

Getting Focused: The P.A.W.N. Analysis as a Tool for Developing a Vision for Action

A Quick Introduction

God is on a loving mission to bless, save, heal, reconcile, and set free the whole creation. And God's mission has a church. But how can we know exactly what we should be doing as a church in mission? How can we decide where to focus our resources in order to be most effective and useful to God? After all, there are many things we could do. But most of us have discovered that, if we try to do *everything*, we end up doing nothing well. Many congregations and synods are finding it helpful to use a P.A.W.N. analysis to get a clearer sense of where God is calling them to drill down and focus their energy, time, passion, and financial resources for the sake of really getting something *done*.

What is a P.A.W.N. Analysis?

The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:32-36) reminds us how much *God* values all *people* and calls *us* to do the same. The P.A.W.N. Analysis is based in this simple scriptural model that recognizes all three parties: God, our selves, and our neighbors. It is a tool we use to see how we can begin to think about God's mission and activity in the world – both in a general way and, more specifically, in our own lives and the lives of others. Practically, the P.A.W.N. Analysis is a tool for deciding what we should actually DO once our purpose & direction is clear. There are four key parts to a P.A.W.N. Analysis:

(P) Purpose: This is our role in God's mission. God is up to something and our purpose helps us stay clear about the part we play.

(A) Assets, Gifts and Passions: These are the good things that God has given to you and/or planted in you to use as you carry out your purpose.

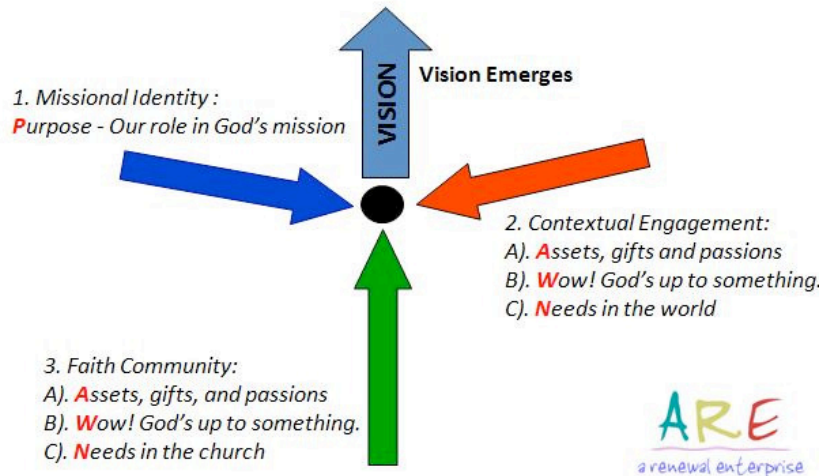
(W) Wow!: God is already doing things and these are the good things that God is already up to.

(N) Needs: What needs or issues are we facing that we need help or added resources to deal with.

Using a P.A.W.N. Analysis, above all, reminds us that our job is to serve the Lord in all things. Like the pawn on a chess board, we are called to be on the front lines of God's mission to love, bless, save, heal, reconcile, and set free the whole world. A diagram of the P.A.W.N. Analysis is on the following page:

Vision: What's Involved?

(Note this assumes God can **and is** doing amazing things in the church and in the world)



You will notice that the diagram above has three arrows pointing IN. One is for our purpose and it is defined by God's mission to bless and save our world and our part in that work. A second arrow is for our context, the neighbors whom God has given us to relate to and partner with. And the third is for the church, the faith community called in baptism to be agents for God in the world. You will also note that BOTH the context and the church share a lot of similarities – both have assets, gifts and passions; both have needs; and both have “wows” – those places and things where God is already at work. There is only one key difference between the church and our context: The church believes it knows a bit about what God is up to because of what God has done in Jesus and what God continues to call us to through the work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the main difference between the church and the world is our sense of *purpose*. But God is on the loose and at work everywhere --- in the church and in the world.

Knowing what to DO, for Christians, comes from being able to see what God is *already doing!* Notice that the fourth arrow – a VISION FOR ACTION - comes OUT from the center. As we see the assets, “wows,” and needs in the church and in our context converge, new ideas for ACTION emerge. Best of all, these actions are POSSIBLE because they spring out of the very real resources God has already given us!

Church leaders are finding the P.A.W.N. Analysis to be a useful tool. But you could also use this same model on your job, at home, and in your neighborhood. God is on the loose and already at work in all those places and beyond. We just need eyes to see and a desire to join in. The P.A.W.N. Analysis gives us a simple way to organize our thoughts and see new ways to make a real difference.