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Pastors are often on the lookout for resources to assist them in the ongoing task of self-guided continued education in ministry. In his book, *Making Your Vision a Reality*, Paul Canning intends to provide a proven step-by-step guide to help a pastor assess the lack of vision in a church, develop a strategic plan for reenergizing a church through a new found purpose, and then implement that plan. The book is written for pastors who find themselves in a church where vision is lacking or needs re-articulation. Although a church planter could glean something from the guidelines presented in this book, the majority of ministry and leadership examples provided pertain to an established church that is either on the verge of extinction or has become stagnant due to a lack of vision. The book aims to remedy the problem with a solid dose of vision crafting, casting, and communication.

The knowledge the author shares from his experience of pastoring churches and helping other pastors to implement their vision plans is the greatest strength of this book. I commend the author for seeking to outline a bibli-cally-substantiated plan for developing a vision for a church. Indeed, Canning employs examples taken directly from the biblical narrative and expounds on the leadership lessons learned from people like Moses, Nehemiah, and Paul. In particular, in chapter two, the author attempts to demonstrate how the scriptures provide guidelines for a pastor to lead a church with vision.

Although the book gets off to a good start, it does have some notable weaknesses with regard to content and scope. The book is not written for those trying to start a new church, and at times it even seems to be at odds with more contemporary approaches to church planting. At other times, the author unnecessarily takes shots at leaders who have sought to create Sunday worship experiences with more “dynamic worship services and short sermons designed to tickle ears and attract members” (16). This and other similar critical remarks present a somewhat antagonistic attitude toward the seeker-friendly model more and more contemporary churches have turned to in the last couple of decades. How can one dismiss the recognizable success modern church plants have had in developing a vision and seeing it come to fruition?

Perhaps the book presents a narrow-minded approach to developing a vision for a church because the author considers the task from a very particular perspective. For example, the book presupposes an audience of churches with a lead pastor in the very traditional sense, who has more or less full discretion to implement changes in the liturgy and overall activities of the church. The author also consistently refers to the lead pastor with masculine pronouns. How, though, would it work in a church system where the congregation or the presbytery has been given a greater control of the governance of the local congregation? Thus, although the book has a strong biblical foundation, it would need to consider various forms of ecclesial governance and even focus on issues of multicultural church leadership in order to achieve its purpose for a wider audience.
The major shortcoming this writer finds in this book relates to its shift to a more prescriptive form, beginning with chapter five. Instead of further articulating the inevitable problems a pastor will encounter when seeking to communicate the vision to a ministry team or working towards the completion of a plan, the author provides annotated ministry outlines from his own church. As helpful as this might be from a biblical standpoint, it does not fully consider the practical implications culture and ethnicity have in developing a vision for a church in different ministry contexts. In the end, I hesitantly recommend this book as a sort of biblical study tool a pastoral leadership team could work through as they aim to clarify the vision for their church. But I would advise the reader to seek as a supplement more theologically rigorous works that critically engage contemporary approaches and encourage developing a strategic vision that is more aware of the cultural and ethnic challenges and opportunities facing the church in the twenty-first century.