is hoped parishes will answer in order to draw up a plan for the future. A booklet was to be produced in January 2006 in order to guide parishes through this process. This 'toolkit' is designed to do just that.

The Toolkit contains the following:

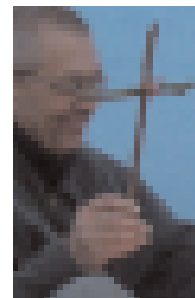
- A description of the 'Three Priorities' including some examples of good practice.
- A guide to the 'Eight Questions'
- Some additional material such as 'Growing Healthy Churches' and an introduction to a resource called 'Mission Possible' (including a DVD) which has been produced for the Diocese of Coventry by St Mary's Leamington.

The 'Toolkit' is meant to be comprehensive but not definitive. There are many more examples of good practice that could have been added and a wealth of other material that could have also been included. Much more information (including further examples of good practice) will be sent out in a weekly e-mail called 'Start the Week'. If you would like to receive this then please send an e-mail requesting it to [ruth.wagstaffe@covcofe.org](mailto:ruth.wagstaffe@covcofe.org)

If you have any other queries or would like to talk about any of the material contained in the 'Toolkit' then please contact Roger Morris on 024 7652 1326 or by e-mail at [roger.morris@covcofe.org](mailto:roger.morris@covcofe.org)

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Worship



**Worship lies at the heart of a missionary church, and to love and know God as Father, Son and Spirit is its chief inspiration and primary purpose.**

*Mission-shaped Church Report*

**It is, therefore, vitally important that the activity that we call public worship truly is God-centred and not merely a gathering of the like-minded who share certain cultural tastes in music and liturgy.**

*Bishop Colin*

The starting point for any discussion about the shape of mission and ministry in the church must start with God – whose mission and ministry it really is. The danger is that mission and ministry become seen as human endeavours and God is often sidelined.

The Church of England report 'Mission-shaped Church' describes worship as our 'chief inspiration and primary purpose'. During the preparations for the Swanwick Conference in 2005, Bishop Colin was often heard commenting that, in order to get a sense of what is God's vision for us and for our church, we first needed to renew our vision of God. It is in the context of worship that such a vision of God is renewed.

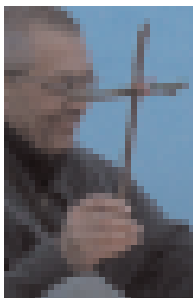
What is worship? Obviously it is giving God his worth, but it is worth exploring what that actually means in practice. Consider these insights from the book 'New Patterns for Worship':

"Worship is a door open in heaven. We lift up our hearts, listen in to what God is saying, join the angels and archangels and all the saints in heaven in praising God's eternal holiness. We are there and he is here."

"Worship is a door open to the inner depths of life. Suddenly, as we worship, there is wholeness, shalom, peace, as all the fragmented bits of our being are put into God's perspective. Things make sense, and there is something to hold on to which has hitherto seemed just beyond the grasp of our mind."

"Worship is a door open to the rhythms of life. Through festivals, simple rituals, a weekly rhythm, worship marking morning and evening, the whole of life, time and space is claimed for God and given back to him. In the worship he gives it to us again, to use for him, and we know he is concerned with our hopes and fears, politics and problems, families and finance."

# THE THREE PRIORITIES



## Worship

And finally, from 'New Patterns for Worship':

"Worship is a door to our hearts open in obedience to God. He commands us to worship in spirit and in truth. We respond to the overwhelming majesty of his beauty revealed in creation, to his overwhelming love and grace revealed in his word and in his Son. And as we worship, we are changed."

[Note: "New Patterns for Worship" is available in hardback from Church House Publishing but much of the material in the book is available on the Church of England website at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/>]

As our vision of God is renewed in worship, so we can begin to glimpse something of God's vision for us and for our church. This too will have a bearing on our worship which will eternally remain our 'chief inspiration and primary purpose.' Any Action Plan or Strategy that fails to include something about the improvement, enhancement or development of public worship is fundamentally flawed. Nothing will have a greater effect on the vibrancy of our churches than a revitalising of our public worship.

There is a group within the Diocese called 'Worship 4 Mission' (part of the Forum for Parish Development and Evangelism) and its members are willing to work with churches or groups of churches in order to help improve, enhance and develop their worshipping life. The contact for this group is Revd. Mark Beach, the Team Rector of Rugby and, himself, a well known trainer and writer in this field. Mark can be contacted on 01788 565609 or at [rector@rugbyteam.org.uk](mailto:rector@rugbyteam.org.uk)

You may also wish to contact the Coventry and Warwickshire Spirituality Group. The members of this group can offer all kinds of ideas and support as your church seeks to grow closer to God. The contact for this group is Mr David Westcott and he can be reached on 01789 414715 or at [fd@westcott.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:fd@westcott.fsnet.co.uk)

**Those charged with the conduct of public worship have a particularly awesome responsibility to be personally prepared and publicly competent in the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments.**

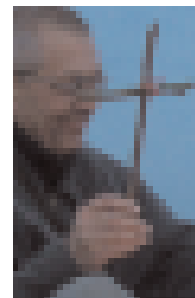
*Bishop Colin*

**Nothing will have a greater effect on the vibrancy of our churches than a revitalising of our public worship.**

*Roger Morris*

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Worship



### **St Andrew's Church Rugby**

<http://www.standrewrugby.org.uk/>

St Andrew's Rugby have worked on a statement of faith and practice that includes the statement:

"We Believe that our worship is a way of expressing and developing our relationship with God, each other and the world about us, through words, music and prayer, in the company of others."

They have also spent a considerable amount of time also working on the values and principles that underpin their worshipping life. The results of this can be seen in their imaginative and inspiring worship and in the impetus this have given to the church's mission. Members of St Andrew's now visit the shops and businesses in their community to ask if they have any requests for prayers. They then pray for these people at their daily Quiet Space.

As an expression of a kind of 'new monasticism', a group of members of St Andrew's have committed themselves to God in prayer, to each other for support and encouragement and to the church and their community in service and action. As a part of their commitment to God they meet each day and make space to be quiet with God in the beauty of holiness.

### **St Peter's Hampton Lucy**

**Revd. Sarah Edmunds 01789 840244**

The Church at Hampton Lucy has developed good links with the local Church of England Primary School. Their monthly Family Service is run jointly with the school. One of the members of staff helps the children to practice the hymns and songs during school time and then leads the congregational singing at the Family Service.

The schoolchildren are now bringing non-churchgoing parents to the service and an additional monthly service is being developed in order to help these new worshippers to grow as disciples.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES



## Worship

### **Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Studley** <http://www.studleychurch.org.uk/>

The Anglican Church at Studley (with Mappleborough Green) has gone for a multi-layered approach to worship. They offer a huge range of services and have trained and equipped a good number of people to help lead them. The availability of services (using a number of different locations) and the variety of styles offered have resulted in over 200 people actively participating in worship each week.

The services they offer include:

#### **HOLY COMMUNION - BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

A service without music, full of peace and stillness. It lasts about half an hour.

#### **HOLY COMMUNION – COMMON WORSHIP**

A balance of the traditional and modern, with a variety of music, lasting just over an hour.

#### **HOLY COMMUNION FOR ALL**

An informal service that involves all ages.

#### **ALL AGE SERVICE**

A short informal service that involves all ages.

#### **CHILDREN'S SERVICE**

A service full of activity, fun and learning for children.

#### **SONGS OF PRAISE**

A weekly service with well-known hymns. This service takes place at Osprey House Sheltered Housing Scheme.

#### **PRAISE THE LORD**

A monthly informal service with a large worship group and often a visiting speaker.

#### **CELTIC WORSHIP**

Celtic Worship up in the tower of Studley church on the second Tuesday of each month.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Making new Christians and Disciples



If we are to value people then we must be prepared to share with individuals the good news that leads to a fully human experience, what Jesus called 'life in all its fullness'. Evangelism is not a specialist activity for the few. It is the humble sharing by all Christian people of the life of Jesus.

*Bishop Colin*

Evangelism is the process by which people become disciples of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is about providing a place for people not just to explore the Christian faith, but to have an opportunity to make a decision to follow Jesus Christ as their saviour and redeemer - to welcome him into their lives and to say YES to God after recognising that God has said YES to them.

It is necessary to understand that coming to faith is a process or journey - with significant moments of recognition along that journey. The church and every one of its members need to ask the question "how can we accompany people on whatever stage of the Christian journey they are on and move them on gently and sensitively to the next step?"

Evangelism used to be thought of as looking like this:

**CONTACT**



**COMMITMENT**  
(CHURCH MEMBERSHIP)

Put simply, the task of evangelism involved proclamation of the gospel to those outside of the faith and an invitation for them to respond. But more and more people are describing becoming a Christian as being more like a journey than an event.

Between initial contact and commitment to Christ something else needs to happen. This is referred to as Nurture: it is the process whereby the Christian faith is explained and explored. The word nurture is often used with reference to young plants and saplings. This is a good analogy of understanding how, when helping small plants to grow, the plants need a great deal of care, attention and a good environment in order to prosper.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES



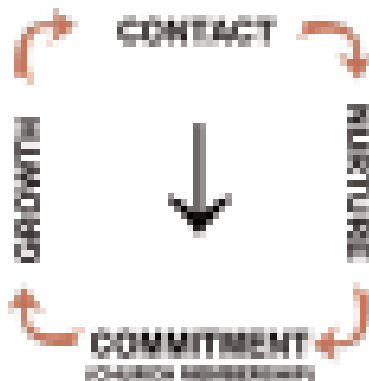
## Making new Christians and Disciples

Actually, evangelism looks like this:



Some people do still come to faith suddenly and dramatically and have wonderful stories to tell but, for the majority of people, the story is quite gentle and takes rather longer.

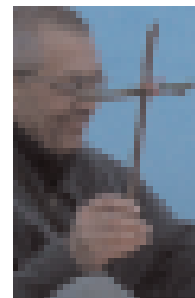
But becoming a Christian is not the end of the journey. It is the beginning. After commitment, people need to grow in their faith. The whole process therefore looks more like this:



The process of making new Christians and Disciples therefore involves all of the following:

- Making contact with people outside the worshipping life of the Church and beginning the process of sharing faith – turning seekers into fellow travellers.
- Encouraging those on the fringe of Church life to a deeper and personal commitment to Christ – turning fellow travellers into followers of Christ.

## Making new Christians and Disciples



- Deepening the faith of those who attend Church regularly - turning followers into disciples.
- Enabling those who are deeply committed to share their faith with others – turning disciples into witnesses

Evangelistic events that might begin the process of sharing faith might include the following:

### 1. Meetings for a particular constituency

Breakfasts, coffee mornings, meetings for Darts players, British Legion, Gardening clubs etc, etc. Breakfasts, lunches or teas/suppers/dinners for any constituencies where there is a natural bonding or fellowship.

### 2. Professional Meetings and Meals

For business people, for lawyers, dentists, doctors, teachers or other particular trades/professions. People can be drawn together for a meal and then addressed by someone relating the Christian faith to the particular situation of those involved. After this there can be a discussion and questions.

### 3. Home Meetings

These can be the key to local outreach; small meetings with a few friends in homes. These should not be confused with church organised house groups or Bible study groups.

### 4. The Occasional Offices

A thanksgiving for all those baptised in the church in the last five years; a service for those married with a renewal of marriage vows, and, as is commonplace within the diocese, a memorial service for all those bereaved within recent years.

### 5. Schools Work

School assemblies are good opportunities - especially if they serve the dual purpose of promoting an activity aimed at children. Senior school assemblies and lessons (including apologetics) should not be neglected.

### 6. Youth Events – Children's events

Holiday clubs, 'It's a knockout', concerts and film evenings can work well as part of a wider programme.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES



## Making new Christians and Disciples

### 7. Songs of Praise

A service of favourite hymns (which could be chosen by popular vote and introduced by people who explain what the hymn means to them) are very popular, work well in all traditions and can be surprisingly evangelistic.

### 8. Pub events

These can be very effective, with or without music and/or drama. Good relations need to be cultivated with the landlord. But in any case, meetings in a pub room draw people in.

### 9. Street Work

This can involve drama, music, street evangelism, questionnaires, prayer walking and other outside activities.

### 10. Civic, Guest, Family and Special Services

Any of these can provide opportunities for invitation, proclamation and welcome.

### 11. Mission Services

These would be more reflective than No 10, with an opportunity for prayer, re-dedication meditation and a chance to make space for God amid the often hectic activities of a parish mission.

### 12. Agnostics Anonymous

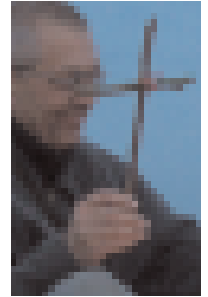
An 'Any Questions' meeting to which a group of doubters/enquirers are invited to discuss and debate the faith in a home or pub or hall.

All these events then need some kind of follow-up in the form of further events or, better still, a nurture course. Remember that 'nurture' is about encouraging those on the fringe of Church life to a deeper and personal commitment to Christ – turning fellow travellers into followers of Christ.

Nurture courses such as Alpha and Emmaus are proven ways of enabling this to happen. In a recent survey, 95% of people who attended nurture courses said that they found them helpful or very helpful. The same survey found that about one in every six people who came on a nurture course became a Christian.

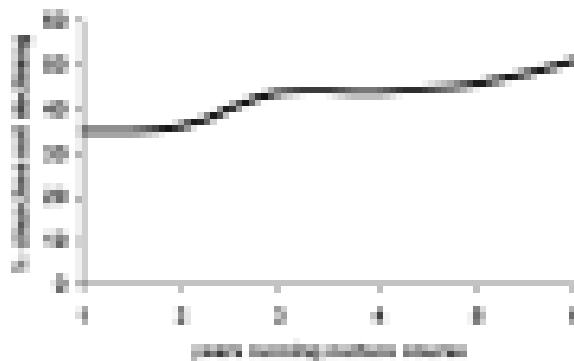
# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Making new Christians and Disciples



Some Churches run a nurture course for a couple of years and then, as the numbers tail off, they stop running them. Research has shown that the first three years of running a nurture course have a greater effect on the existing church-going population and then, as the numbers drop slightly, inroads begin to be made into those on the fringe and beyond the fringe of church membership. The longer you run a nurture course, the less likely it is that your church will decline.

This graph, taken from data in 'Evangelism - which way now?' by Mark Ireland and Mike Booker, plots the percentage of churches not declining against the number of years running a nurture course. It further underlines the point that it is only after running a course for three years that its effect becomes apparent:



The research also indicated that it didn't matter what nurture course you ran - they all had about the same effect.

The list below gives the three major courses and their websites. The Director of Parish Development and Evangelism, Roger Morris, can advise you about these and other courses:

- Alpha - <http://uk.alpha.org>
- Emmaus - [www.e-mmaus.org.uk](http://www.e-mmaus.org.uk)
- Christianity Explored - [www.christianityexplored.com](http://www.christianityexplored.com)

## THE THREE PRIORITIES



# Making new Christians and Disciples

When talking about nurture, it is vital that we do not neglect our ministry to children and young people. At the beginning of the twentieth century, over 52% of children were registered in Sunday schools and about another 30% were taken to churches that didn't have a Sunday school tradition. Now just over 10% of under 15's are regularly in church or Sunday school.

Bob Jackson notes, in 'Hope for the Church', that "Very few adults without a Sunday school background become worshippers in later life." He further adds that "Most people who begin churchgoing as adults are returning to the Church of their childhood. The massive missionary challenge posed by generations growing up without childhood involvement has not so far been met." This not only presents us with a challenge with regard to evangelism among those adults who have not had childhood involvement with the church. It also underlines the importance of investing in the church's ministry among children and young people in order that, even if they drift away from the church, they have a faith and a church to which they can return.

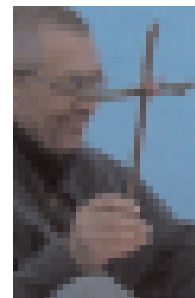
In addition to investing in children (as the church of today and the leaders of the church of tomorrow), it should also be noted that churches that engage in effective ministry among non-churched children are also seeing their non-churched parents expressing a desire to explore the Christian faith – often through the evangelistic ministry of their children. One church in Coventry has seen three generations of one family come to faith – and it all began with the church's effective ministry to the child whose grandparents and then parents subsequently came to faith.

Contemporary provision for children and young people has been cited as a vital ingredient for churches to grow; particularly within medium to larger churches.

Further help is available from the Children (and Families) Officer, Helen Franklin, who can be contacted on 024 7652 1326 or at [helen.franklin@covcofe.org](mailto:helen.franklin@covcofe.org) and the Youth Officer, Greg Bartlem, who is also contactable on 024 7652 1326 or at [greg.bartlem@covcofe.org](mailto:greg.bartlem@covcofe.org).

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Making new Christians and Disciples



**Evangelism on its own is not enough. The command to 'go and make disciples' speaks of an ongoing process of lifelong learning so that people may become mature in Christ. The regular teaching ministry from the pulpit is vital but a short sermon is rarely enough to satisfy the deep needs of the heart and mind. Alpha courses are an excellent start but they only go so far. Even Lenten study groups can only scratch the surface. I believe we need a much more serious commitment to understanding our faith and to wrestling with some of the profound questions that discipleship in today's world raises.**

*Bishop Colin*

The Bishop of Coventry points out that we 'need a much more serious commitment to understanding our faith and to wrestling with some of the profound questions that discipleship in today's world raises'. Many churches have raised generations of what John Wesley referred to as 'pygmy Christians' whose growth as disciples has been severely stunted. Every church needs to pay attention to the ongoing work of deepening the faith of those who attend Church regularly - turning followers into disciples.

Bible Study Groups, Prayer Groups and a programme of mentoring can all help resource this process of making disciples. In addition to this, a new resource called Growing Leaders has been produced by CPAS. Their promotional literature describes it as follows:

Leadership is a proven factor in growing healthy churches. Yet so many churches struggle to find leaders. The Growing Leaders pack and training days will help your church find and develop leaders passionate for God's work.

Growing Leaders is more than just another course. Over a year, its unique mix of teaching, mentoring and practical application focuses on leadership rooted in Christ, deepening commitment to long-term service and essential skills for the task. The pack includes leaders' notes and resources, photocopiable handouts, The Growing Leaders paperback book and a CD-ROM with PowerPoint presentations, brief training videos, additional handouts, resources, and software. The Course costs £60 and is available from CPAS Sales: 01926 458400, [www.cpas.org.uk](http://www.cpas.org.uk).

It is also worth noting that an understanding of Christian Stewardship is both essential and also indicative of a person's maturity in Christ. Graham Wright is the Diocesan Stewardship Advisor and heads up the Diocesan Stewardship Group comprising 5 members who are often called upon to support, counsel, advise, review leaflets, provide examples, talk at PCCs, at services and at events to assist parishes in the area of Christian giving. Graham can be contacted on 01926 864991 or at [Grahampjw@aol.com](mailto:Grahampjw@aol.com).

## THE THREE PRIORITIES



# Making new Christians and Disciples

### **St Martin in the Fields Finham**

<http://www.smitf.org.uk/>

St Martin's at Finham is committed to a programme of bringing the overall community in the parish together under an initiative called 'Bringing Community Together'. This involves hosting various groups at their church facilities (which are shortly to be improved) as well as going out into the community with projects such as the repainting of the underpass on the A45.

The have run a number of events such as:

- Football Frenzy- A football competition organised for 10 and 11 year olds on the church field.
- Holiday Bible Club - St. Martin's take some 80 primary children on a week fun and learning.
- Eton Rifles band dance
- Light Party - St. Martin's celebrates "Light" at the end of October with 90+ children enjoying a days fun and games and learning more about Jesus.

St Martin's have also been running Alpha for 6 years and their last course saw a large number of men in their 20s and 30s taking part.

### **St James's Whitley**

**Rev. Pam Stote 07905 230924**

St James's Church in Whitley runs on the principles of cell church. Information on Cell Church can be obtained from the Anglican Cell Church Network whose website is at <http://www.accn.org.uk/>

A Cell Church is a church that is made up of small groups called 'Cell Groups'. Each 'Cell Group' or 'Cell' is usually made up of about 6-12 people who meet weekly or fortnightly in each others homes for worship, fellowship and application of the Bible to their daily lives. An important aim of Cell Church is for each Cell Group to "multiply". Multiplication is when a Cell Group reaches about 12-15 members and 2 new Cell Groups are formed from the old one. Members are encouraged to focus outward and reach out to others.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Making new Christians and Disciples



### St John's Westwood

<http://www.westwoodchurch.co.uk/>

St John's Church at Westwood has developed a year-out discipleship programme for young people called 'Form'. Its aim is to form followers of Jesus in character, service and mission.

The context is mission. The year with them is about formation - God setting the foundation stone of character in the participant's life so that they can continue to grow as a disciple and lead others in an increasingly missionary lifestyle.

During the year, the participant will find themselves serving, leading, praying, following, belonging, retreating, evangelising, socialising, reading, worshipping, as well as interacting in course sessions and huddles.

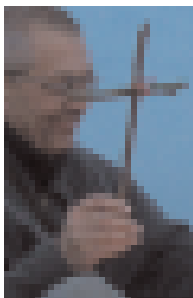
St John's are committed to see God grow His church. There is an emphasis on models of church which facilitate mission and growth. Participants on 'Form' are encouraged to be a radical, active part of these emerging models by belonging to them fully during their year.

Those on 'Form' regularly experience a real sense of community amongst themselves and within the wider church. Having had a taste of community it is hoped that trainees go on to lead effective out-reaching missional communities themselves.

A typical week involves 2 days in training, 3 days working part-time (as the participants are self-supporting), regular church and community involvement on Sundays and some evenings with a day off on Saturday.

For more information For more course details check out the Form website at [www.form-uk.org](http://www.form-uk.org)

## THE THREE PRIORITIES



# Transforming Communities

Bishop Colin has written, “To be involved in the transformation of communities will require us to measure the value systems by which we live against those of God’s Kingdom, the kingdom of peace, justice and righteousness.’ He further points out that ‘we cannot be involved in God’s transforming activity in society without meeting human need face to face in our neighbours.’

His comments resonate with the Church of England report ‘Mission-shaped Church’ that says that ‘a Mission-shaped Church exists for the transformation of the community that it serves, through the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. It is not self-serving, self-seeking or self-focused. The Kingdom of God is its goal, and church is understood as a servant and sign of God’s kingdom in its community, whether neighbourhood or network.’ A good way of understanding what this might mean in practice is to see the Church as a provider of ‘social capital’.

Social Capital is a means of attempting to quantify a sense of ‘community spirit’ or ‘altruism’ and may include such aspects as citizenship, ‘neighbourliness’, social networks and civic participation.

A number of people subscribe to the view that ‘one good turn deserves another.’ A few may even say that one should ‘do a good deed every day.’ The Christian is one who is one who is committed to working for the well-being of those who are not just different, but are perceived as carrying a threat or menace.

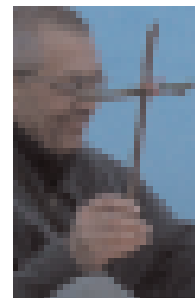
Ann Morisy, in her book ‘Journeying Out’, refers to this as ‘brave social capital.’ She adds that ‘brave social capital can unleash the cascade of grace from which an unknowable range of people and situations benefit. This cascade of grace is uncontrollable, unpredictable and virtuous. It speaks of God’s Kingdom and gives us a glimpse of what it is to be God’s children, and each other’s brother and sister.’

**To value communities implies that we take seriously the fact that God has called us to live together in society. To be involved in the transformation of communities will require us to measure the value systems by which we live against those of God’s Kingdom, the kingdom of peace, justice and righteousness. Because politics is all about how we live together in society some political awareness and, indeed, action will always be on our agenda as Church.**

*Bishop Colin*

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Transforming Communities



**A gospel which has nothing to say to the poor and dispossessed can never be good news for the world since two thirds of humanity fall into that category. The ultimate vision of the New Testament is that our present power structures will one day become the Kingdom of God and of his Christ. We cannot be involved in God's transforming activity in society without meeting human need face to face in our neighbours.**

*Bishop Colin*

At the diocesan conference in Swanwick during 2005, Ann illustrated this idea of 'brave social capital' with the following story (which also appears in 'Journeying Out'):

'At a Mother's Union meeting in a village in Kent the speakers were three Mother's Union workers from Zimbabwe. In their presentation they spoke of how important hand sewing machines were to the villages in Zimbabwe where there was no electricity. The word went round and soon there were eight old sewing machines retrieved from people's lofts and cellars. However, the Zimbabwean women advised that the only way they could reliably reach the villages would be if they were delivered personally. The British women, all over 60, were faced with a challenge – would they organise a few jumble sales to pay the shipping costs only to have the machines moulder in a customs yard, or would they go to Zimbabwe themselves and carry the sewing machines to the villages? Would they choose venturesome love or would they opt for what, in theological terms, Bonhoeffer would have described as cheap grace?'

The women did go to Zimbabwe themselves, with the following results:

- The local newspaper followed the women's story at every stage, carrying the implicit message that church involvement does not have to be dull and predicable.
- The families of the women hotly debated whether their mother was being reckless in taking such risks... especially with her bad back. The grandchildren, however, thought that their grandmother was cool.
- Prayer became passionate.
- An understanding of world development issues grew.
- The women were transformed by their experience – and were radicalised and sensitised by the experience.
- An ongoing relationship was created between villagers in Zimbabwe and villagers in Kent.

Ann concludes the story by saying that 'these are only the immediate gracious outcomes. There would be more because the potency of the experience would resonate throughout the Kentish women's lives.'

# THE THREE PRIORITIES



## Transforming Communities

The cascade of grace is so overflowing it cannot be tracked. Each time the children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren of these women are confronted by a challenge to express fraternal relations to a stranger they will no doubt reflect on the boldness that is part of their inheritance. And this will change the future for the better.'

Much of this kind of transformational work comes under the heading of 'social responsibility'. The Forum for Social Responsibility aims to develop understanding of the role and responsibility of the Church in promoting 'Kingdom values' in the wider society and to facilitate methods of work which support this aim. The Director of Social Responsibility is John Hall and he can be contacted on 024 7652 1326 or at [john.hall@covcofe.org](mailto:john.hall@covcofe.org).

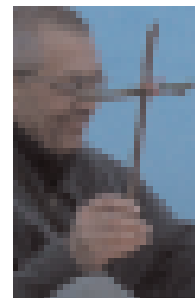
The work of the Diocesan Development Team also comes under the Forum for Social Responsibility and they have helped a number of parishes manage and fundraise for a variety of social and community projects. The team leader for the Diocesan Development Team is John McCallum and he can be contacted on 024 7652 1306 or at [john.mccallum@covcofe.org](mailto:john.mccallum@covcofe.org).

### **St Matthew's Salford Priors** **Revd. Steve Tash 01789 772445**

At the 2005 AGM for St Matthew's, Revd. Steve Tash mentioned a concern he had for the lonely and housebound within the community. This struck a chord with a member of the church who then, in consultation with Steve, put together a visiting scheme called 'Neighbours'. The scheme consists of a team of six people who have each committed to the scheme for one year. In turn, they visit a number of housebound people on a weekly basis. After four weeks, the team members rotate so that those being visited get to see someone else from the team. This ensures a balance between continuity and dependency. The team meets regularly for prayer and the exchange of information. The scheme is now being advertised in a local authority newspaper.

# THE THREE PRIORITIES

## Transforming Communities



### **Coventry East Team Ministry** **Rev. Clive Gregory 024 7622 5907**

The Coventry East Team is made up of four churches serving a number of disadvantaged communities.

St Peter's Hillfields was built in the grounds of the former church and is attached to an existing Social Centre providing a wide range of rooms and spaces in addition to the Worship Area. Over one hundred organisations have used the building including the library service who operate out of an upstairs room. A Community Development Worker is employed by the community centre.

Down the road at St Margaret's, they are well underway with a £500,000 project to turn the church into a "centre for the community" incorporating an advice centre, all sorts of groups, rhythmic gymnasts, karate, a toddlers group and the residents group. (Note: the advice centre, toddlers group and residents group use the church for free).

St Alban's also redeveloped their church so that it could be used by the wider community. Their building is used every day. The Vicar, Lesley Johnson makes a point of meeting people as they use the church building and has found this particularly helpful in getting to know the young parents coming to the Mother and Baby clinic in the church.

St Anne and All Saints hosts a very successful community project that sees the church host a pre-school nursery and all kinds of community groups.

### **St Mary's Leamington Priors** **<http://www.stmarysleamington.com/>**

Central to the ethos of St Mary's are two passages of scripture; Isaiah 61 and Ezekiel 37.

Among their many community projects is the Pathway Recovery Project that gives support and practical help to those struggling with various instabilities in their lives, including drug and alcohol addictions.

The church displays an unrivalled passion for the poor and the fruit God's work among them can be seen in the many lives that have been miraculously transformed.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



## Introduction

The starting point for any discussion about the shape of mission and ministry in the church must start with God – whose mission and ministry it really is. The danger is that mission and ministry become seen as human endeavours and God is often sidelined.

Paul Bayes, the National Mission and Evangelism Advisor for the Church of England, has noted that, ‘for those whose minds are so inclined, planning, analysis and strategizing can be great fun, sometimes even addictively so. The risk with moving too quickly to this is that we come to think of God as a poor old soul who cannot really get his act together unless we give him a little training.’

The church belongs to God. As Rick Warren, the author of ‘Purpose-Driven Church’ says, ‘The Church is a body, not a business. It is an organism, not an organisation. It is alive.’

The major task in the process of discerning vision is therefore to connect with God. Bishop Colin has said that we will not glimpse what is God’s will for the church until we have a clearer vision of God himself.

This knowledge of God can only come about through prayer. Ann Morisy, who spoke at our Diocesan Conference in 2005, says, ‘Prayer is fundamental. I say this on the basis of observation. I am convinced that prayer makes a difference, and I am bold enough to say that I can tell when a venture is being regularly prayed for. It brings a clarity as well as a unity of purpose. Time needs to be taken for prayer, and someone needs to take responsibility for helping this to happen.’

Alongside prayer, a church that is engaged in the process of discerning vision needs to be willing to change. It is undoubtedly true that God’s vision for each of us, and for the church as a whole, is for us to be transformed so that we become what he is urging us to be. God’s purposes will not be served by us remaining as we are.

**Prayer is fundamental. I say this on the basis of observation. I am convinced that prayer makes a difference, and I am bold enough to say that I can tell when a venture is being regularly prayed for. It brings a clarity as well as a unity of purpose. Time needs to be taken for prayer, and someone needs to take responsibility for helping this to happen**

*Ann Morisy*

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

## Introduction



**We have every reason to be confident, not in ourselves or the Church of England or in the establishment institutionally or in new churches or old, emerging or retracting churches but to be confident in the love of God in Jesus Christ.**

*Archbishop Rowan*

**Mission, it's been said, is finding out what God is doing and joining in. And at present there is actually an extraordinary amount going on.**

*Archbishop Rowan*

We need to ensure that we remain rooted in God and his love for us. Archbishop Rowan says, 'We have every reason to be confident, not in ourselves or the Church of England or in the establishment institutionally or in new churches or old, emerging or retracting churches but to be confident in the love of God in Jesus Christ.'

In order to help congregations discern God's will for their church, the Bishops Council have come up with the following eight questions:

- **Where do we see God at work, and how can we build on what is working well?**
- **What is holding us back – about which we can do something?**
- **What might God be calling us to do?**
- **What might God be calling us to stop?**
- **What then are our priorities?**
- **How can we resource what we want to do?**
- **How might we use our resources for the benefit of others?**
- **What resources and support would we value from others within the diocese and outside?**

In the pages that follow, we shall look at each of these questions and explore some of the ways that churches could begin to answer them and come up with a Mission Action Plan.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



*Where do we see God at work,  
and how can we build  
on what is working well?*

A proven way of identifying where God is at work is the 'Growing Healthy Churches' inventory. Its author, Robert Warren, discovered that what influences a church's ability to grow is its overall health. Church health can be difficult to define but research has identified seven marks that indicate overall health.

A healthy church is a church that:

- is energised by faith
- has an outward looking focus
- seeks to find out what God wants
- faces the cost of change and growth
- operates as a community
- makes room for all
- does a few things and does them well.

The 'Growing Healthy Churches' material is reproduced at the end of the book. Using this material will enable you to discover certain strengths on which one can build as well as weaknesses that can be addressed.

Another useful tool is the SWOT analysis. SWOT is the acronym of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. Performing a SWOT analysis involves identifying and recording those internal resources and capabilities of the church (strengths and, when absent, weaknesses) as well as factors that are external to the church (opportunities and threats).

Strengths and weaknesses can be identified by asking the following questions:

- What do we do well?
- What do we do less well?
- What areas of our church's life are vibrant and healthy?
- What areas are weaker?
- What would someone who sees several churches like ours point out as being distinctive (either positive or negative) about our church?
- What resources can we call upon?
- How does this compare to our needs?

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

Where do we see God at work,  
and how can we build  
on what is working well?



Opportunities and threats are identified by looking beyond the boundaries of the church.

The following questions might be useful:

- What are the external trends that will impact upon us?
- What is changing in society or in the local community that will affect us?
- What extra demands might be placed on us?
- What needs are there outside the church that could be met by the church's strengths and resources?

The SWOT analysis doesn't identify what should be done, but it does provide a framework for identifying where strategic opportunities might exist. It would certainly be unwise to consolidate every strength, address every weakness, exploit every opportunity and guard against every threat. The analysis may produce a number of options from which only a handful are worth acting on at this time.

Another useful tool is the 'History Exercise'. A large piece of paper (12' by 3') is placed lengthwise on a wall and a time line is written on it (going back around 100 years). You can use the calendar or the incumbent (or both) to mark out the time line. Members of the congregation can then identify key events and characteristics of the church (starting at the earliest recalled event and working up to the present day). Themes may well emerge and 'statements of meaning' can be recorded.

If the statement of meaning is a positive one, then the goal statement should focus on how the church might capitalise on that strength. For example, "Music has always been a strength of this parish; we propose getting this message out to the community in the following ways..."

If the meaning statement is negative, goals should focus on the way the parish can move beyond that damaging dimension. Again, this process may produce a number of options from which only a handful are worth acting on at this time.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

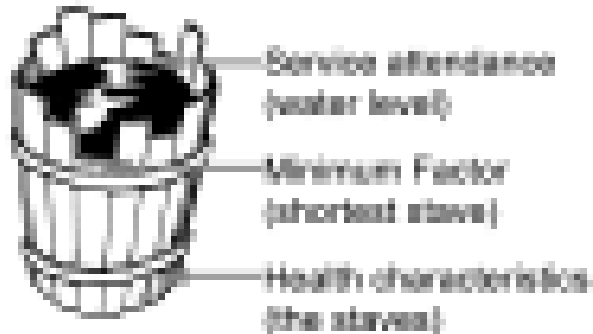


## What is holding us back – about which we can do something?

The 'Growing Healthy Churches' process, the SWOT analysis, and the 'History Exercise' can simultaneously address this question too.

The crucial issue with this question is that, rather than just build upon a church's strengths, it is vital that any weaknesses are addressed. Christian Schwartz's 'Natural Church Development' confirms that concentration on the "minimum factor" (the weakest area of church life) will make a significant difference.

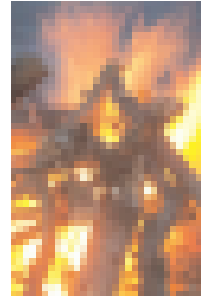
He uses the illustration of a barrel:



If we pour water into a barrel it will fill to the level of the shortest stave and then the water will begin to pour out. In the illustration the staves of the barrel are the characteristics of a healthy church and the water is the people that God is pouring into the church. There is a point at which the barrel (the church) will no longer hold any more water (people). They pour out at the level of the minimum stave. The strategy is to determine your minimum stave or quality characteristic and then develop a plan to strengthen that area. When the minimum stave is lengthened the barrel will hold more water.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

## What might God be calling us to do?



One way of discerning what God might be calling the church to do is to use the data compiled from the 'Growing Healthy Churches' process, the SWOT analysis, or the 'History Exercise'. From this a number of 'interim goals' can be produced that build on the strengths identified, address the weaknesses and dysfunctions, and take account of any possibilities of further mission to the community. There may be as many as 30 or 40 interim goals. These can then be circulated to the church membership for them to prioritise them (either high, middle or low). The top priority goals are then studied by the PCC or DCC and around 4 or 5 selected.

One church to carry out this process and arrive at a list of things that they believe God is calling them to do is St Mary Magdalene and Risen Christ in Wyken (part of the Caludon Team). The incumbent is Richard Hare who can be contacted on 024 7660 2332 or at [thehares@ic24.net](mailto:thehares@ic24.net)

You may wish to simply focus on your weaknesses as a church and, if that is the case, the 'Improvement Plan' printed towards the back of the book might provide a framework for this.

Another option might be to use the 'Mission Possible' material produced for The Diocese of Coventry by St Mary's in Leamington. A strength of the 'Mission Possible' material is that it focuses on both strategy (the steps taken to achieve your aims) and values (the manner in which this is undertaken). Details of additional resources for 'Mission Possible' are available on the St Mary's website at [www.stmarysleamington.com](http://www.stmarysleamington.com)

However you go about this process, you should end up with a focussed plan of action. It is important that you avoid the temptation to do too much. The old adage of 'doing a few things and doing them well' is wise advice for all churches.

Good ideas can be very attractive but it would be unwise to act on every good idea. You need to prayerfully discern what are the best things for your church to be doing in this season of its life - even if other good things remain undone.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



## What might God be calling us to stop?

Firstly, your church should be focussed on the three priorities of worship, making new christians and disciples and transforming communities. Any activity that cannot easily be described in these terms should be stopped. You may want to address this by listing all your church activities and then placing them under the three headings of worship, making new christians and disciples and transforming communities. Some activities may need to be altered in order that they satisfy these priorities. Some groups may need to disband. Some things may simply need to pause in order that the church can decide whether or not to continue with them in the longer term. It is important to cultivate the idea that some activities are meant for a limited time only and then should be set down. God can be thanked for the good that has been done even though others will grieve for what has been stopped. Some may feel that they are letting past members down by stopping.

The Bishop's Council, in asking this question, are not just encouraging you to make some space for more activity. There is also a need in the church to rediscover God's gift of sabbath rest.

A new Lent Course for 2006 called 'Life Balance' aims to help groups explore how to build Sabbath time into the crazy pressures of everyday life and also to look at how 'Sabbath attitudes' can transform the way we spend our time. The Course is written by Sue Mayfield and Robert Warren and is published by Church House Publishing.

There are also some simple steps you can take in order to make your church less busy. These might include:

- PCCs in multi-parish benefices meeting together for a presentation (e.g. on stewardship) and then breaking out into individual PCCs for the rest of the meeting.
- Sub-committees in larger churches meeting on the same night in order to encourage people not to be on every committee.
- Having a day every week on which there are no meetings.

**We need fewer meetings and more genuine meeting.**

*Robert Warren*

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

## What then are our priorities?



At this stage, you should have a clear idea of what your priorities will be. They may represent weaknesses or dysfunctions that you are wanting to address. They may represent strengths on which you are looking to build. They may also represent new areas of work that you are wanting to undertake. It is important to ensure that your priorities are clear and focussed. You will need to know whether or not you have achieved what you are setting out to do.

It is common these days to talk about SMART targets. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-related. SMART targets were originally invented by Kenneth Blanchard in 'The One Minute Manager' and they are used widely in education, local government and business. You may wish to ensure that the priorities you have identified are in the form of SMART targets.

Once you have identified your targets, you may wish to use the 'Improvement Plan' material towards the back of the book in order to monitor progress in these areas.

Having identified your targets and planned your strategy for meeting them, you will also want to publicise your targets to others.

It would be useful to let the following people know what you, as a PCC, have decided:

- The wider church membership (including the electoral roll members and casual attenders)
- The wider community (so that they know what the church is seeking to do)
- The wider benefice, cluster and deanery (so that, if a number of parishes have identified similar targets, training can be arranged at a benefice, cluster or deanery level)
- The diocese (through the Archdeacon or the Forums) so that relevant training can be offered at a diocesan level

It would also be a good idea to make your agreed targets fixed items on every PCC agenda.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



## How can we resource what we want to do?

The most important resources that are available to you are people. It is their time and abilities more than anything else that will help your church to fulfil its vision. Often we make use of people by starting with a predetermined job and then asking for volunteers. This will often leave result in the vast majority of jobs being done by a very small group of people. A more effective way of releasing the gifts of all the people is to help each individual identify what their ability, passion and calling might be.

St Nicholas Church in Kenilworth used the Willow Creek Network Course to do just this. The tagline for the course is 'The right people in the right places for the right reasons at the right time.'

The Network Course is a dynamic six-session process to help Christians understand who God has uniquely made them to be and mobilise them to a place of meaningful service in the local church. Each participant on the Network Course works through a series of assessments which leads them to discover their unique blend of spiritual gifts, ministry passion, and personal style. The participants are also taught the biblical nature and purpose of the church as the body of Christ and the unique importance of each member's contribution. Details of the Network Course can be found on the Willow Creek website at <http://www.willowcreek.org.uk>

The other resource that is needed in order to fulfil the church's vision is money. A healthy, biblically sound and spiritual attitude to money is needed in the church. Sometimes churches are reluctant or they feel under-equipped to teach about money or to plan for a Stewardship Renewal. In recognition of this, the Diocese has set up a Stewardship Group. The Diocesan Stewardship Group is chaired by Graham Wright and he can be contacted on 01926 864991 or at [Grahampjw@aol.com](mailto:Grahampjw@aol.com).

**The right people  
in the right places  
for the right  
reasons  
at the right time.**

*Network Course*

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

## How can we resource what we want to do?



**The Church of England's challenge to all church members is to prayerfully consider giving 5% of their take-home income to their local church.**

The following is based on some of the guidelines for good practice from the national stewardship website at <http://natstew.diochi.org.uk>

- Once you have arrived at a Mission Action Plan, the church membership need to be made aware of it and also encouraged to help achieve its aims.
- It is important to continue with or to begin regular teaching about wider stewardship of time, money, possessions and talents as part of Christian discipleship. Each church member should be encouraged to prayerfully give a proportion of their income to the mission and ministry of the church. The Church of England's challenge to all church members is to prayerfully consider giving 5% of their take-home income to their local church.
- It is good to have a regular time each year when individuals can review the time and money they personally contribute to the church and other Christian agencies and charities. This can include a reminder about keeping or making a will. All donors' details must be kept totally confidential.
- It is good to aim for a majority (>75%) of the regular church income to be donated in tax efficient ways (e.g. Gift Aid, CAF CharityCard or vouchers, payroll giving). You can also have a stock of Gift Aid envelopes available in the church for visitors and one-off gifts.
- The PCC should produce clear annual budgets for regular income and expenses, and progress towards them should be occasionally summarised for the main congregation. A brief financial summary can be given on the back of a pew sheet or in the parish magazine.
- It is good to cover the majority of regular budgeted church expenses by regular gifts (bank standing orders, weekly envelopes etc). Income from legacies can be used to develop new projects, not fund deficits.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



## How can we resource what we want to do?

- At least once a year the PCC should write personally to each regular supporter to thank them for their particular contribution of time and money.
- Many PCCs have chosen to donate at least 10% of their voluntary income to external Christian bodies and secular charities. This 10% includes any excess over full Parish Share that the parish contributes to help support other churches in the deanery and diocese.
- The PCC should pay its bills promptly. It is best practice to ensure that the agreed parish contribution towards your priest's stipend and support costs is paid to the diocese by monthly direct debit or standing order starting each January.

The National Stewardship Website has resources for teaching and worship and practical advice for incumbents, churchwardens and PCCs.

Stewardship is different from fundraising. It is possible that, in order to fulfil your church's vision, you may need to raise quite considerable funds. This is certainly the case if you are planning to do anything involving the renovation, conversion or erection of buildings. The Diocesan Development Team exists to enable visionary development with communities and congregations.

They provide advice and support on the following:

- Researching your community effectively
- Influencing and working with decision makers
- Establishment of good management practice
- Development of church property
- Fundraising and fundraising techniques
- Sound communication and marketing strategy
- Community Partnerships

There is also information about fundraising on the National Stewardship website <http://natstew.diochi.org.uk> and also on the Churchcare website at <http://www.church-care.co.uk>.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

## How might we use our resources for the benefit of others?



In Rugby deanery, the clergy regularly come together for Chapter Meetings and, for the last few months, they have been taking it in turns to give a presentation on their church. Two questions always follow each presentation. The questions are 'What can you and your church contribute to the deanery?' and 'What can the deanery offer to you and your church?'

The Vale of White Horse Deanery in Oxford Diocese has structured the Deanery so as to be able to support this kind of collaboration. They have set up these six 'Expertise Groups' working across the deanery:

- Mission (supporting outreach, nurture and fresh expressions)
- Vocations & Training (providing or resourcing training and fostering vocations)
- Worship & Spirituality (developing particular types of worship such as healing services, youth worship, etc., organising quiet days and retreats, and developing a prayer diary)
- Youth Work (managing and resourcing a part time youth worker, developing schools work and implementing the child protection policy)
- Deanery Development (developing the role of deanery synod and improving deanery communications)
- Buildings & Resources (undertaking an audit of church buildings, exploring and developing alternative uses for churches and cataloguing all available resources)

This kind of vision of a deanery working together led the writers of Mission-shaped Church to say that 'deaneries have the potential to bring together a range of human and financial resources, to consider mission beyond parish boundaries, and to share prayer and encouragement.'

The other way of using resources for the benefit of others is to share proven models of good practice. There are many more examples of good practice in the Diocese than those cited in this booklet. The Forum for Parish Development and Evangelism can share models of good practice through the 'Start the Week' email that is sent to clergy, readers, churchwardens, etc.

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



*What resources and support  
would we value from others  
within the diocese and outside?*

The following contacts might be helpful:

## **Worship**

### **Worship for Mission**

Contact: Mark Beach  
Telephone 01788 565609 (Office)  
01788 542936 (Home)  
Email rector@rugbyteam.org.uk

### **Guild of Servers**

The guild is open to all altar servers with the intention of helping to raise their spiritual tone in performing their duties at the altar and to encourage a more frequent attendance at the eucharist in addition to times of duty.

Contact: Brian Goodyear  
Telephone 024 7632 7537 (Home)  
Email brian.goodyear1@btopenworld.com  
Web www.GSSonline.org.uk

### **Spirituality Group**

Contact: David Westcott  
Telephone 01789 414715 (Home)  
Email fd@westcott.fsnet.co.uk

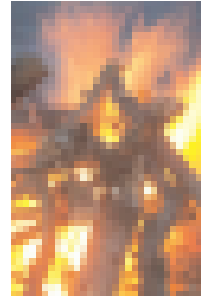
## **Making Disciples**

### **Evangelism, Nurture, etc.**

Contact: Roger Morris  
Telephone 024 7652 1326 (Office)  
07798 813178 (Mobile)  
Email Roger.Morris@covcofe.org

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS

*What resources and support  
would we value from others  
within the diocese and outside?*



## **Stewardship Group**

The Diocesan Stewardship Group are here to support, counsel, and assist parishes in the area of Christian giving.

Contact: Graham Wright  
Telephone 01926 864991 (Home)  
Email [grahampjw@aol.com](mailto:grahampjw@aol.com)

## **New Wine Networks**

We want to see as many Christians and churches as possible alive with the joy of knowing and worshipping Jesus Christ, and equipped to live out and proclaim his kingdom in the love of God the Father and the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Telephone 020 8567 6717 (National Office)  
Email [info@new-wine.org](mailto:info@new-wine.org)

## **Cursillo**

Cursillo is a valuable tool for empowerment of the Laity; helping individuals to recognise and act upon their own special gifts, and to employ them to obey the awesome command to "Go forth and make disciples of all men everywhere".

Contact Nick Clarke  
Telephone 01676 540320 (Home)  
Email [nickandcherry@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:nickandcherry@tiscali.co.uk)

## **Ministry, MLTs, Readers, Training, Selection**

Contact The Forum for Ministry  
Telephone 024 7652 1206 (Office)  
Email [rogerspiller@btinternet.com](mailto:rogerspiller@btinternet.com)

# THE EIGHT QUESTIONS



*What resources and support  
would we value from others  
within the diocese and outside?*

## **Transforming Communities:**

### **Social Responsibility**

Contact John Hall  
Telephone 024 7652 1326 (Office)  
Email John.Hall@covcofe.org

### **Diocesan Development Team**

Contact John McCallum  
Telephone 024 7652 1306 (Office)  
Email John.McCallum@covcofe.org

### **Schools and Colleges**

Contact Linda Wainscot  
Telephone 024 7652 1250 (Office)  
Email Linda.Wainscot@covcofe.org

### **Mothers' Union**

Contact Felicity Hawke  
Telephone 024 7652 1350  
Email mu.cov@covcofe.org  
Web [www.mothersunion-cov.org.uk](http://www.mothersunion-cov.org.uk)

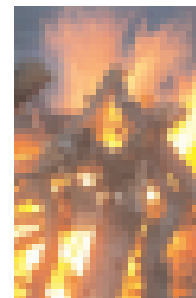
### **Family Life**

Contact Carol Davies  
Telephone 024 7652 1326  
Email carol.davies@covcofe.org

### **World Development**

Contact Jo Rathbone  
Telephone 024 7667 8735 (Home)  
Email jorathbone@phonecoop.coop

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



This checklist has been widely used in the UK and beyond to help churches take a 'health check' and identify ways in which they can give fuller expression to the life of Christ by the way they work. It is a particularly useful exercise for a Church Council or leadership Group – helping them identify priorities for the church.

Outline of the Exercise: 5 steps

- **Doing the Checklist Exercise**

An introduction of the seven marks of a healthy church is followed by individual scoring of the church on each of the seven marks. This is done individually without conferring with others.

- **Creating the Group Checklist**

The individual scores are transferred onto a flipchart sheet in such a way that a Group Checklist is created that visually demonstrates the profile of the church.

- **Reflecting on the Checklist**

The Group Checklist will indicate current strengths in the church, what might be holding us back, and where there are differences in our perceptions.

- **Identifying what needs working on**

The full list of the seven marks of a healthy church is now explored, so as to identify areas that need to be addressed. A Group List of issues is developed which is likely to highlight clear mission priorities and specific areas needing attention.

- **Taking Action**

Having agreed the main areas that need attention, more detailed work can now be done. The task is to identify priorities for specific actions, which will best address the issues raised. This involves both a preliminary look and also, often at a subsequent meeting, time to develop specific and focused action plans.





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

1. Energised by faith

An Introduction to the Seven Marks of a Healthy Church expressing the life of Christ through the local church:

### 1. Energised by faith

Rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive

- worship and sacramental life move people to experience God's love.
- motivation: energy comes from a desire to serve God and one another.
- engaging with scripture: in creative ways that connect with life.
- nurturing faith in Christ: helping people grow in, and share, their faith.

### 2. Outward-looking focus

with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern

- deeply rooted in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks.
- passionate and prophetic about justice and peace, locally and globally.
- making connections between faith and daily living.
- responding to human need by loving service.

### 3. Seeks to find out what God wants

rather than letting our own preferences set the church agenda

- vocation: open to the Spirit's leading about what we should be and do.
- vision: developing and communicating a shared sense of where we are going.
- mission priorities: consciously setting both immediate and long-term goals.
- able to call for and make sacrifices, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.

# GROWING HEALTHY CHURCHES

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### 4. Faces the cost of change and growth

rather than resisting change and avoiding failure

- while embracing the past, daring to take on new ways of doing things.
- taking risks: admitting when things are not working, and learning from experience.
- crises: responding creatively to challenges that face the church and community.
- positive experiences of change, however small, are affirmed and built on.

### 5. Builds community

rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation

- relationships are nurtured so people know they are a part of a community of faith (often through small groups) with opportunities for service
- leadership: lay and ordained work as a team to develop appropriate expressions of all seven marks of a healthy church.
- lay ministry: the different gifts, experiences and faith-journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church.

### 6. Makes room for others

being inclusive rather than exclusive

- welcome: works to include newcomers into the life of the church.
- children and young people are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith.
- enquiries are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ.
- diversities: coming from social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities and age differences are seen as a strength and sought after.

1. Welcomes  
2. Faces the cost of change and growth  
3. Builds community



# GROWING HEALTHY CHURCHES



## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

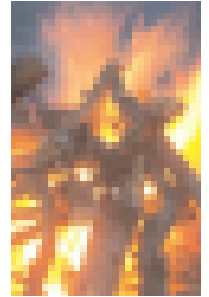
7. Does a few things well

**7. Does a few things – and does them well**  
focused rather than frenetic

- doing the basics well: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration.
- occasional offices: makes sense of life and communicate faith.
- being good news as a church in our attitudes and ways of working.
- enjoying what we do and being relaxed about what is not being done.

HEALTHY CHURCH CHECKLIST							
MARK	1 low	2	3	4	5	6 high	TOTAL
1. Energised by faith							
2. Outward looking focus							
3. Seeks to find out what God wants							
4. Faces cost of change and growth							
5. Builds community							
6. Makes room for others							
7. Does a few things well							

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



A full description of the Seven Marks of a Healthy Church follows:

### 1. Energised by faith

What it might look like:

Churches which are energised by faith will usually be able to tell a story about how God has led them.

Worship will include:

- Silence to enable people to hear what God is saying to me/us.
- Use of testimony/stories to share experiences of God's action.
- Celebration of the reality of God's presence and goodness to us.

A sense of shared purpose will be evident, whether there is a mission statement around, or not.

Conversation will naturally include the mention of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit rather than be restricted to the weather – or the church!

When its not present:

- churches suffer from a lack of energy, with no one willing to put effort in. Like a car without petrol, this is the key first matter to address.
- other churches have lesser motivations, such as creating the best choir in town, keeping the building open, bell ringing, etc.
- yet others are trapped in competing personal agendas, and/or personality clashes which constantly manifest themselves as alternatives agendas.

Worship and sacramental life.

Careful planning and leading of worship, with the inclusion of sufficient space and silence to draw people to God, pays dividends. A church did a survey of their members to find out how their faith was nourished and how far public worship connected with their lives.

A church  
energised by  
faith





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### Motivation.

Pastoral work that helps people address unhealthy motivations, such as the pursuit of power, the need to control, or the desire to please is not easy; but is needed to develop a sense of vocation and a desire to serve God and others.

### Engaging with scripture.

A church did a Lent course on the Sermon on the Mount as a result of which it became active in the Jubilee 2000 (Debt relief) programme. Study of scripture caused one church to set up a support group for single mothers, and another to organise a lunch and recreational club for the elderly.

### Nurturing faith in Christ.

Many churches have found the faith of church members renewed, and enquirers have had faith ignited, by the use of courses such as Alpha, Emmaus, Credo, or by developing home-grown materials. Churches have helped members to grow in prayer through running a Parish Quiet Day, holding a School of Prayer, and by encouraging involvement in groups such as Cursillo, Ignatian Spirituality and Franciscan Tertiaries, as well as giving people information about retreats and spiritual directors.

## 2. Outward-looking focus

What it might look like:

- there are likely to be stories to tell about things happening in the community and the daily living of church members, not just the church.
- there is evidence of activities in the community such as parent-and-toddler clubs, a drop-in centre, or a luncheon club for the elderly.
- community activities take place alongside others.
- there are examples of faith being communicated through these activities.

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



You can often pick up this outward-looking focus (or lack of it) by listening to the content of the intercessions in Sunday Services.

An outward looking focus is about more than church activities. It is about:

- living out the faith at home and at work
- resources for living the way the church and the faith help people make sense of life, live by a different set of values and have something to share with others about the practical relevance of life of our faith.
- world mission: some neglect this because the focus is on 'our patch', others neglect 'our patch' as a high profile is given to 'real missionaries'.

Is our vision of God's mission big enough to embrace all creation?

Deeply rooted.

Many churches have re-ordered their buildings to make them more suited for use by the church and community for activities throughout the week. Some churches have met with representatives of local communities in order to help them identify ways in which they can best serve the needs of the community. Other churches have developed ecumenical youth work, funded a detached youth worker, initiated a Church Urban or Lottery Fund project, an ecumenical credit union, an ecology project and a children's holiday programme.

Justice and Peace.

Local and global issues have been given prominence in preaching, in the intercessions in services, by encouragement and affirmation of those with a passion - especially the young - to speak and act prophetically.

Faith and daily living.

A questionnaire was used in one church to identify the major concerns of church members – such as stress, parenting, and the environment – so they could be addressed in preaching and in home groups.

A question  
to ask during  
intercessions





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### Loving Service.

Befriending asylum seekers, inviting them into homes, offering English lessons, providing clothing and food, caring for the needs of the house bound, the lonely, single mothers, etc. One church ran a drug awareness week for the church and the community: another has developed an adult education course to build self-esteem, having identified this as a key issue in the community and the church.

### 3. Seeks to find out what God wants

This Mark connects spirituality (Mark 1) with mission (Mark 2) by means of prayerful discernment

Some evidences we might find

- things are done in the life of the church to help people pray and join a prayer group, make use of a spiritual director or 'soul-friend' or discover personal vocation within the life of the church, rather than doing things because they have been pressurised to do so.
- prayer is clearly central in the life of the church – and PCC.
- the church has found ways of exercising discernment about its own priorities and vocation.
- This will include finding ways to pray together as a church.
- Attention is paid to discerning/expressing our values as a church.

Much of the church's vocation arises out of our history, and the gifts, passions, skills and energy of the present members of the church. When this is not present in a church, then competing personal agendas and conflicting personalities are likely to be shaping the church's priorities.

### Vocation

Prayer, engagement with scripture and a conscious effort to discern God's priorities are integral to the way the leadership, including the Church Council, work. Churches take time (at an Away Day or Parish Week-End) to listen to God so that present priorities are a response to the leading of the Spirit.

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### Vision

Mission statements that make a difference are very brief, memorable and express the longing of the whole church rather than the bright ideas of the leader(s). A church sees its spirituality and its mission as being on pilgrimage together. Worship, home groups, pastoral support are all shaped by that sense of calling. Churches most able to say 'no' are those that have already said a clear 'yes' to 'what God wants us to be and do'.

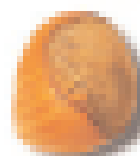
### Mission priorities.

A church took over a year to identify itself as 'called to hospitality': this was first explored as God's hospitality to them in the Eucharist, then as to how it could be expressed in the local community and in daily living. The Church Council of one group ministry puts their stated priorities on every Church Council agenda so they can continually assess the progress of their commitments.

### Make sacrifices.

The courage and confidence to call for and the willingness to make sacrifices of time, effort, money, personal preferences and comfort, are evidence of Christ-like health. One church gave up its buildings and identity and invested its money in the re-ordering of a smaller church better placed to serve the community. Another church completely rethought its theology as a result of engaging with the local 'benefit culture'.

A church  
that is  
healthy





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### 4. Faces the cost of change and Growth.

when this is present there is likely to be

- good communications which will not just be about information, but also about feelings, hopes fears, doubt and losses.
- clear structures and attitudes of consultation
- evidences of ways in which good changes have come about.
- the admission of where past changes have not worked/lasted and the ability to learn from them and grow beyond them.
- opportunity for people to share what they feel about changes and freedom to own feelings of fear, anger, threat, etc.

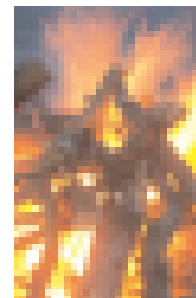
Change is often held back from happening by

- failure of nerve, will and desire to face the need for any change
- rubbishing what needs to be changed, which denies the real bereavement that is usually taking place

#### New ways

A small group in a church wanted to do parenting courses in the community. Twice they tried – but nobody came. The third time they found a new way of publicising it which led to two dozen couples coming on the course. Having a dialogue-sermon, altering the time of Sunday services, breaking into small groups to generate ideas in the Church Council and starting an orchestra to lead worship have all resulted in positive experiences for churches – but only by facing and working through resistance to change in the congregation.

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### Taking risks

'Let's try it', rather than 'Are you sure it will work?' is a healthier approach to life for a church as much as it is for an individual, especially when potential failure is turned into new learning by courageously admitting when things are not working.

### Crisis.

What matters most in the life of a church is not what happens unexpectedly, but how we respond, creatively, courageously and with faith, when confronted by unexpected events. One church in an inner city area turned waste ground into a rose garden, greatly increasing requests for baptisms and weddings.

### Positive experiences of change.

One church's work with asylum seekers has brought both conflict and blessing, forcing it to have the courage to confront divisions in its midst; another was transformed as a result of responding creatively to a nervous breakdown experienced by the vicar. Many churches have been changed as a result of facing the fact of declining attendance, an extended vacancy or the possibility of closure – and doing something about it.

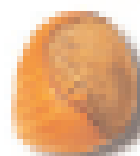
### 5. Builds Community

A healthy church is a well-organised community, not just a well-run organisation.

Healthy communities are marked by....

- the valuing of individuals for who they are, for 'being here', not simply or primarily for what they can contribute.
- careful nurturing of good relationships, rather than a primary focus on activities, programmes, roles procedures and status.
- providing a range of social settings in which people get to know each other; e.g. PCC Christmas party, Away Day or Retreat, meals together that strengthen relationships above 'business'.

1. Welcomes  
the stranger  
2. Caring  
for the  
vulnerable





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



Leaders in a healthy church:

- can identify, encourage and develop the use of people's gifts, rather than need to do and control everything.
- create opportunities for personal growth and self-discovery and are able to face and resolve conflicts.
- pay attention to the values that shape the life of the faith community.

Relationships

Building a sense of community is not only needed in the church, but often describes the mission of the church to its local area. Small groups for study, prayer and/or mutual support foster a sense of community, especially where they are done with an emphasis on listening to each other, affirming people, and addressing conflict.

Leadership is more about identifying the questions to be addressed than providing all the answers, and more about supporting the whole ministry of the church rather than doing everything – alone. Healthy leadership spots people's gifts and calling, is pleased (rather than threatened) by skills in the congregation and gives people responsibility for making things happen; encouraging teams and small groups to work on projects together.

Lay ministry is more likely to be developed when people are personally invited to take on a task rather than relying on appeals in notices. One church held a 'Gift Day' when people were invited to offer their skills, time and energy, rather than money; another did an 'energy audit' to uncover people's gifts and passions in order to shape the emphasis of the church.

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### 6. Makes room for others

Research indicates that churches are much more likely to grow if

- there is a good mix of ages
- there is a social and ethnic mix
- there are structures in place to help newcomers explore the faith, not just 'come to church'.

The key issue for most churches to address is the extent to which, often in subtle and unseen ways, we are really

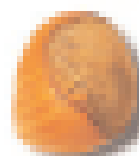
- only looking for 'more people like us'
- incorporating a richer diversity of people in the life and leadership of the church's life.

Such openness is often evident in the way a church is happy to

- welcome and draw on help from beyond its membership
- working in partnership with other groups, churches, and faiths
- gives opportunities in its life to minorities, such as young people

Welcome is what happens after you had said 'Hello'. It is about valuing people, discovering what they have to contribute and making the space for them to do so. One church has 'Welcomers' on the door, with name badges on the word Welcome underneath; they help people up steps, find a place for buggies, introduce newcomers to someone else in the church – so people experience real welcome. Another church has developed a 'street warden' pattern, focused on welcoming newcomers into the community, taking them flowers or a cake and a leaflet about local services (doctors and dentists, not just church services!)

6. MAKES ROOM FOR OTHERS





## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



### Children and young people

Healthy churches find ways of listening to them, exploring what they want to contribute, what they want from the church and how they can be helped to grow as Christians. Children and young people are passionate about ecology and justice issues and their enthusiasm need to be given expression and seen as a wake up call to the church. Healthy churches invest time, energy and money (including often a specific budget) to develop the ministry to and of children and young people in the life of the church.

### Enquirers

Opportunities are provided and relationships established to allow people who want to explore the faith – rather than just join the church – to do so.

### Diversities

Vibrant churches are ones in which a variety of ages, abilities, social ethnic backgrounds are valued for their diverse contributions. One church focuses all its work around being inclusive, fully incorporating the 'differently-abled' and those whose first language is not English into its life.

### 7. Does a few things – and does them well.

Satisfaction is a key indicator of this being present in a church. Doing a good job not only brings its own reward, it also – usually – has a positive effect (e.g. adding to the numbers attending or the positive responses made).

Stress is usually the experience of a group trying to do too much, not doing to well, having little significant effect and not much sense of a job well done.

## The Seven Marks of a Healthy Church



For this Mark to be part of a church's life it is necessary that

- priorities are established: so we have a common mind about what the 'few things' we should be doing well.
- a clear strategy is developed: for how we are going to do the few things – and do them well.
- regular reviews: are held to plot progress, revise objectives and overcome obstacles.
- time for reflection: is given before new ideas are taken on board
- an ability to critique our work is established: this will arise out of a culture of secure non-threatening relationships and teamwork.

Doing the basics well includes prayer and paperwork, handling people and money well, maintaining buildings and forwarding mission. Delegating Church Council work on fabric and finance to sub-committees is only productive if there is sufficient trust and self-discipline to accept their decisions and not re-run the discussion every time in the main meeting.

### Occasional offices

Many churches have baptism and wedding preparation teams and bereavement visitors and support groups. Many churches hold annual Memorial Services. One such church focused on families who had lost children, providing trained counsellors to be present at Services and a place to leave cards, toys, flowers and messages.

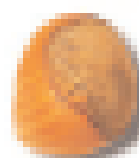
### Being good news

A large church stopped all groups for a year in order to discern what should be re-started, what re-formed, what discontinued and what new things should be developed to help people live out their faith. One church focused for over a year on 'creating the sort of church I would want to bring a friend to'.

### Enjoying what we do

The great themes of Sabbath, jubilee and shalom (peace) in the Old Testament are about learning to stop and enjoying celebrating together as central expressions of faith.

A church that is healthy and growing



# THE CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



## Managing the Plan

by Lorrie Cooper

*Schools enhance their effectiveness by following a process of school improvement. Lorrie Cooper, churchwarden at St Paul's Warwick, is also the Senior Primary Inspector for Warwickshire County Council.*

Once the priorities have been determined it is important that a plan is drawn up which summarises the main agreements and makes clear who will do the work of implementing the plan and how progress will be measured and evaluated.

It is unlikely that the plan will be successful unless there is an identified process for progress chasing and monitoring the impact of actions. The suggested pro forma asks for such details to be included.

The process of managing the plan will vary dependant upon the management structures within each individual church. It is important that the process fits into the normal structures if it is to become embedded as normal practice.

In some churches the appropriate group would be the PCC. In others it might be the leadership team. If no structure is in place the church may consider establishing a planning committee who both arrange for the production of the plan and monitor its progress.

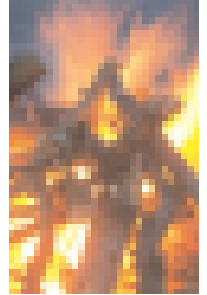
An important part of the plan is the arrangements for monitoring progress. It is important that those who are named as the responsible person for each action have a forum for discussing progress and being held to account for it. Regular opportunities should be planned in for this to happen. The outcomes of these meetings with evidence of the progress made should be recorded against each key priority.

At the end of the life of the plan an evaluation of impact will need to be undertaken. This should indicate how far the target has been met and what impact it has had. It should also indicate any further action which is needed and which might feed into the following year's plan.

# THE CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Managing the Plan

by Lorrie Cooper



<b>Key Issue / Priority:</b>			
<b>Success Criteria:</b> How will we know when we have got there? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>			
<b>Activity:</b> what will we do?	<b>Responsible Person:</b> for ensuring the action happens	<b>Time Frame:</b> when will it happen?	<b>Resources:</b> people, time, money
<b>Planned Monitoring Activities and Evidence:</b> indicate how the monitoring will happen, by whom, and then record the outcomes			
<b>Evaluation:</b> Has the target / priority worked? What do we need to do now?			



## Planning your church's history in advance

### The 'Arrowhead' model.

Please watch the associated DVD (about 15 minutes) before reading the following notes.

### Introduction.

The following method of strategic process has been developed by St Mary's, Leamington Spa. St Mary's is a church which is growing across all age ranges, and is making a significant impact in its local community, having initiated projects ranging from a £1.2 million multi-cultural community centre to a fully integrated drug / alcohol / offender recovery programme now taking referrals from prison.

The model they offer works! It is very visual, and can be easily used by leaders and leadership teams with congregations or organisations to develop a coherent and effective long-term strategy. Their vicar, Rev Morris Rodham, is now Rural Dean of Warwick and Leamington and is using the model to help the Deanery develop an effective long-term strategy.

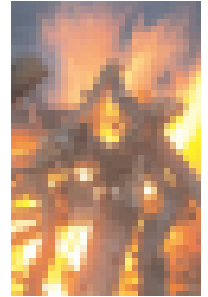
A taster DVD is included with printed copies of this booklet. It lasts about 15 minutes, and gives a flavour of why planning and strategic process is important. The DVD gives a brief introduction to the model. The full resource pack with CD including all Powerpoint presentations, images, and extended information and training material on the process, will be available from St Mary's Church at the end of January at a cost of £10.

Please contact St Mary's at:

**[office@stmarysleamington.com](mailto:office@stmarysleamington.com)**

if you wish to order or purchase it. St Mary's may also be able to offer some element of mentoring and assistance as your church works through the process.

## Planning your church's history in advance



### Why Strategic Planning is Important.

Planning is a normal part of everyday life. If you don't know where you are going, you probably won't get there! Making a journey involves a plan of some sort. For any journey we usually need to know:

- WHY we are going
- WHAT we are going to do when we get there
- HOW we are going to get there
- and the SPECIFIC STEPS along the way.

Planning is not unspiritual. God had a strategic plan. He knew he would come to earth born as a human being (Jesus). He knew he would start his public ministry at the age of 30, and train a small group of followers. He knew he would die at the Passover. He knew he would rise again on the third day. He knew he would send his Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All this did not happen by accident. God had a plan. He knew the WHY, WHAT, HOW and SPECIFIC STEPS of the journey, whilst still allowing room for the spontaneous promptings of the Holy Spirit within the overall plan.

### The Arrowhead Model.

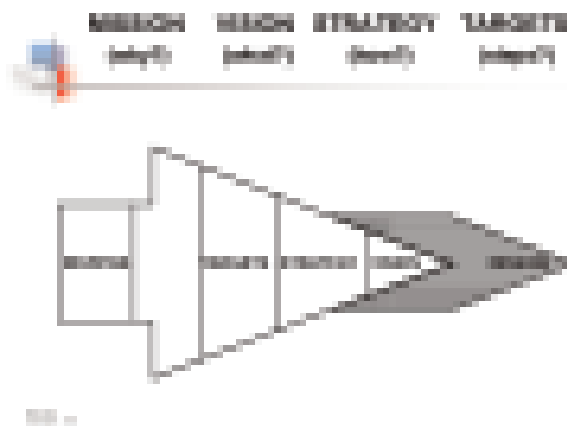
The model of the arrowhead gives a forward looking dynamic and just gives some different terms to the WHY, WHAT, HOW and SPECIFIC STEPS mentioned above.

WHY	=	MISSION
WHAT	=	VISION
HOW	=	STRATEGY
SPECIFIC STEPS	=	TARGETS



## Planning your church's history in advance

These fit into the arrow shape as follows:



The **MISSION** is the **WHY**: an inspiring, easily remembered, one-sentence statement which captures the thrust of the main purpose for your church or organisation.

The **VISION** is the **WHAT**: an inspiring picture of a different future of what your church or organisation will look like and achieve, set within a specific time frame (say 5 years).

The **STRATEGY** is the **HOW**: a range of methods, projects, and programmes which will help achieve the **VISION**.

The **TARGETS** are the **SPECIFIC STEPS**: Specific, Measurable, Attainable; Realistic; and Time-framed (SMART) objectives to achieve the **STRATEGY**.

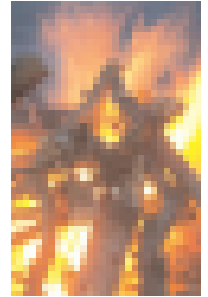
You will need the overall five-year targets for a five-year vision, with subsidiary one year targets for each specific year within the five-year timeframe.

The process should aim to ensure that:

- the **VISION** will fulfil the identified **MISSION**.
- the **STRATEGY** will achieve the **VISION**.
- the **TARGETS** will achieve the **STRATEGY**.

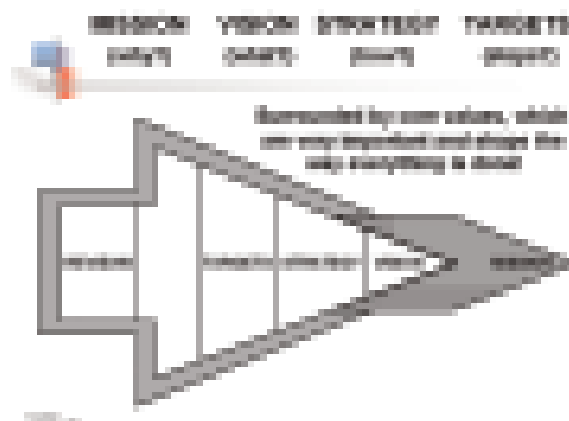
Logically therefore, the **TARGETS** should ultimately achieve the **MISSION**.

## Planning your church's history in advance



Then follows the delivery, with reviews and monitoring all through the process to check that everything is on track, and to make amendments if not. Examples of each stage, and hints on how each church can develop their own MISSION, VISION, STRATEGY and TARGETS will be on the full St Mary's CD resource.

The strategic process is then wrapped with your core values.



### Why values are so important.

Core values are very important because they shape and influence the way everything is done. Good values will deliver a strategy, whereas poor values will not – no matter how good the strategy. It is core values which ultimately transform lives and communities, not programmes.

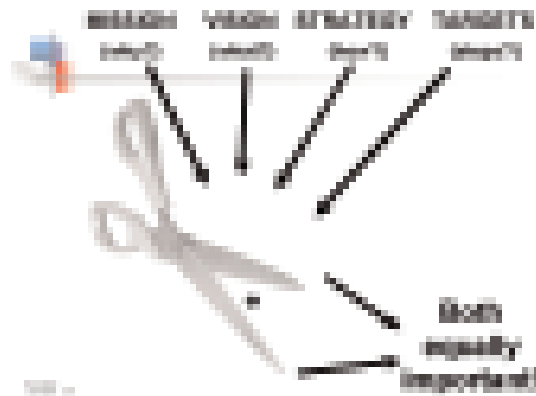
Values are like the Highway Code. The Highway Code will not give you the technical details of how to drive a car, or tell you the route of your particular journey, but it will tell you the manner in which you need to drive.

**So spending time agreeing and re-inforcing values is as important as time spent on the strategy.**



## Planning your church's history in advance

Understanding the key values of your church is critical. Some values will be able to be kept and will enhance the mission of the church. Other values may not be as healthy and may need to change to assist progress. But one thing is for sure, if the right values are not in place, your well thought out plans may never happen! Just as both blades on a pair of scissors are equally important, so strategic planning and values go together!

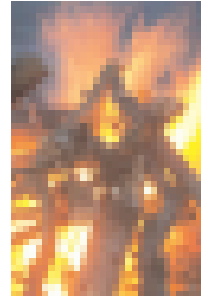


### Planning versus Spontaneity.

As expressed earlier, it is not unspiritual to plan. God planned ahead! But within the plan there needs to be room for the spontaneous acts and promptings of the Holy Spirit. Just as VISION and VALUES are both important blades on a pair of strategic scissors, so also PLANNING and SPONTANEITY are equally important. We need both.



## Planning your church's history in advance



### **Process and structure.**

Local life-changing church communities are God's chosen instrument of transforming the world. Integral to these communities are empowered followers of Christ. Therefore one of the key questions for churches is how we can help people with no faith not only access faith, but also be transformed into empowered followers of Christ. And this process needs to be as accessible and easy as possible for the enquirer, with all possible barriers along the way removed.

The DVD outlines one possible process for making and empowering disciples, which will be covered more fully in the CD resource. Every church community is different, but the resource will give you a helpful structure (like a trellis for a growing plant) which will help you as a church make it as easy as possible for people to find faith and become empowered followers of Christ, enabling them to make a dynamic difference in their communities.

### **Summary.**

It is important to plan. If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail! The CD resource of the 'Arrow' model will give you a helpful tool to create, develop or refine your vision as a church. It will help you work out your core values as a church, and perhaps identify new ones you may need if you wish to grow more. It will also give a useful tool to assess the process people can make in your community who have no faith, to make their journey into empowered followers of Christ, serving in a life-changing, local church community, as easy as possible. If you work through all this well, you will be.....

### **Planning your church's history in advance**

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## FURTHER HELP



## Book List

***Discerning Your Congregation's Future:  
A Strategic and Spiritual Approach***

by Roy M. Oswald, Robert E., Jr. Friedrich,  
Alban Institute  
ISBN: 1566991749

***Raising the Roof:  
The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition***

by Alice Mann  
Alban Institute  
ISBN: 1566992540

***Hope for the Church***

by Bob Jackson  
Church House Publishing  
ISBN: 0715155512

***Growing Leaders***

by James Lawrence  
Bible Reading Fellowship  
ISBN: 1841012467

***Journeying Out:  
A New Approach To Christian Mission***

by Ann Morisy  
ISBN: 0819281018



