
The Bishop's Certificate and Diploma in
Theology for Ministry

Situation Analysis

for Ministry and Mission

Handbook Three

Church Audit

Name:



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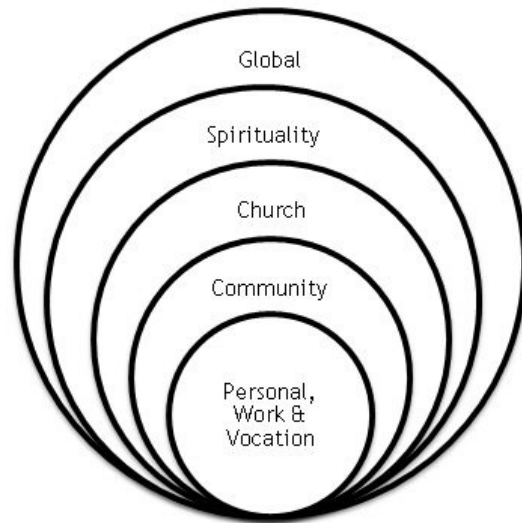
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Introduction to this Handbook

As you embark on your research in this third handbook of guided situation analysis, we recommend that you carefully re-read the *General Introduction* provided in the first handbook (the *Personal, Work and Vocational Audit*). You can also read the *General Introduction* on the NSTM website.



In the first handbook, the *Personal, Work and Vocational Audit*, of this situation analysis process, you addressed some issues relating to your own life, your work and your vocation. You undertook these exercises as a way of understanding the person you are, what makes you ‘tick’, and the ways that your family background, education and work have contributed to the development of your ‘point of view’.

In the second handbook, the *Community Audit*, we turned our attention to the community in which we live and minister in order to gather data that would aid our understanding of the dynamics which shape it and the issues which confront it, so that we could begin to engage in more relevant forms of mission.

In the third handbook, the *Church Audit*, we will endeavour to create a profile of our church as an institution and agency within the local community. Some of you may live in one community but worship or exercise a ministry in a different community. It is intended for this audit that you focus upon the local Church in which you worship and/or share in ministry.

It is worth reminding ourselves at the outset, that the institutional church can be viewed in a variety of ways, some of which you will encounter in your future studies or may have already encountered.

Some people tend to regard the Church as essentially a spiritual and theological phenomenon, as the Body of Christ continuing Jesus' ministry of proclamation, healing and redemption in the contemporary world.

Those who regard the Church primarily in this way can often be disappointed by the way in which the Church and its members can compromise its witness by seemingly behaving in unchristian ways.

Another group of theologians, some of them associated with Latin American liberation theology, regard the church as a people's movement seeking social, economic and political changes which reflect the characteristics of the new Kingdom that Jesus announced.

They view Jesus as a skilled communicator and organizer, establishing a climate of change through what is often referred to as "the Jesus Movement".

This Movement with its humble beginnings amongst the poor and outcast of Israel was internationalised through Saint Paul's work amongst the gentiles, and eventually became such a powerful force that it replaced the Roman Empire when it collapsed.

Those who hold this view may feel frustrated when the Church fails to engage with society and effect social change.

Others think of the Church as essentially a human creation, established by Jesus' followers after his death as the means of carrying on his work in the world.

They take the view that because the Church is created and staffed by humans it consequently has human weaknesses built into its structure.

Following Vatican II in the 1960's and 70's, some Roman Catholic scholars suggested that when considering the nature of sin, we need to think beyond individuals sinning (which each of us is aware of), and beyond entire communities sinning (as the ancient Israelites did on occasions and incurred Jahweh's judgement) to acknowledge that all the structures that we humans have created have human sinfulness built into them.

So we live our lives within sinful social structures and consequently need to be alert to their subtle influence upon us. Thus it is often said that one of the failings of the Church is that its intentional language (about love and acceptance for example) is all too frequently betrayed by its institutional behaviour (as when it becomes judgmental and alienating).

That the Church itself evidences occasions of being a sinful structure is all too clear from its history, one glaring example being the way that a large part of the German Church supported Hitler's regime.

On one occasion at a class in a university in the UK where models of the Church were being discussed, a student confessed that many churches appeared to him to be little more than museums.

While that response created some amusement, there was a serious aspect to the description particularly in a situation where churches are many centuries old and house tombs and monuments to historical events and famous parishioners.

There is a sense in which the church is a cultural and historical monument or repository. While our church buildings may not be as ancient as those in some other countries, many in our diocese stand as similar monuments to the convictions and lives of pioneer settlers, and in some instances, the convicts who built them.

They therefore give testimony to struggles to tame the land, to particular visions of community, and deeply held religious and moral convictions and are signifiers of our Australian history and culture.

Another influential typology is that developed by the American Roman Catholic theologian Cardinal Avery Dulles, who wrote a book which has become a classic, *Models of the Church* (Gill & Macmillan, 1976).

In this work Dulles identifies five major models of the Church. The following is an adapted summary of Dulles from Anne Hope and Sally Timmel in the second volume of their work previously recommended to you *Training, for Transformation* (Mambo Press, 1996):

Model	Motto	Emphasis	Politics
<i>Church as Institution of Salvation</i>	You are Peter, and on this rock ...	Church as means of salvation. Clarification of faith and morals. "Outside the Church there is no salvation"	The Church is a political power; e.g. influence via Christian political parties
<i>Church as Mystical Communion</i>	Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of you	Openness to the Spirit and concern for each individual	Politics worldly and dirty. The Church's role is spiritual and it must not interfere in politics
<i>Church as Herald</i>	Go out into the whole world and proclaim...	Prophetic role: denouncing evil and announcing Good News	Theory of Two Kingdoms: politics the domain of rulers but God rules over all
<i>Church as Sacrament</i>	You are the light of the world	Church as visible sign of God's grace and sign of hope of a new society modelled on the Kingdom	Church has prophetic role: and shows that alternative society is possible through religious communities
<i>Church as Servant of the Kingdom</i>	Let us go outside the camp and share his degradation.	Through involvement with the poor we come to understand God, and Jesus as the "poor servant"	A people's church siding with poor and oppressed; ready to die as an institution; opposing oppressive states

It is clear from these reflections that there are different ways in which people experience and describe the Church. Nor is it a case of “either/or”. A local church can certainly exhibit characteristics of more than one model.

All this is by way of saying that as our situation analysis to date has made us aware that we wear a set of spectacles through which we describe and interpret our social reality, so we also have lenses through which we view the Church. One result of this is that it is quite rare, although sometimes does happen, for all members of a congregation to regard the Church in the same way. Because people have different experiences and expectations of the Church you may well discern a variety of views and practices within your congregation.

It follows that in a congregation where a plurality of views prevail certain tensions and disagreements will emerge, just as they often do within a family. This is nothing to feel disconcerted or embarrassed about. In undertaking our situation analysis we need to be aware that we do not yet inhabit an ideal world. Thus church meetings may exhibit some of the rough and tumble of the deliberations of secular organizations. People may express strongly opposing views simply because they hold on to a different model of the church. So it is good to remind ourselves before embarking upon this exercise that there is no one uniform way of being the church in the world, but a variety of ways, and we may need to reflect that in our situation analysis work.

Before we start this audit it would be a good idea if you could refresh your memory about the expectations relating to your situation analysis journal, together with the notes on the use of the internet and confidentiality. You will find these after the *General Introduction* in the first handbook.

Session One

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

In this first session of the audit you will be collecting some statistical information about the membership of your local Church.

If you are in a multi-centre parish you will need to decide whether it will be more useful for you to collect information for the centre that you most regularly attend, or for all of the centres (if you collect information for all of the centres you will need to distinguish between the statistics for each centre in order to have clear data for future use).

You are being asked to distinguish between the overall membership of the Church (expressed in the members on the Parish Roll and their children) and the regular participants (those who actively and regularly participate in the activities of the Church). This will not normally be exactly the same group of people.

Be careful to remember that there may be regular participants who you do not normally see, people who worship at a different service or on a different day of the week for example.

If you are in a smaller community you may be able to name all those people who are regular participants, but if you are in a larger Church or a multi-centre Parish this may be more complicated and you might like to discuss your impressions and estimates with your parish priest in case you have missed a group of people.

You may need to ask your parish priest whether it would be possible to look at the service registers, and if this is not possible you can complete this part of the audit using estimates taken from your observations.

If you are a member of a parish ministry team, or if you are studying on this programme with others from your local congregation please remember that you can share out these tasks and work collaboratively together on them.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 1. How many adults are formally members of your parish with their names listed on the Parish Roll? How many of them are men and how many of them are women?**
- 2. How many children are associated with the adults who are listed on the Parish Roll? How many of them are boys and how many of them are girls?**
- 3. What is the age profile of the men, women, boys and girls included in the figures in your answers to questions 1 and 2? (It might be helpful to use the following categories: 0-10 years, 10-20 years, 20-40 years, 40-60 years, over 60 years).**
- 4. How many adults would describe themselves as 'regular participants' in the life of your Church? How many of them are men and how many of them are women?**
- 5. How many children are regular participants in the life of your Church? How many of them are boys and how many of them are girls?**

- 6. What is the age profile of the men, women, boys and girls included in the figures in your answers to questions 4 and 5? (It might be helpful to use the following categories: 0-10 years, 10-20 years, 20-40 years, 40-60 years, over 60 years).**

- 7. Compare the statistics that you have discovered in the questions above. How would you summarise your findings about the comparison between the overall membership and the active participants in your local Church?**

- 8. The average age of adults members of the Diocese of Newcastle in 2006 was 64. Work out the average age of adult members of your Church. How does this compare to the average in the Diocese?**

- 9. In your *Community Audit* you focused on your local community. From what you discovered in that audit about your local community compare the active participants in your Church with the people who live in your local area. What are the similarities and what are the differences? (These headings may be helpful for your comparisons: ethnic background, area of the parish in which people live, employment/retired status, age and gender).**

Session Two

PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

In this session we will be focusing on the patterns of worship in your local Church. There are two aspects to our explorations. On the one hand we will be documenting the patterns of worship offered by the Church, and on the other hand we will be trying to uncover the patterns of attendance and participation by members.

Patterns of worship differ across the Diocese. In some parishes a snap shot of one week of worship will describe the regular pattern throughout the year, in other parishes (particularly in multi-centre parishes) the snap shot may need to be taken over one month or longer in order to uncover the actual pattern of regular worship that is offered.

There was a time in Australian Anglicanism when 'regular attendance' was considered to be 'weekly attendance'. Patterns of attendance are now much more complicated, and in some cases people will want to assert that they attend regularly by coming once each fortnight, once each month or once every few months. Uncovering these patterns of attendance will be helpful for you as you build up an accurate picture of parish life.

Here again you will need to draw upon your skills of becoming a 'participant observer' (somebody who is participating in an activity while at the same time being observant of what is going on.)

You may need to ask your parish priest whether it would be possible to look at the service registers, and if this is not possible you can complete this part of the audit using estimates taken from your observations.

If you are a member of a parish ministry team, or if you are studying on this programme with others from your local congregation please remember that you can share out these tasks and work collaboratively together on them.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

10. What is the pattern of Sunday worship offered by your local Church?

If the pattern of services is not the same every week describe the full pattern or what is offered over a longer period.

11. What is the pattern of week day worship?

12. What proportion of regular participants attend worship every week?

13. What proportion of regular participants attend the same worship every week, and what proportion move between different worship opportunities?

14. What proportion of regular participants rarely attend worship on Sundays?

15. What proportion of regular participants rarely attend worship during the week?

16. How many regular participants have a specific role in Sunday worship? (this might include such activities as reading, leading intercessions, welcoming and hospitality, singing in the choir and serving.)

- 17. How many regular participants have a specific role in week day worship?**

- 18. In the past year how many baptisms, weddings and funerals have been conducted?**

Session Three

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

In many parishes the life of the local Church is made up of many activities in addition to worship.

There will normally be opportunities for Anglicans to gather together for fellowship, mutual care and encouragement in faith.

There will normally be groups that meet to be nourished in their understanding of Christianity, either in home groups or in formation programmes on the Church site.

There will normally be activities that seek to meet the needs of those who are not members of the Church who live in the local area.

In some parishes there are activities that seek to raise funds for specific ministries in the local Church and mission partnerships through mission agencies and other charities, and in almost all parishes there are groups that meet to maintain and improve the buildings and grounds.

There may be activities for children, young people, young parents, women's groups, men's groups and opportunities to gather around particular themes or interests.

Some of these activities will have been initiated by and continue to be led by members of the local Church, others may be offered by external organisations that make use of the Church's facilities.

In this session you will be auditing the activities of your local Church in order to uncover more fully the life of your parish. If there are activities that do not fit easily into the questions in this session please note these at an appropriate point.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

19. Try to list all of the activities in the life of your local Church under the following headings: (add more applicable headings if you need to)

- **Mutual (Pastoral) care and fellowship for members of the Church;**
- **Fundraising for the parish, mission agencies and other charities;**
- **Opportunities for nurturing, study and building faith;**
- **Assistance to those in need in the local community;**
- **Maintenance of buildings and grounds;**
- **Specific ministries for children, young people and other groups of people.**

20. Look at the list of activities that you have developed. Approximately how many people are involved as leaders in each of these activities?

21. Look at the list of activities that you have developed. Approximately how many people are involved as participants in each of these activities?

- 22. Look at the list of activities that you have developed. Which of the activities are led by clergy and which are led by lay people? Compare which activities are led by each.**

- 23. Look at the list of activities that you have developed. How many of these activities take place in Church buildings and how many take place in other venues? What types of other venues are used?**

- 24. Which external groups use your Church buildings? (You might like to distinguish between groups that use the buildings without charge as an extension of the ministries of the Church, and those that use the buildings through a hire/payment arrangement).**

Session Four

CHURCH FINANCES

How we allocate our personal financial resources is one of the greatest indicators of our priorities in life. If a young father said that his first priority was to care for and support his young family at the same time as spending the greater proportion of his salary on gambling, for example, there would be a mis-match between the priorities that he voiced and the priorities that he enacted.

Whilst vision statements and mission plans give voice to our priorities as a Church, how parishes actually allocate their financial resources is one of the greatest indicators of their priorities and vision.

In this session you will be seeking to discover the financial resources available in your local parish, and how these are used for mission, ministry and maintenance.

The stewardship of financial resources can often become a hotly debated issue in church affairs. Some parishes are fortunate that they are beneficiaries of gifts from former generations, others have no such resource.

Some parishes have a history of faithful and often sacrificial giving by parishioners, others do not. You will need to be alert to the fact that asking questions about the use of financial resources needs to be undertaken sensitively, recognising the many competing demands for resources.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 25. Locate a copy of the latest annual ministry budget for your parish and copy this into your situation analysis learning journal.**
- 26. What are the four most significant areas of income listed in the budget?**
- 27. What are the four most significant areas of expenditure listed in the budget?**
- 28. What proportion of the income comes from the giving of parishioners, and what proportion from other sources? What are the other sources?**
- 29. Are there additional financial resources available to the parish that are not included in the annual ministry budget? Where do these come from? Who decides how these are allocated?**
- 30. How would you describe the proportion of the budget spent on 'maintenance' in comparison to the proportion spent on 'local mission and ministry' and the proportion spent on 'mission and ministry beyond the parish'?**
- 31. What is the process for developing and agreeing the annual ministry budget in your parish?**
- 32. What mission and ministry projects would you parish like to engage in if the financial resources were available?**
- 33. What proportion of your parish income goes to mission and other church-related activities beyond the parish (for example to Mission societies or Samaritans)?**

Session Five

CHURCH STRUCTURES

In this session we are focusing on Church structures, by which we do not mean Church buildings and memorials, rather the leadership frameworks that are in place for the smooth operation of the life of the Church.

At a conference of priests in the Diocese a couple of years ago the facilitator led the clergy in an interesting exercise around structures. People symbolising the various office holders in the Diocese (Bishop, Bishop's staff, priests, lay leaders, members of the congregation) were asked to stand at the front, and then various of the clergy were asked to place these symbolic people into the structures that exist in the Diocese.

On the first attempt the ordering was something like: Bishop relating to Archdeacon, relating to Area Dean, relating to parish priest, relating to lay leaders, relating to congregation. As we look at the Diocese that certainly goes some of the way to describing the structures that we have in place.

But one member of the clergy wanted the ordering of the structures to be quite different. The people were moved around so that the structure began by with the congregation, being served by the lay leaders, who in turn were enabled by the parish priest, who was resourced by the Area Dean and the Archdeacon and other members of the Bishop's staff, and indeed the Bishop himself.

Within the life of the Church there are both formal (and often legally binding structures) and informal structures and spheres of influence as well.

In this session we are going to engage in a mapping exercise similar to the mapping that we developed in the *Community Audit*. This time our focus will be the structures of the Anglican Church of Australia.

In response to the first task it may be possible to locate a diagram of how the Anglican Church is structured nationally with its Provinces, Dioceses, Bishops, General Synod, Commissions and Committees; or you might encounter this information in written form in which case you will need to express the various relationships diagrammatically. In this way you can create a map of the web of relationships through which our Diocese relates to the wider Anglican Church.

Then secondly we invite you to draw a similar diagram of the structure of our Diocese with its Bishop, office holders, synod, parishes, organisations and commissions.

Thirdly you are asked to construct a diagram of the way that your parish is structured. This will be different depending on whether your parish has a ministry team in place, and depending on the number of centres and organisations that are active.

Then fourthly, and very importantly, we want you to consider whether there is an informal structure that you experience alongside the formal structure of your local Church. Informal structures, very often based upon friendships and interests can often be as powerful an influence upon us as the formal ones.

Finally you are invited to place yourself at the centre of a diagram illustrating how you perceive all these structures relating to you. You may consider some of the structures to exercise far more influence over you than others and you could indicate these by using thicker lines or arrows. Don't forget to include the informal structures if you have identified any, in this diagram.

Please respond to the following tasks in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 34. Draw a diagram of the national structure of the Anglican Church of Australia.**
- 35. Construct a diagram of the way that our Diocese of Newcastle is structured.**
- 36. Produce a diagram of the structure of your local Church or parish.**
- 37. If you are aware of an informal structure which is also important to local Church life, express this as a diagram.**
- 38. Finally, place yourself at the centre of a diagram and indicate how, if at all, these various structures touch you.**

Session Six

DECISION-MAKING

The process through which decisions are reached is crucial to all levels of our lives and you may recall from earlier exercises in social analysis that survival (economics), our values and behaviours (socio-cultural) and our decision-making (politics) are important analytical categories at all levels of human existence.

This is equally true of parish life, where we may discover any number of decision-making processes at work ranging from “Father knows best” to ‘the oldest member of the congregation knows best” to “reflective processes for making decisions” or even “anything goes”. Decisions in some places are able to be made quickly, and in other places similar decisions are made on the basis of the slowest person in the room.

We need to remember that, whatever our experience may feel like sometimes, we are not a congregational Church. Anglicans are episcopally-led (through the leadership of the Bishop) and synodically governed (through our representatives in the Synod of the Diocese). Some decisions are also limited by the canons and formularies of the our Church.

Our Anglican Church is a hierarchical body where decisions reached at various levels (which you identified in last session’s mapping exercise) inform our lives at parish level. Local congregations also have enormous freedom to make decisions about mission and ministry within the broad parameters of the Church.

In this session we are going to explore how decisions are made in your local Church.

The issue of decision-making in the Church is not always as clear-cut as we might like it to be. It is also of course a theological issue raising questions about the nature of the Church and its authority; for example whether the Church is a theocracy (governed by God) or a democracy (governed by its members), or an organisation that at times exhibits elements of both, or another method of decision-making.

We also need to be aware that the history of the Church is littered with conflicts, and even wars, over who has the right to make decisions about Church governance or policy, be it Popes, Kings, Government, courts or bishops or the laity.

Whenever we are thinking about decision-making in any area much is revealed if we recite the situation analysis mantra which runs: 'Who decides? Who benefits? Who is disadvantaged?'

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 39. Describe how decision-making in your local Church works in theory (what are the formal structures for decision-making)?**
- 40. How does it work in practice? What differences are there between this answer and the one that you gave above?**
- 41. How is leadership exercised in your local Church? How would you describe the dominant model?**
- 42. To what extent and in what ways are Church members encouraged and able to participate in decision-making?**
- 43. When conflict emerges in your local Church, through what process(es) is it generally resolved?**

Session Seven

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

In this session we will be looking outside of the boundaries of the activities of the local Church in order to try to identify the pattern of relationships that your congregation has established beyond itself.

On the one hand this may indicate the ways in which your local Church has been able to look outwards and make connections within the local community and perhaps more internationally. On the other hand this may also indicate the extent to which your local Church is influenced by forces beyond itself as well.

Most parishes in the Diocese have connections through our mission agencies with the work of the Church in many parts of the world. Some congregations have specific links with missionaries that are known personally to members of the local congregation, or with projects that have had a particular significance with member of the Church.

Some parishes also have connections with other charitable organisations (Christian or otherwise) that seek to undertake particular work locally, nationally or internationally.

We all have a global network of connections through the Anglican Communion, brought alive through our daily cycle of prayer for Anglican ministries around the world.

This section will help us to identify some of these connections.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 44. Is your local Church connected with a particular mission project or missionary through one of the mission agencies? How is this kept alive, what are the responsibilities of each party in the relationship?**
- 45. Is your local Church connected with local community organisations or forums? If so, what do you perceive to be the value that the Church brings to these organisations? Who practically represents the Church to these groups?**
- 46. Is your local Church connected with a link parish in another Diocese? If so, what has this experience been like?**
- 47. Is your local Church associated with a particular movement or organisation in the wider Church? If so, what benefits does this bring to the congregation? Who initiated the relationship, and how is it kept alive?**
- 48. Is your local Church engaged in an ecumenical partnership with other churches in your area? If so, what forms does this partnership take?**
- 49. In what ways does our membership of the Anglican Communion impact upon your local Church?**

Session Eight

ETHOS

When we speak about the ethos of something, we are using a rather elusive concept. The term refers to the distinctive character, spirit, attitudes or “genius” of an institution, movement or culture. It is that combination of attributes to which outsiders may be attracted or by which they may be repelled.

If you are one of those people who has a passion for visiting churches here or overseas you will be familiar with the impact of the way in which a Church presents itself from the statement its architecture makes, through its use of colour, light and decoration, to the manner in which its ceremonies and rituals are performed, the quality of its preaching and music, right down to the character of the welcome that visitors receive from its members.

These and many other features combine to create a positive, neutral or negative impression upon the visitor.

It is an assessment of the impression that your Church offers to the outsider that we are endeavouring to identify in this session.

Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 50. What do you think the physical surroundings, the architecture, and the decoration and upkeep of your Church say to a first-time visitor?**
- 51. What provision is made for welcoming people through signs, symbols or persons?**
- 52. To what degree do you think visitors would be attracted by your liturgy, music, preaching and teaching?**
- 53. What cultural influences can be detected in your Church's architecture, decoration and ornaments?**
- 54. What aspects of your parish life would encourage a visitor to want to come back?**
- 55. Do you have an intentional system in place for welcoming visitors, following them up after their visit, and helping them to understand the ethos and distinctives of your local congregation?**

Session Nine

LITURGICAL AUDIT – PART ONE

For the next three sessions our focus becomes more specific as we embark upon a liturgical audit, analysing the style, content and impact of our particular liturgical tradition. This section of the audit is particularly relevant to course *CM105: Liturgy and Life: Worship and the Christian Year* which you are studying at the moment.

You should be able to establish some links between the questions that you are addressing in this audit, and the learnings that you are gaining from the study blocks.

Some of the information that you are asked to collect in this and the following sessions might be derived from your own observations of liturgy in your local setting.

In other instances it would be as well to draw on impressions other than your own, by conducting simple interviews with several members of your local congregation.

You have been developing your interview skills over the whole situation analysis process and here is another opportunity to put them into practice. Interviewing a range of parishioners will enable you to produce a much more comprehensive survey of liturgical issues.

Again, don't forget that this can be a collaborative task shared with other participants in the programme, and your Parish Ministry Team if applicable.

We begin our liturgical audit through the following questions. Please respond to them in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 56. What are the central focuses in the worship space of your Church building?**
- 57. What do you think the interior of your Church says about the theology of those who built it in relation to (1) God, (2) the Christian community, and (3) ministry?**
- 58. Do you think that the theology that the building expresses are at odds with or the same as the current theological understandings of the congregation?**
- 59. Who plans the liturgy in your parish? To what extent are lay people involved in the creative tasks of planning liturgy, arranging and decorating the space, and leading worship?**
- 60. What symbols are used in your regular worship, and what do they signify?**
- 61. What music is used in your liturgy? Who chooses the style of the music? How is the music played?**
- 62. Would you describe the regular worship that you attend as (1) the same every week, (2) different every week, (3) surprising every week? If none of these describe your experience, use other words that are more appropriate?**
- 63. What would you like your worship to be like?**

Session Ten

LITURGICAL AUDIT – PART TWO

In this session we continue our liturgical audit by responding to further questions. Remember to try to elicit the views of others as you reflect on these questions. Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 64. How flexible is your worship area when you want to use the space to express something different?**
- 65. What have been the three most radical changes in the way that liturgy is done in your local Church in recent years?**
- 66. Is innovation in worship generally welcomed or resisted? What measures are taken to deal with resistance?**
- 67. To what extent, if any, are environmental concerns reflected in your liturgy, eg references to creation, issues of energy consumption, sustainability, etc**
- 68. In what ways does your Church enable children and/or young people to worship in a way that is relevant to them?**
- 69. In what ways are the gifts of men, women and children in your congregation employed in your liturgies?**

Session Eleven

LITURGICAL AUDIT – PART THREE

This session we complete our liturgical audit. Please respond to the following questions in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 70. What do people in your local Church think that the purpose of weekly worship is?**
- 71. In what specific ways does your liturgy embrace the past, the present and the future?**
- 72. In what ways are contemporary events – local, national or international – acknowledged in your liturgy?**
- 73. To what degree is your liturgy representative of, or related to the culture(s) of your neighbourhood?**
- 74. From your conversations, do Church members have any recommendations to make about improving the quality of worship?**
- 75. What mechanisms are in place for reviewing or evaluating liturgy and making changes to it in your local Church?**

Session Twelve

CHURCH STORY-TELLING

In this final session of the *Church Audit* we are introducing you to a new tool for situation analysis, that of storytelling.

“Collective memory” is a sociological term which creates a distinction between those memories which are individual and those which are shared.

Collective memories are constructed, shared and passed on by and within a particular group of people, thus becoming one of the foundations of group solidarity and coherence, as well as creating a sense of history and purpose.

An illustration of the difference between individual and collective memory are our Anzac Day remembrances. Individually we may recall family members who gave their lives in conflict: collectively we gather as groups at War Memorials to recall events like Gallipoli which are etched into our nation’s history as collective memory.

The American professor James Hopewell explored the relevance of this concept to Church groups in his very influential book *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1987).

Hopewell set out to establish how local churches managed to hold together in the face of strains and pressures. His research indicated that congregations use narrative or stories to capture their corporate experience and describe their common life, and the telling and re-telling of these stories enable the group to comprehend and explain its nature and its mission.

So the final exercise in this audit is to try to ascertain and identify a few of the stories which are part of your congregation's collective memory.

These might be stories about a former vicar or character in the congregation, they may be associated with a 'golden age' or about hard times in the parish's history; they may be linked with the development of new buildings, or even with the start of the parish (which may have been in living memory); they may be amusing or tragic stories, or about hurtful or healing episodes, about fun times shared, successes celebrated or particular challenges faced.

In order for this exercise to be effective it would be helpful if you could engage in purposeful listening with at least three members of the congregation. For this purpose try to identify one of the people who has been a member of the congregation for a very long time. Try also to identify someone, or a number of people who may have a different perspective on the story of the Church. If you can, talk with someone who has been involved in your local congregation for less than three years?

Please respond to the following tasks in your situation analysis learning journal:

- 76. Provide brief outlines of some of the stories representative of your congregation's "collective memory".**
- 77. Do any of the stories contradict each other? Do any of the stories provide a different perspective on the same event?**
- 78. If you were able to talk to a relatively new member of the congregation, had they been told these stories by others, or did they have different stories to tell you?**
- 79. What do you think the stories that you heard told you about the key elements of the collective memory of your local congregation?**

You need to bring your situation analysis journal to the session at the next learning weekend so that you can discuss it with your fellow participants.

Please therefore do not submit your situation analysis journal to your local group leader until after the learning weekend.