



Trinity College
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Trinity Certificate in Theology & Ministry



Tutors' Manual

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**Trinity College Theological School
Certificate in Theology and Ministry**

Tutor's Manual



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Written by Charles Sherlock, for Trinity College Theological School.

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Introduction

Welcome to your role as a tutor for the Trinity Certificate in Theology and Ministry. You have *just one* essential task – to assist each member of your group in exploring their experience of Christian faith. You are not being asked to give lectures, make presentations or be the expert, but to assist others' learning through being an effective leader of the group.

This Manual aims to help you in this task, and accompanies the workbook for each Unit. Let's start, however, with some practical matters, without which little learning will take place!

The schedule of meetings

An important initial task is planning the meeting-times for the group for which you will be the tutor. The 'standard' schedule for each Unit is a weekly two-hour workshop-style meeting (at any appropriate day and time). This allows participants adequate time to prepare and respond to each session, and maintains learning momentum in the group.

There will be circumstances, however, in which this is impractical (the tutor's personal comfort is not such a factor!). In such cases you will need to work out a suitable series of meeting-times, and the following suggestions are made:

- It is strongly recommended that the first group meeting for each Unit cover one or at most two workbook sessions: in the latter case, participants need to be given significant notice.
- No group meeting should seek to work through three sessions – one is plenty, two is taxing and three is likely to leave many members near brain-dead ... and someone who misses a multi-session meeting has a major hole in the learning!
- The time between successive group meetings should be no longer than three weeks, or learning momentum is lost.

Groups in rural areas where distance is a problem could consider meeting for alternate sessions once a fortnight, using Skype for a phone-conference meeting: this can work well for up to six voices, though the tutor will need to learn how to run such a 'voices only' meeting. A web chat-room may assist in such circumstances, though the interactive group-learning ethos of the Certificate makes it unsuitable for a wholly online-learning mode.

The strategy of learning

The pedagogy of the Trinity Certificate aims to be *transformative* rather than only *informative*, though this is an important dimension. Some group members may come to the course expecting to hear lectures, and 'take in' information as relatively passive participants. This is a natural expectation, and appropriate in many other courses - but is not how this particular course is designed.

The Group Work is the heart and hub of the course, its key learning strategy. It revolves around the conviction that enabling group members to discuss and reflect on their own ideas and thoughts, and listen to those of others, is a fruitful pedagogy for mutual adult learning about God, about Christian belief, about one another, and about our own faith.

NB: The above learning strategy works best when a group includes 8-10 members. Fewer members can mean that the range of life-experience, personality and theological perspective is limited, while more can make it difficult for everyone to have opportunity to speak. But there will be situations where an ideal number is impossible – adapt accordingly!

The role of the tutor

The tutor's role is to *help each group member learn*, not to impress everyone with their knowledge! You are asked to guide the group through each session, making sure that everyone has a chance to contribute (and be quiet, as appropriate).

Group members are encouraged to ask you to clarify issues, or respond to questions which they are interested in. Experience shows that most participants in theological education find themselves deeply challenged at some point, and the Certificate is no exception. But since session time is limited, and few issues in Christian faith and life can be settled in five minutes, resist the temptation to respond to every question in detail – trust that the Unit overall will cover major matters of relevance to its theme. Group members are asked to approach you about such issues, preferably before the relevant session, and be sensitive to the needs and interests of others.

You, as the Unit tutor, are above all a living resource, recognised by Trinity College Theological School as a thoughtful Christian able to bring your knowledge, life and ministry experience to serve the group's learning.

NB: Trinity Certificate materials do not use (male) pronouns for God. But do not become artificial in our own use of gendered (or other) words, or the way group members speak.

Preparation - general

In order to be able to lead your group effectively, three overall preliminary tasks are needed:

- 1 *Read quickly through the whole workbook for your Unit (this may take an hour or so).*

As you go, look to gain a sense of the overall thrust and contents of the Unit, so that you can place each session within a wider framework of the learning involved. Note any sessions where you feel that you could be at a loss with the group – an area of theology or ministry you have not studied, a dimension of life you find uncomfortable or have problems with, for example. (Don't worry about minor points, or particular aspects of a session at this stage.)

If you believe you need to do some further preparation for one or two sessions, contact a local person who can help you (e.g. your parish priest) or contact the Certificate Coordinator at Trinity – email is usually easiest.

If you come to believe that you could not be a tutor for the Unit, please contact the Certificate administrator immediately.

- 2 *Visit the place where the group will meet, even if you know it well.*

Consider these factors, each of which is important for effective learning:

- *space*: is the room big enough for all to fit in, but not 'barn-like' in size and feel?
- *temperature*: is the heating available sufficient to avoid participants feeling frozen? (Cooling down when it is hot is no so easily fixed, beyond waiting until after sunset.)
- *seating*: is it reasonably comfortable, and can it be easily moved so that members can readily break into small groups or 2 or 3?
- *privacy*: is the space quiet and free of noise and distractions, so that people can readily hear one another in privacy?
- *visibility*: will you be able to see each person's face in the group?
- *facilities*: is the proposed meeting place accessible for people with mobility problems? Are toilets available? Is it easy for members to make a cuppa (and clean up)?

- 3 *Check the contact details for each member, especially those you do not know.*

The administration of each group is the responsibility of the local body supporting the Certificate, not of Trinity College Theological School. As the tutor, you are responsible for keeping a record of attendance, grading assessments for the Unit concerned, and sending these to the Certificate administrator at Trinity.

Preparation - particular

For each session in the Unit, you will need to undertake the following preparation:

1. *Complete the 'Preparation for the Session' section for yourself, as a group member.*

Apart from being familiar with what each participant is asked to do, this will enable you to be ready to offer your own responses at the appropriate time during the group session – if that is helpful. Avoid giving members the impression that your response must always be 'right' – what is mostly sought is personal engagement, rather than 'orthodox' answers.

2. *Mark statements which group members might find puzzling, problematic or off-putting.*

You do not need to become an expert in resolving them, but should do some reading, or ask for assistance, in areas which may get the group 'off the track'.

Notes for each session are provided to assist tutors in their preparation: as well as offering suggestions, they seek to anticipate typical 'neuralgic' areas. Some are given headings for easy reference if you want to check them when preparing sessions in other Units.

3. *Work through the 'Group Work' materials, thinking yourself through each stage.*

Suggestions are made in the margin of each session's workbook as to when it would best for the full group to work together (e.g. in giving their responses from homework), or when people might be better working in small groups or as individuals. Please note that these are *suggestions*, and should be varied depending on the make-up and size of the group.

Taking your group into account, pencil time-points in the margin of the 'Group Work' notes, indicating when you think the group should move on to the next task. This will give you a sense of how the two hours – 120 minutes! – might best be used, and during the group meeting will help you know when it is appropriate to move on.

It is good practice to have a short break in the middle of each session, but don't let this drag out – the notes for each session usually make some suggestions as to when this might fall.

Leading a group meeting

Apologies if the following notes tell well-practiced group leaders to 'suck eggs', but the role of the tutor is so important that failing to give some guidance would be irresponsible.

1. **Be early** to welcome people, and always start and end **on time** – especially for the first meeting. Having a kettle boiled so participants can make a cuppa is rarely unappreciated!

At the first session, check on the names, contact details and fee status of each group member. **Contact details are confidential to yourself and the Trinity Certificate Coordinator**, and may not be shared with the group unless each member listed has given their permission.

2. It is Trinity's practice to **open and close classes in prayer**: a good range can be found in *APBA*, while informal prayer is quite acceptable. After the first couple of weeks, encourage others to volunteer to take up this ministry for the following session.
3. Each group member should be expected to complete their **preparatory work**, as best they can, whether or not they intend to complete the assessment tasks. This is not only for the sake of their own learning, but also for their contribution to that of others.

If a person fails to do any preparation for more than one session without good cause, the question of their ongoing participation should be raised with them in private.

4. Encourage all present to **express their opinions**, but some will be happy to engage through active listening. Use questions to clarify a person's ideas rather than 'set them right'.

If someone dominates a session, insists on their view being imposed on other, or is argumentative, speak with them before the session.

5. During the session, when giving prepared responses to session preparation work, encourage participants to read just what they have written: **avoid 'off the cuff' responses** – but be sensitive to those for whom reading aloud may be difficult.
6. From time to time people will look to you to explain a point. Keep an eye on what topics are coming up later in the Unit, or in other Units, and **do not give 'lectures'**. Say 'I don't know' if you don't, recommend appropriate reading but don't hesitate to offer a succinct response.
7. Certificate course notes, while noting an appropriate variety of Christian opinion, are careful not to propose ideas that contest mainstream Christian belief without indicating this.

Participants should not need to have concerns about the 'orthodoxy' of each Unit – many popular ideas of 'orthodoxy' are quite false! That said, the way questions are posed – even in this superbly written course! – shape the possible responses.

You may find some aspects of this Certificate's notes or processes less than satisfactory: if so, please don't hesitate to make a note, and pass your comments on to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator at the end of the Unit, as part of the evaluation process.

Concluding the Unit

1. The last session is always a little special: arranging for some nice eats is recommended, and opportunity should be given for participants to embarrass you with their appreciation!
2. Ensure that each group member receives an Evaluation form at the last session. Ask one of the group to collect these, and post them to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator in a stamped, pre-addressed envelope, so that members feel free to comment without pressure.
3. Look back at the 'Aims' and 'Outcomes' sections at the beginning of each Unit workbook.

To what extent do you believe that these were fulfilled?

Is there anything which stands out as calling for change in your role for another Unit?

Are there aspects of the workbook or learning processes which worked really well, or failed badly?

Reflecting on such questions will help you prepare your own evaluation of the Unit, which should be sent within two weeks to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator. Some indication of your availability to tutor further Units is always appreciated.

4. Please submit the results of assessment for *all* group members along with your evaluation. Experience has shown that it is helpful if Trinity's records include all participants, whether or not assessment is completed.

Assessment

The Trinity Certificate is not a competitive course – units are graded as 'Complete', 'Incomplete' or 'Audited'. The aim is for group members to learn with and from each other.

Experience shows that people who attend and participate in the classes and do the preparation tasks usually do well in this course, and find the assessment tasks an integrative opportunity rather than a burden.

The assessment requirements are as follows: explain the options at the first meeting, including the date for work to be handed in:

1. **A person must attend and participate in 6 of the 8 sessions, or 7 of 9 sessions in each Unit.** To assess this, ensure that an accurate record of attendance is maintained.

The tutor also assesses each group member's involvement in and contribution to the group as a whole. This is primarily assessed by keeping a record of how each one has undertaken the 'Preparation for the Session' tasks – what matters is that they have been done, not that they have been done particularly well!

Very occasionally a person may be present at a session, but not 'there'. It is important that you respond, not in the first place for assessment purposes, but because it is likely that something is wrong and you need to ascertain what pastoral issue may be involved.

3. **A written exercise, group project, or creative option must be completed satisfactorily, for credit to be given for a Unit.**

This should normally be submitted within two weeks of the last group meeting – requests for extension must be received before the last group meeting, and should not be extended beyond four weeks after the last group meeting.

It is your responsibility to return each student's work within two weeks of it being received, with written comments designed to help them continue to learn from their study in the Unit. If there is likely to be any delay in this, contact the Certificate Coordinator immediately.

Further resources for tutors

Tutors have borrowing rights from the Leeper Library at Trinity College, but to do so you need to register with the library: see www.trinity.unimelb.edu.au/resources/library. Registered tutors can then access the Leeper Library's online catalogue and have books mailed out to them – the catalogue can be found on the main library page.

If you wish to purchase books, Ridley College Bookshop offers excellent service: its website gives access to current specials – <http://bookshop.ridley.edu.au> - and you can subscribe to their email service to receive information about new books and offers.

Tutors can find further resources and online discussion groups for the Certificate online at the Trinity Portal: go to <https://www.trinitycollege.vic.edu.au/mfp/> and click on the **My TCTS** link. You can then log in – your account will have been created by the Certificate Coordinator – and select **Certificate in Theology and Ministry Homepage**.

Contacting the Certificate Coordinator

The Certificate Coordinator, Dr David Gormley O'Brien, can be contacted at

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Thanks for being willing to take on this important role!

Unit 1 – Experiencing Christian Faith

Introduction

Unit 1 will introduce the Certificate to many participants, so it is especially important that you model and establish a good pattern of learning for the group. In particular, your task entails taking care to ensure that each member is appreciated, given space to participate, and that their personal faith – no matter how idiosyncratic you may think it is! – is respected.

As each person experiences this Unit as engaging, safe and accessible, she or he is better equipped to undertake those which follow, as well as growing as a Christian believer.

This Unit introduces participants to a variety of typical experiences areas though which Christian faith is known and expressed – *their* experience of *their* faith in Jesus Christ, which may be tentative, warm, firm, muddled, long-lived or as small as a tiny seed (and Jesus said something about the last ...). Being open about this, and open to others, *includes the tutor*. You are not only the guide for the group, but also a member, a fellow-learner and disciple.

The sessions in this Unit cover wide range of topics, crossing all the traditional theological disciplines – Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, Ethics, Liturgy, Spirituality etc.! So it is hard to suggest particular reading which you might undertake in preparation, but I encourage you to consider the books listed in the ‘further reading’ section. Reviews may help you decide which may help you and your group, and can be found by ‘googling’ the titles: some useful ones can be found by clicking on these addresses, if you are online:

Alister McGrath:

www.lavoisier.fr/notice/frVWORO6OARAWOKR.html

Tom Wright:

www.americanbible.org/brcpages/review-simplychristian

Rowan Williams:

rdtwot.wordpress.com/2008/01/13/724/

Now please work through the ‘Preparation – General’ tasks outlined above for this Unit.

Session 1 - Beginning the Journey

Preparation: Work through 'Preparation – particular' in this Manual as applied to Unit 1.

If you are not familiar with Luke 24, read it carefully (the printed text is from the NRSV), possibly looking up other versions: *The Message* is recommended as a complement to the NRSV for the Certificate, and hyperlinks in the workbook point to this.

If necessary, look up a commentary or guide (suggestions are given in the workbook): Luke 24 is frequently used to reflect on the Christian journey of faith, as for example during the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* in 2010, for which excellent resources are online: www.ncca.org.au/departments/faith-Unity.

If you wish the group to join in a closing prayer (see below), have copies made.

Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all group members know one another already, prepare tags with each member's Christian name in large print.

Make sure that the meeting-place is ready, and that a cuppa is available.

Opening: The notes which follow are more detailed than will be the case in later sessions, but seek to serve as examples of how the Certificate is designed to run.

Open the session with a time of quiet, then a short prayer – those in *APBA* pages 23 #10, page 36 #4, page 206 #14, page 213 #38, page 216 #47 are suitable, but one you have found from other sources or written yourself for use in the group is fine.

Welcome people to the group, and make sure you can see each person. Let them know when the meeting will finish, and note where the toilets are.

Group Work: Exercises 1 and 2 are 'ice-breakers' to start the Unit off, and should be used even if some, or all, of the group may already know each other well – but keep them short!

1. Done in the full group.
2. People should speak with a person next to them – there is no need to move.

Allow 2 minutes for each person.

When all have spoken, emphasise the point about listening being as important as speaking in this Unit, and that your role is not to give lectures, but guidance.

3. Have people move into small groups (ideally threesomes), far enough apart so that each small group can converse without too much distraction from others. Then ask them to proceed with the exercise given – allow up to 15 minutes for this.

When the full group has come together, explain the overall course structure, and draw attention to the Unit Contents, noting your group's meeting dates. Ask if there are any questions, and make sure that everyone is comfortable about these.

Note the assessment tasks briefly, and encourage all participants to do these, but don't push for decisions at this session. If each prepares and participates in the first few sessions, they will find the formal assessment task less foreboding – each can decide whether or not to take the Unit for credit around sessions 6 or 7.

4. From what you have gleaned of participant's likely reading confidence, ask three people in turn to read aloud, slowly, one of the printed paragraphs.

NB: *These paragraphs presuppose that participants identify as Christians, but are careful not to assume what level of commitment this might entail. If someone says they do not have Christian faith, but wants to take part – encourage them!*

Care has also been taken to avoid the word 'individual' in these paragraphs: in common use it has the notion of a person living without relationships to others. The Certificate course aims to help participants learn both as individuals *and* as a group.

5. Ask each person to think for a moment or two about their response to the question, then write down a few words about this. If someone does not have a pen, don't make a fuss, just encourage them to be ready to state their opinion succinctly.

After a few minutes, ask participants to read their responses – perhaps choosing people at random, rather than 'going round the table', so that participants do not get nervous about the arrival of their turn.

DO NOT exclude any opinions – the point is not that some may have clearer or fuller ideas than others, but that each is honest in saying what they think, and giving you and the group an idea of where they are coming from. You may wish to take a few brief notes of possible issues some may have with the Unit, to inform your preparation of particular sessions.

NB: Members will often be asked in their Preparation for Sessions to write their ideas down and be willing to read them back. Apart from its intrinsic value, the exercise described above gives familiarity to this practice.

By now the group meeting is probably at the 45-60 minutes mark, and a short break is recommended. Don't let people move too far from the room, and make sure the group resumes in 7-8 minutes – if members get into the habit of taking a long break, you will face late or frustrating finishes!

6. When the full group has reconvened, ask one group member to read the part of Jesus, and another that of the disciples. Read the narrator's text yourself, slowly.

When the reading is finished, leave a short silence and ask people to move back into the same small groups. Explain that they should call you over if they have a question which they think they need help with.

7. Allow up to 30 minutes for people to work their way through the questions.

Spend a few minutes with each group, *listening* to how they are working with one another – only contribute if asked to do so, and speak in order to get them re-engaged, rather than offer 'answers'.

When about 10 minutes remains of the meeting time, ask the group to reconvene, and offer the possibility of members making responses as indicated in the workbook.

Ending the session:

Note the theme of the next session, 'Faith that sings!' explaining the homework task clearly. Emphasise the point that the Certificate's learning method is based on participants' contributions.

Allow a period of silence, end the meeting with a prayer of thanks: *APBA* page 218 #2 or another suitable prayer could be copied out for all to join in to conclude the time together.

Check informally that each person has safe transport to their home.

When you are safely home, make brief notes about the evening – things that went well, just rolled along or were problematic, and about each group member. This will assist with your evaluation report to Trinity at the end of the Unit. Also note who was in which small groups, so that these can be varied at the next session.

You are encouraged to pray for each participant between your meetings.

Session 2 - Faith that sings!

As the introductory note in the workbook explains, this session is the first 'normal' one, so it is important that each feature works well: run to time, ensure that each participant is able to speak and listen, and encourage responsible freedom in discussion.

Also note the 'word about worship'. This has been included for two main reasons.

- First, 'worship' is often used today in the narrow sense of 'when I feel I want to lift my hands' during a service: there is nothing at all wrong with feeling the need to express our adoration of God, but limiting even this to a 'liturgical' moment is a major issue.
- Secondly, in recent decades many in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney have reacted strongly against what is perceived to be an over-emphasis on 'experience' and 'cultic' worship, to the point of only speaking of 'services' as 'meetings', underestimating the sense in which Christian assemblies are for the purpose of *Engaging with God* (the title of a useful book by Sydney's David Peterson, noted under Further Reading). Some group members may be influenced or puzzled by these emphases: the Note aims to anticipate problems positively.

Now some notes on each task in Parts A and B:

Preparation:

- 1 As you read 'Hymns and Responses to Jesus', note any passages which might get you onto a personal 'hobby-horse' – and try to stay off it during the session!
To help inform the discussion, and possibly assist some members in realising the range of hymnody around today, you should bring along some hymn books in case some members haven't been able to get hold of one. Trinity recommends that this include several copies of *Together in Song*, the Australian ecumenical book produced in 2000, which seeks to embrace a wide range of material: it also now available in (impressively programmed) electronic form.
- 2 Choose half a dozen hymns yourself, and present your list after others have offered theirs: you can then hopefully add a hymn not yet mentioned, and ideally of a style which has not yet been considered.
- 3 The following notes are provided to give you some background by explaining why what has been written is there, and filling in some gaps – but don't waste time in the group unnecessarily by reading these aloud!

The set reading is fairly solid as far as its reading of the New Testament goes, and some members may find thinking about the meaning 'behind' the text unsettling. However, it does reinforce a 'conservative' approach using a 'critical' method, which most participants find illuminating and encouraging. The section on history, in contrast, is brief to the point of over-simplification, so the following Note helps fill it out, in case issues arise in the group which this might clarify.

Note: a brief history of hymns

It comes as a surprise to most Christians to realise how reluctant all churches (East and West, Catholic and Protestant) were to use non-scripture-based hymns until the 18th century, when the Evangelical revivals broke the dam (at least for English-speaking Protestants). The 16th century Lutheran Reformation had begun the shift earlier, but the Psalms remained the staple diet for the reformed Church of England, Church of Scotland and Church of Ireland.

The 19th century Oxford Movement in England initially resisted the new hymns, but then accepted that the horse had bolted, and responded with translations of patristic texts (notably those by John Neale) and 'objective' hymns (though Newman's 'Lead kindly light' hardly fits!).

The outcome by mid-1800s was numerous hymnbooks (a new category in Christian literature) reflecting various theological and stylistic preferences, from the *English Hymnal* to Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos*. In part this development was due to the availability of cheap printing, the rise of universal education – people who cannot read effectively retain high levels of oral memory, but are slow to learn new material – and the permeation of Romantic ideas.

The explosion of hymnody since the 1970s is also related to technology: the arrival of the transistor radio saw the invention of 'Top 40' charts with its insatiable demand for new songs, while TV (especially in colour) changed attitudes towards what 'participation' meant. Mere listening or watching – the culture of liturgy across the board until then – came to be viewed as almost unchristian, to be replaced by the active participation of many in a service. The combination was spurred on by the emergence of the Christian music industry, initially from country Gospel and long-standing folk tradition, but soon moving into rock and pop. This is the socio-cultural context in which many of the 'church music wars' are being out: few people participate in both the RSCM Summer School and the Cooma Christian Music Festival, for example.

Many new hymns are being penned in what might be termed 'mainstream' church culture, however, as well as 'popular'. Australasia is blessed with some superb writers – e.g. Digby Hannah, Ross Langmead, Robin Mann, Shirley Murray, Elizabeth Smith, Chris Wilcox (listed in alphabetical order). Overseas, lyricists such as John Bell (Iona), Fred Kaan, Pratt Green, Thomas Troeger and Brian Wren are now represented in many hymnbooks.

Other technological factors are the cheap availability of the data projector, and the coming of the internet. Between them, they are effectively eliminating hymnbooks from many congregations (helped by the photocopier). This is in many ways a good thing, but some unexpected consequences should be noted.

- First, 'censorship' is practically unknown, whether of a doctrinal, stylistic or affective kind, in contrast to the days when a new hymn had to make its way past a publisher (and in many cases a church authority).
- Secondly, there is the loss of a 'canon' of well-known English-language hymns, crossing church traditions, nations and accents: choosing hymns for a public occasion such as an ordination or wedding is now a challenge! To see the huge range of music available, try www.higherpraise.com/.

Group Work:

- 1 Talking about hymns is fraught both with danger and opportunity, which is why it has been chosen as the first 'experience of Christian faith'. Christians often have strong associations with a particular hymn, whether as marking a key point in their spiritual journey, nostalgic memories of childhood, or expressing a much-loved aspect of their own faith in Christ.

It is therefore essential that respect is shown to the particularity of faith which each person expresses, especially as this session will set the tone for later ones, and the Certificate as a whole. It is rare for a major theological issue to emerge from a well-known hymn, but do not avoid discussing problems which people may have with some, as well as with more 'pop' ones.

Do not hurry this opening section – in timing it, work out how long you think each person should have, and multiply by the number of members (including yourself).
- 2 This is the major exercise of the session: as far as practicable, try to have people in small groups other than those used in the first session.

Too many hymns are suggested in the workbook than can be usefully considered, so divide them up between the groups.

A short visit to each small group to listen to their reflection is a good idea. This will also give you a sense of when a break should be taken – people could be encouraged to get a cuppa and bring it back to continue discussion if time looks short.
- 3 This step could be the way you bring back small groups after a break: move through it quickly and with minimal comment: its aim is to give the group as whole a digested view of its own understanding, as a basis for further discussion under

4. As noted above, maintaining respect for each person's expression of faith is crucial.
5. Ask people to move into the same small groups as in step 2. This step should be reached with at least 30 minutes remaining: no 'reporting back' is envisaged - the group's own discussion is the key to the learning process.
6. Take the lead in reflecting back to the group its own work. Follow this up by encouraging each person to feel free enough to contribute to the discussion.

Ending the session:

Be ready to sing a verse of your own favourite hymn - and encourage others to join in as different group members start to sing their own favourites!

Note the theme of Session 3 - 'Tell me your story' - and encourage them not to be afraid of doing the tasks set: experience shows that most people are delighted to express their opinions about faith, God and religion!

As with Session 1, make appropriate notes about the evening - and keep praying for your group's members.

Session 3 – Tell me your story

You will be feeling more comfortable with the Certificate process by now, but this session poses new challenges in helping members of the group (which includes you, remember) open up about their own experience of Christian faith.

Preparation: In contrast to Session 2, there is much less reading and more personal preparation to be done for this session, to vary the learning. As previously, do the Preparation exercises yourself: if possible, speak with two friends who are not church-goers.

Read the appendix, 'The Roots of Spiritual Experience', so you are fully aware of questions which members may raise. Note that it avoids 'religion' as far as possible – a word only used a couple of times in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3.16, James 1.27). Its meaning today is largely a creation of the Enlightenment, which defined 'religion' in such a way as to sideline it to 'private life', a lifestyle preference for people who 'like that sort of thing' – a common view in Australian media. For Christian faith, however, 'religion' is part of the problem, not part of God's 'solution': Bonhoeffer's writings on 'the abolition of religion' are particularly stimulating in this regard. This issue will receive more attention in other Certificate Units.

Group Work:

1 Keep the focus on receiving feed-back on people's views of view of God and Jesus. Watch that the discussion does not get side-tracked on other issues raised in the conversations (e.g. evolution, clergy abuse of children, suffering etc.).

2 Hopefully no-one has contacted you and asked to be excused from this exercise. If someone does ask to opt out, try gently to find out why: this may enable you to suggest that they offer a limited or partial part of their story which they feel safe in telling. *But do not pressure any group member into joining in this exercise.*

In hearing the stories, you are responsible for keeping people strictly to time. Any prompting or asking of questions should aim only to clarify the story and affirm the story-teller. The right of group members not to tell their story if they don't want to must be strictly respected.

Include your own prepared three minutes in the discussion, but not at the beginning or end – allow 4 or 5 stories to be told and then offer yours. This will help avoid your story being seen as 'the right way to tell it'.

- 3-5 It is likely that you will be at or near a break, a convenient point to stop and allocate the small groups. Try to mix people up differently than for the previous two sessions – though by now some overlap is almost unavoidable!
- As previously, visit each group in turn, listening and watching the time ...
- 6 In pairing members off, try and separate spouses and close friends. If there is an even number in the group, be one of the pairs yourself.
- 7 Allow only a few minutes for this work, and the ending: after two hours of close reflection on their stories of faith, members are likely to be tired, and might ramble on in ways which they may later regret.
- Pay attention to each person's well-being as the meeting ends, and follow-up if you sense a level of awkwardness / embarrassment which might reflect spiritual unease.

Ending the session:

Before the closing prayers – by now other members may be happy to offer a prayer of thanks for the meeting, and commend the group to God's care – remind members of their preparation tasks for session 4.

Session 4 requires group members to be assigned to three sub-groups, each of which is to look at one of the passages set for Task 2 of the Preparation for Session 4. Before they leave, each member must be clear as to which passage they are to explore.

Session 4 – Living by faith

This should be a fairly straightforward session, clearing up and consolidating questions about 'experiencing Christian faith' which may have arisen in sessions 2 and 3. But one never knows!

Preparation: As is now your custom, work through the Preparation tasks for yourself, including a careful reading of each of the three passages. If you find yourself bothered by the tensions between Paul and James over Abraham, check some commentaries – the *XX for Everyone* series by Tom Wright is highly recommended, particularly on this topic of faith / sight / works.

Note: 'Born again-ism'

The notes under 'Living by faith' are very carefully written, but one point of clarification under 'Faith – a decision?' may help some participants.

In John 3, Jesus insists to a professor of theology (a person just like this writer) that 'you [*plural*] must be born anew / from above / again' in order to enter the kingdom of God (John 3.7, following up 3.3). This is often assumed to mean that 'you [*singular*] must have a conversion experience to be a Christian', which is spiritually dangerous: to require a particular experience to enter God's kingdom would be a return to 'justification by works' rather than through God's grace! Such a reading can also make many Christians who have not had a definite conversion experience feel 'second-rate', rather than delighting in the reality of God's love for each one. The sharing of personal stories in session 3 was designed in part to help group members be aware of the diversity of ways through which believers come to faith in Christ, from 'cradle Christians' to 'gradual growth' to 'converted' ones.

However we come to faith in Christ, we are powerless to turn to God in and of ourselves, as the carefully-phrased Article X teaches (*APBA* page 827). But – as this passage in John 3 concludes – 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes (*pisteuo*) in him may not perish, but have eternal life' (John 3.16). Our belief / faith / trust in Jesus is the outcome of God's love for 'the world', not our contribution to salvation.

That some believers come to faith in Christ through a dramatic turn-around experience is gloriously and happily true – but each one I know attributes this to the intervention in their lives of God's Spirit (which is what Jesus is trying to get the professor to see). However you or I came to put our trust in the Lord, its beginnings lie in God's 'no buts' love, love which sets us free to respond, helps us want to respond, and enables us respond – this is the work of God, whose Wind / Spirit 'blows where it wills', beyond our ken.

The word translated 'born ...' in John 3.3 and 3.7 has several possible meanings, which points to its richness. It can indeed mean 'born again', i.e. born a second

time, which is what the professor hears, and it ties him up in theological knots! Jesus points rather to the sense of 'born from above', the result of the Spirit's divine midwifery. And its consequence is having one's whole being turned inside out and upside down, i.e. being 'born anew'! To be 'born again / anew / from above' is no promise of an easy ride through life ...

Interestingly, one reason why many believe God blessed the evangelistic work of Dr Billy Graham was Grahams' care in phrasing the invitation for people to respond to 'the Message'. Early in his ministry he was tackled about this by a 'Calvinist' theologian, so Graham studied the matter, and from then on avoided any suggestion that he was asking people to 'make a decision' from their own strength, but as a response to God's prompting in their hearts and minds.

Group Work: There *are* wrong or false notions of faith, but no 'correct' ones!

We are talking about a relationship, which is impossible to define - so be careful to ensure that no-one is 'squashed' as regards their own faith story, but if really false ideas are present, respond with questions rather than contradictions ... i.e. run the group as an exercise in living by faith rather than sight!

- 1 Don't take too long on this first task - it is more a 'getting the topic going' exercise than intended to engage participants in deep discussion.

People should move fairly quickly into their small groups, with you visiting to listen as previously - this exercise may call for more input from you. Ensure that each small group contains at least one person assigned to each of the three passages in Task 2 of the Preparation work - groups of three would be ideal.

- 2-4 In terms of time, these tasks are likely to take 30-40 minutes: Task 4 is likely to be a good way to ask the group to resume as a whole after a break.
- 5 As with 2-3, this task is likely to take a fair while: no full group summarising is provided in view of the reflective, personal nature of the small group discussion.

Ending the session:

Draw attention to the theme of the next session, Praying, noting the request that each person bring along a favourite prayer from the Christian tradition - ie not one they or a friend penned, but one which has been used in the churches: *BCP*, *AAPB* and *APBA* are obvious possible sources.

Session 5 - Praying

This Unit varies from earlier sessions in that the full group only comes together briefly at the start and end. This means that you will have to be careful in letting the small groups, pairs and individual people know about timing – a small bell indicating a minute or so before a change may come in handy.

Also, make sure that the place where you meet can be adapted for the 'Alone' part of the Group Work, in which each person will need some privacy (e.g. being separated from their neighbour by a metre or so – they don't need to be in separated rooms).

Preparation: the notes are careful to avoid either 'over-theologizing' or 'too simplistic' a view of prayer, and seek to place it in a clear Trinitarian framework. It is important to realise that many people, even long-term Christians, still think in terms of prayer as directed 'at' or 'to' a deity whose attention needs to be gained (or even woken up – cf the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18!).

A sentence or two has been included in the notes about this, and also mentioning the Lord's Prayer, which is otherwise not included in this session: a close discussion of this key Christian prayer lies beyond the scope of this introductory Unit.

To facilitate group members using Exercise 3 at Group Work 5, prepare a number of objects (e.g. a candle for lighting, a holding cross, a 'written' icon - not a reproduction pasted onto chipboard - pictures for meditation, etc.).

Group Work: the opening needs to be kept with discipline, and people moved into small groups as quickly as possible.

- 1-4 Move around the small groups to listen, as usual - watch for people being 'defensive', or criticising other's experience.
Give clear guidance on when each should move on from task 1 to 2, 3 and 4 in turn. *This set of exercises is likely to take up the whole of the first half of the session.*
- 5 This exercise is done individually, and is likely to take some 30 minutes: take care to ensure that each person, especially those using an object for reflective prayer, has a 'comfortable' space in relation to them being unhelpfully aware of others around them.
Nip in the bud any comment about some forms of prayer being less helpful – all those suggested in the session are 'mainstream' Christian practice, even if not suited to every person, group or context.

- 6 Note next week's preparation, *before* moving to the praying in pairs: each member is asked to bring 3-4 verses from a favourite psalm (*other than* 23, 121 and 122) to share.

Explain that if the service to be commented on is not a 'regular' one, then they should prepare on the basis of what is 'usual' or 'typical'. Encourage members to bring a copy of *APBA* (preferably the red full edition) to the next session.

Ending the session:

Take the initiative in moving people into pairs, to avoid delay and remove uncertainty: keep all pairs in the same room, and be clear about two minutes' maximum – mention that silence when both have finished praying is fine.

Include yourself in a pair, possibly with a person you sense may be hesitant about the exercise.

When all pairs have finished, ask the group to pray together the Lord's Prayer, in whatever language or version they are most familiar.

Session 6 - Worshipping together

Preparation: The steps outlined in the workbook need to be followed yourself – being willing to offer critical, empathetic reflection on what happens in your congregation will set the tone for much of the group discussion.

As noted in the preparatory reading, 'Worship the Lord', the term 'worship' has come to be used to refer to just what happens 'in church' (particularly in more 'middle-of-the-road' parishes, and some 'catholic' Anglican circles), or to its 'praise' part (especially in 'charismatic' circles).

Partly in response, but also based on a particular reading of the New Testament, many Sydney clergy sharply downplay 'liturgical' worship, in favour of 'meetings' largely consisting of Bible teaching. If this is an issue, David Peterson's book *Engaging with God* is recommended as a positive Sydney Anglican contribution.

The workbook notes seek to affirm what is positive about all these – and other – positions. Wording has been phrased to avoid confusion as to when 'Sunday services' are the main topic, and when the wider sense of 'worship' is in view.

NB: This is an introductory session in the first Unit of the Certificate, not a course in Liturgy ... My own teaching of Liturgy starts with a discussion of 'worship', concluding that (at least from a curriculum perspective)

Worship = Mission *plus* Ethics *plus* Spirituality,
expressed in and fed by interaction between Liturgy and
Christian Education, drawing on Biblical Studies, Church
History and Theology.

But theological course syllabi rarely seem to work this way!

Group Work: The opening is a brief time of sharing favourite psalms, during which you should share your own: to end this part, it is suggested that you read all of Psalm 23.

1-3 As is now your custom, divide the small groups with members a bit different to the previous session, and move between them to listen. Give a clear time-signal so that the small groups move on to task 3 rather than getting bogged down in minutiae.

NB Both in the small groups, and especially in task 7 in the full group, keep your eyes and ears open for critique which is so negative as to possibly make the person concerned think about changing churches, or becoming unduly critical of their clergy

and lay leaders. Don't respond to such criticism, but keep it in mind as the group meeting proceeds: you may need to take this up with the person after the session, *for the sake of their spiritual health*, not to cover up problems.

- 4 As far as possible, restrict small group feed-back to just the sentences drafted, so that the task of shaping a full group statement is achieved ... learning good practice in worship is more important than hearing the many criticisms which can be made!
Your break should fall either just before or after task 4.
- 5 This step should be kept to no more than 15 minutes.
- 6-7 Members may find it helpful to have copies of APBA handy, using them to look at the main elements in the services they have audited in their local congregation: the Second Order forms beginning on pages 19 and 119 are the fullest, while in the full edition, the Outline Order (page 812) gives a useful structural overview.

Ending the session:

You are asked at the end of this session to draw member's attention to the Assessment tasks for accreditation: bring some topics or project ideas which might appeal to this particular group - we trust you, but if you need to check, don't hesitate to contact the Trinity Certificate Coordinator.

For the next session, 'Being a Disciple', divide the group into three and assign Gospel passages for Task 2 in the preparation:

- one third look at passages a), d) and g);
- one third at b), e) and h); and
- one third at c), f) and i).

This will spread member's preparation across more than one Gospel.

Session 7 - Being a disciple

This is probably the most straightforward session yet, as regards both preparation and the group work. However, you will need to have a look at all nine scripture passages ...

Be ready to consider any proposals for assessment of this Unit which group members may have prepared; undertake to have your response as to their suitability by Session 8, if not immediately.

Note: abstract terms

You might notice that (as is generally the case in this edition of the Certificate) the abstract term 'discipleship' is not used (it does not appear in the New Testament, either). Rather, the group and each members is asked to reflect on what it means to be a disciple of Christ – the answer to which ends up being quite personal, though are clearly many aspects which apply to all Christians.

This is an example of an important theological method: often the use of an abstract term gathers diverse ideas together which start to be more like an ideology than God's truth 'according to the scriptures': think of *Anglicanism*, *leadership*, *ecumenism*, *servanthood*, *headship*, for example.

Preparation: Make sure that some large sheets of paper ('butcher's paper'), with large-tip felt pens, are on hand to record members' contributions in Group Work 2 and 8 – or have a laptop with a data projector on which these can be screened. One or the group who writes clearly can do the recording, once they have given their response.

Also, plan for what is going to happen at the end – if possible, provide a fire-proof bowl, together with matches or a lighter. A bowl such as is used to burn palm crosses on Ash Wednesday, or a stainless steel saucepan, work well. AND have a jug of water on hand in case something goes wrong – never take fire lightly.

Group Work: This should be straightforward, but watch the time, especially at Task 5, group reports.

- 1 Keep this task as 'objective' as possible: the intention is to give the small groups an awareness of a wider breadth of responses than their own preparation, and set the stage for later feedback on how the meeting's discussion changes or develops ideas.
- 2-3 Do your circulating and listening as usual.
Make sure that the groups come back together to allow at least 20 minutes for Task 4 and 5.

- 4-5 A huge range of possibilities exists here – be as careful as you can to get the group down to five things disciples are called to do: this is not a magic number, just one large enough to illustrate the diversity of disciples' actions, small enough to keep it do-able! Using the large paper sheets (or projected laptop data) may help maintain disciplined discussion.
- 6-7 A break is likely to be appreciated after task 5, after which the small groups can resume – perhaps with their cuppas to hand.
- 8-9 Similar points apply as for tasks 4-5: end these with 10 minutes remaining.
- 10 Don't go overboard about this: the point is not to get members to write reams, but to become accustomed to the practice of self-examination in positive terms (i.e., not only as looking to admit our sins).

Ending the session:

Before the closing prayer action, remind members to bring their own Bible to the next session – and it may be worth noting that while it is more demanding than others in this Unit, members are encouraged to be honest in their work, and respectful of others.

As regards the closing ritual, work through it without fuss: there is no need to try and 'explain' the significance of burning or tearing the papers – trust that the actions will speak sufficiently for themselves. The final prayer could be read by all together, or line by line by members in turn.

Session 8 - Using the scriptures

This session is probably the most difficult in this Unit, because it not only deals with a topic that is increasingly fraught in Anglican circles – the Bible – but also because the issue of how we use it has never been simple! The workbook notes have been written with considerable care to be fair to the various views represented, but some members may not accept this.

The Further Reading includes some excellent resources of which many Christians are unaware – most notably *Treasures in Earthen Vessels* (available as a small book as well as the internet). Anything by Walter Breuggemann, Marva Dawn, James Dunn or John Goldingay is worth reading – these are scholars / preachers who transcend the various ‘approaches’ listed!

Note: the tutor's role in Session 8

In the last half-century, rapid changes in western societies, and the end of the colonial era, have seen renewed interest in and need for renewed interpretation of the scriptures. Awareness of the roles of gender, social class, language, culture, literacy level and the like in the actual *use* of the Bible in the churches has been both stimulating and challenging. Yet the particular debates about how biblical teaching applies in areas of sexuality – divorce, polygamy, the ordination of women (or not), sexual abuse, and especially the place of lesbian / gay / bisexual people in society and church – have been, and remain, divisive, not least across the Anglican Communion.

Some of this background is very likely to be of concern to participants in your group (including you!). In this session, given the sensitivity of the issues, you may need to keep your own opinions to yourself, even though this runs against the general ethos of the Certificate course. A member who is sensitive to any (perceived) challenge to the authority of the Bible can easily ‘read’ resistance to this *on the part of the tutor* as ‘undermining faith’, and leave the group and/or discourage others from continuing or joining.

Conversely, others may have overly-simplistic ‘critical’ attitudes, for whom insistence on ‘biblical authority’ will turn them off learning. If your group is relatively ‘monochrome’ theologically, it may be difficult for other approaches to the Bible to receive proper representation. In this case, you should act as advocate for other approaches, as necessary – again, this is a rare situation in which your own views may need to remain unstated.

Regular prayer for your group members – not forgetting yourself – is again encouraged!

Notes on terminology

1. *'Old / First' and 'New' Testament*

The terms 'Old' and 'New' Testament are regarded as problematic in some circles today, because they could be taken to denigrate the scriptures of the Jewish faith. Some resort to speaking of the 'Hebrew Bible', but this has several difficulties. First, it ignores the presence of Aramaic in the Jewish canon; and secondly the term 'Bible' is not one used regularly by Jews, who refer to their canon as the 'Tanach', an abbreviation of the Hebrew letters beginning the terms for its three main sections, the Torah ('Law' - Genesis to Deuteronomy), Nebi'im ('Prophets', including the historical books of Judges, Joshua, Samuel and Kings - 'Former prophets' - and the prophets' collected writings - 'Latter prophets'), and Chethibim ('Writings' - psalms, wisdom and other books).

On the other hand, for Christians to drop the term 'New' would fly in the face of Hebrews 9-11, and the sense that in Christ, God is making 'all thing new' (2 Cor 3.17). A recent suggestion has been to use the terms 'First' and 'New' Testament: though asymmetrical, they respect the originality of the Jewish canon, and that it has been taken up, not set aside, in the Christian sense of God's 'new' revelation in Christ.

This may not be an issue for the group, but it is as well to be aware of it - it is discussed further in Unit 2, Users' Guide to the Old Testament.

2. *'Bible' and 'scriptures'*

As explained in the workbook, 'Bible' properly refers to a bound volume including the two collections of canonical documents accepted by the Christian churches. 'Scripture' is the term used in the New Testament to describe these documents (cf 2 Timothy 3.16, referring to the Old Testament, though 'all scripture' was soon understood to include the New).

Both terms point to profound truths, carrying different emphases. The term 'scriptures' draws attention both to their written form (and thus humanity) and to their plurality and diversity. The term 'Bible' affirms their Unity and coherence: while usually bound as in a single volume, it is a two-room library of documents written over some 1500 years, in several regions, using three languages and a diversity of literary forms.

In the workbook for this session, both 'Bible' and 'scriptures' are used, taking care as far as possible to use the appropriate word for the context. (The addition of 'holy' before either - though defensible theologically - has been avoided, to avoid possible misunderstanding.)

3. 'Liberal'

To accuse a person of being a 'liberal' can, in many Christian circles, mean that their views are dismissed, their personal relationships and reputation marred. (The term 'conservative' can be bandied around wrongly, but rarely has equivalent damaging effects.)

The term 'liberal' can be used in a variety of ways (apart from a reference to an Australian political party!), for example:

- having a 'liberal' (open-minded) attitude (very few people would deny this of themselves!);
- denying basic Christian beliefs (e.g. the resurrection and deity of Christ);
- holding to 'progressive' social / political opinions.

These are not the same, and must not be confused, lest we defame the good name of fellow believers. In particular, theological 'conservatives' often hold 'liberal' political opinions, while some 'liberal' theologians seem to have closed minds about the evidence for 'conservative' beliefs.

One person has noted that, applied to a Christian, 'liberal' can be a great adjective but a poor noun!

Preparation: Even though it may be that you need to be reticent about stating your own viewpoint, you will need to do the preparation in order to 'hear' members' views, and be in a position (as needed) to articulate those not present.

Some members may forget to bring a Bible, so make sure you have some extra copies on hand - including the NRSV and The Message, the two versions recommended for us in this Certificate. You will also need to have large sheets ('butcher's paper') and felt pens, for use in Group Work.

You might find it helpful to have some copies of *An Australian Lectionary* for the current year (the one which relates to APBA) to use in **Ending the session**.

Group Work: It may be helpful to open the session using a prayer about our use of the scriptures, such as those in APBA page 23 #10, page 36 #4, or the Prayer for the Week for the Sunday between November 6 and 14.

- 1-2 This fairly 'obvious' exercise is more of an ice-breaker than anything else, aiming to settle the group down into working with the actual Bible, before they begin to explore their own perspectives - so don't let it drag out too long. If there is disagreement about which the category in which to place a book, use more than one.

- 3 The aim of this exercise is to encourage group members to appreciate the *positive* values which each approach represents, and to understand that their own approach to the scriptures is not the only one.
- In allocating people to small groups, try not to put people who you think may have dramatically opposite viewpoints in the same small group (unless you believe they are mature enough to benefit from lively inter-action). On the other hand, small groups of the like-minded may not explore very much! Use your active listening skills to the max as you visit the groups.
- 4 This may be a sensitive time: seek to work towards positive insights, not theological civil war!
- If at all possible, finish this task before having a break, during which you should ensure that each small group has paper and pens for doing their summary.
- 5-6 As usual, people should be in the same small groups as for task 3, unless there has been some major problem. Give an indication of time, so that the small groups allow enough time for task 6.
- 7 Group members may be happy to remain in their small groups for this personal work: be sensitive as to whether to ask people to move to more private locations.
- NB: there is no Full Group work for this part of the session: the point is *not* to reach a group consensus, but equip each member to use the scriptures.

Ending the session:

You may need to reiterate that this session has been about helping members come to grips with the Bible, not solve all the problems of using and interpreting it!

If group members already use a system for personal or group Bible reading / reflection, affirm this. The notes produced by the *Scripture Union* or *Bible Reading Fellowship* are well-written, and various sets are oriented to people of differing ages and life-situation.

If you have copies of *An Australian Lectionary*, you could explain that this is Bible-reading scheme is used by Australian Anglicans not only for Sundays but also weekdays. (It will help if you have read through the Introduction to understand the main points of how this scheme - very similar to those used in other Anglican Provinces -works.) If group members wish to read the scriptures regularly, one or more of the Lectionary's columns can be used for personal or family reading, and/or the coming Sunday readings can be read together with others, and/or members could join in reading the scriptures in the context of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.

Session 9 - Engaging with spiritual traditions

This is – fortunately! – a relatively straightforward session with which to end the Unit, and may also help draw together the group if there has been friction in session eight. It is important to appreciate that different people will find some of the spiritual writers cited more appealing than others, but across most groups there is usually someone who finds each one of the five attractive.

Preparation: As always, do the preparation yourself, and in doing so pray for each group member in person, that they may find this final session to be an integrative experience. The Prepare / Picture / Ponder / Pray / Promise method, by the way, is basically Ignatian, but also close to that recommended by *Scripture Union!* Arrange for some treats to share and celebrate the group's life and work together.

Make sure you have enough Evaluation forms for the group, and a stamped addressed envelope for their return to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator. Before the meeting, ask a suitable group member to be willing to receive and send on – unread! – the completed forms.

Find out the details of when and where the next Unit in the Certificate is being held (even if not in association with your current ministry location).

Group Work: You may like to open the meeting with a brief reading and reflection on a Psalm, *the* classic spiritual writing in the Bible.

- 1 Try and place members in different small groups to those used in session 8. Listen and watch the time, as usual.
- 2 Five groups are suggested so that each writer is covered: this may mean that some 'groups' have just one person – include yourself in one of the groups if necessary to avoid this, however. And try to have people reflect on someone whom they are NOT already a great fan of!
This step will probably take the remainder of the time before the break.
- 3 People return to the small groups of task 1 for this – leave 15 minutes free for the rest of the session: it is impossible to do more than begin the reflection involved in this session.
- 4 Keep this brief, avoiding repetition in reporting by moving on from a small groups once they have articulated one or two major points.

Ending the session:

Leave the time of silent prayer until the end of the meeting, so that it the group's final experience.

Share around the treats (if any are left after the break!), during the eating of which you should

- a) Explain that you need to receive the assessment papers or projects within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
- b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
- c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
- d) Inform the group as to when and where the next Unit if being held (usually this would be Unit 2, User's Guide to the Old Testament).

When all this done, the silence could be 'guided' like this:

1. Ask members to thank God for what each has gained from the Unit (leave silence for about a minute)
2. Ask members to thank God for each person in the group, and commend each to God's guidance and love (leave silence for about a minute or two)
3. Ask members to commit themselves to seek to live out what they have gained from the Unit (leave silence for about a minute)
4. Ask the group to hold hands (if appropriate) and join together in the Lord's prayer.

Say your farewells, complete your 'roll' and get ready to start marking!

Unit 2: Users' Guide to the Old Testament

*If you have not previously tutored a Trinity Certificate Unit,
STOP - DO NOT READ ON!
Go back and work through the Tutor's Manual Introduction.*

Introduction

This Unit – and those which follows – lifts the expectations placed on group members a little. It assumes that each has worked through Unit 1, and so has become familiar with the learning strategies of the Trinity Certificate.

Two large issues face you as you seek to facilitate this unit:

- some group members may have a negative view of the Old Testament, as 'sub-Christian'; and
- all will be largely unfamiliar with its contents.

The Old Testament is a large collection of documents – around 1000 chapters! – of highly varied material. Even reading a chapter a day would take three years ... To help with this, an introductory resource is provided, summarising each of the books in the Old Testament such as way as hopefully to entice group members to start dipping into it prior to the Unit.

James Michener's *The Source* is recommended as a readable 'page-turner' to orient participants (including yourself, as necessary), though David Kossof's excellent *Bible Stories* will take less time ... (Neither author writes from a Christian perspective – Kossof is Jewish.)

Session 1 - The story of the Old Testament

The preparation opens with four 'Notes on terminology', designed to move group members out of several preconceived ideas which the use of familiar terms can hide. They follow up in a little more detail some of the ideas in Unit 1 Session 8, so should be a 'step further' rather than wholly new.

Preparation: Work through 'Preparation – particular' in this Manual as applied to Unit 2.

Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all group members know one another already, prepare tags with each member's Christian name in large print.

Contact group members a fortnight or more prior to the first session, giving them the meeting dates, times and place. Suggest that they do some general preparation such as reading the Bible book summary, Michener or Kossof, and reminding them to bring a copy of the Old Testament to each group meeting.

As usual, do the preparation yourself: the reading is on the long side, but has been carefully written to avoid raising unnecessary problems for group members, whatever their 'doctrine' or approach to the scriptures.

If necessary, consult a Bible dictionary or similar resource if you anticipate facing questions beyond your own knowledge or understanding – but don't prepare so thoroughly that you feel you have to give a lecture!

If possible, bring to the session some modern maps of Palestine and the Middle East, for comparison with those in the workbook – though many Bibles will have more detailed and colourful ones than these: the internet is a good source.

Make sure that the meeting-place is ready, and that a cuppa is available.

Opening the meeting:

Open in prayer, then introduce yourself and the session list for this unit.

If someone is new, allow time for her or him to be introduced *briefly*.

Listen actively and carefully during the meeting, especially if this is your first experience as a tutor!

Group Work: This is designed to be a straightforward process of initial familiarisation with the overall contents of the Old Testament.

- 1 Once the meeting has opened, move people into three small groups as quickly as possible, dividing the passages listed among them, so all are covered.

As always, move between the small groups to listen, and respond to queries: note that there are few 'exactly right' answers for this exercise, for which you should allow about 20-25 minutes.
- 2 Chair the report-back tightly – this is a familiarisation exercise, not one making hard and fast decisions about particular texts!

By the time each passage has been discussed, a break will be appropriate, or after the next task has been completed.
- 3 Small groups (use the same ones as for 1) are used here so that each person has a say. In moving around the groups, affirm that various responses are possible to these questions.
- 4-5 Again, these tasks are about *familiarisation*, and helping participants realise that the world of the Old Testament was 'real', not some 'ideal' or 'spiritual' existence.
- 6 As before, the passages should be divided up among the small groups so that, if possible, all are covered – the discussion in this task is likely to be fuller.
- 7 Again, chair this task fairly tightly, so that a reasonable range of texts can be covered – and as before, this task can have a variety of outcomes: what is helpful to some may seem irrelevant, boring or unhelpful to others!

Watch lest group members edge towards making spiritual assessments of one another ... or you!

Ending the session:

Try and assess whether any member is feeling rather swamped by the amount of material before them, emphasising that they can trust the workbook notes to guide them through it in a responsible manner. Quite often an earnest beginning student of Old Testament can feel that they are letting God down if they cannot come to grips with every nuance of the whole vast volume!

Close the meeting in prayer – it is suggested that you or the group use one from the Old Testament, e.g. a familiar Psalm, and/or part of a prayer of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon or Ezra. Numbers 6.22-26 makes a good conclusion – and its outcome, 6.27, is amazing!

Session 2: By the waters of Babylon

Apart from the usual issue in this Unit of dealing with large amounts of scriptural material, and being sensitive to attitudes to the scriptures, this Session should be straightforward.

As noted earlier, starting the Unit with the Exile may seem unusual, but it makes spiritual and theological as well as academic sense – if group members end this session by realising the huge gift of faith which the Exilic scribes' placing of Genesis 1-12 at the start of the Hebrew canon constituted, you will have achieved a great deal!

Note: starting Old Testament study with the Exile

It may be helpful to note briefly to the group that the next session does not start at the beginning of the Old Testament – Genesis. Doing so might seem the obvious way to begin Old Testament study, but it can also make us over-confident in approaching the scriptures, rather than in grateful dependence on God's grace in the midst of urgent despair – as Israel had to do in coping with the Exile, when the Old Testament came largely into its present form.

This starting-point is not in the first place due to the 'assured results of modern scholarship' (which some members may suspect seeks to 'criticise' rather than listen to the scriptures), so much as to start where Israel did in holding to the covenant they knew, even when it seemed broken, and their great act of faith in gathering together the traditions and texts they had. This point is made in the Preparation reading for this first Session, but it may be helpful to repeat it at this stage, as a transition to Session 2.

Preparation: As usual, work through this for yourself, checking all scripture passages referenced.

As with Session 1, it is recommended that the meeting open with a passage from one of the OT scriptures under discussion, such as Lamentations in this case.

Group Work: Be careful not to get into detailed discussion of the origins or any particular OT book: this Unit is trying to help participants become effective in its *use*.

- 1 This is intended to put items for discussion 'on the agenda' for the meeting, not to clear up every detailed difficulty which may have been raised.
- 2 As the italics indicate, the aim is start the meeting noting links, and also to orient discussion within an ethos appropriate to the difficult topic of Exile.

Move to the next task within 15 minutes of the meeting's start.

- 3 Divide the group into three, each of which considers one set of passages – move between them to listen, encouraging them to keep moving and not become bogged down in detail or (inappropriate) attempts to be 'devotional'.
- 4 Another challenge to keep the group in order, and moving – but you will need to have your break no later than the completion of this task!
- 5 This is the key task of the meeting, but allow 15 minutes at most. Hopefully members will be happy to recall what was said in their Preparation reading, showing that they have digested this.
- 6 Use the same small groups, asking each group to look at two passages, allocating them so that each passage is covered.
- 7 Complete this task allowing a few minutes for task
- 8 but don't allow this to become artificial – it is quite possible that members (who have not read Brueggemann!) will see little immediate relevance in the Exile.

Ending the session:

- 9 By this time it is likely that members will be 'brain dead'. Be ready to offer a 30-second reflection on 'new covenant', e.g. as used in the Thanksgiving prayers in Holy Communion in *APBA*.

In the next session, preparatory work is to be done on different patriarchs in the Torah / Pentateuch. Allocate group members so that some are looking at Abra(ha)m and Sarai/h, some at Isaac, Jacob / Israel and Rebecca, and some at Joseph. Ask them to be prepared to share their findings and thoughts with others in the Session 3 meeting.

Session 3 - Faithful but flawed

This Session again deals with large amounts of scriptural material, and the Preparation reading is extensive. In the 2009 edition, care has been especially taken in reflecting on 'grace'.

Notes about this Session

a) Nation / clan / family

In the 2009 edition of this Session of Certificate Unit 2, the use of the term 'nation' has been reduced. This has been done in part because the concept of 'nation-state' is anachronistic for the people of God as described in Genesis, in part because this approach could easily lead to debate about Australian identity that is irrelevant to the aims of this Unit.

'Family' has been retained, though its use in any context aims to refer to the extended 'clan' which it represents in Genesis. There is actually no word in Hebrew which corresponds to 'family' in our sense (even 'extended family', which includes blood ties only).

The smallest 'group word' in Hebrew is 'clan', which includes servants (some of whom had sexual relations with 'family' members) as well as kith and kin. The smallest social structure in the contexts of ancient Israel corresponds to something like 'homestead' in Australian terms.

b) Heroes and patriarchs

References to 'national heroes' have been removed from earlier editions of this Session, though 'heroes' occurs a few times. One consequence is more frequent use of 'patriarchs': this includes both women and men in Genesis, but gender roles in those times were clearly different to current ideas in the West.

Care has been taken in using women's as well as men's names as appropriate, and using 'Abram' and 'Abraham', 'Sarai' and 'Sarah', 'Jacob' and 'Israel' according to their occurrence in the text.

The table of the genealogy of the patriarchs has been expanded in the 2010 edition, so that group members appreciate the relationships between the women in the stories with the men they marry - which may raise some eyebrows, but the texts are clear and unembarrassed!

c) The patriarchs in the New Testament

Finally, though there are many references in the New Testament to Abraham and Jacob, notably in Romans and James, these are not taken up in this Session, beyond a hint at ways in which Genesis 22 may relate to Jesus (not to do this would immediately attract comment!).

It is likely that some group members will want to use such New Testament passages as the interpretive framework for Genesis - there is nothing wrong

with this, but the aim of this Unit is to help people use the Old Testament scriptures in their own right, so that they may all the better serve to help us understand the New. If someone raises this issue, seek to return the discussion to Genesis as quickly as possible.

Preparation: Group members were assigned particular patriarchs, but you need to do all the reading!

Group Work: After a brief opening in the full group, this Session is spent in small groups.

1-6 Your main task will be to keep people on track, since it is important that each group covers all four generations of the patriarchs. For this purpose, members should be assigned so that all those who have prepared work on a given person are in the same group.

As well as circulating and listening, use an agreed way of indicating when each group should move on in a minute or two to the next task.

7-8 Allow 12-15 minutes for this concluding part of the Session – seek to avoid vague generalities or 'pat' responses!

Ending the session:

A short time of prayer, based on some of the findings of Task 8, may be good way to close.

In preparation for Session 4, divide the group into two, one to do preparatory work on the Exodus, the other on the Sinai covenant, though all should read quickly through the reading for the other topic.

Session 4: God takes action

By now you and the group should be gaining in familiarity with the Old Testament. Though this Session focuses on Exodus, don't discourage people from exploring the following three books of the Torah, whose contents are often surprise people who have not studied them ... One of my favourites is pointing out that none of the sacrifices described in Leviticus 1-7 are about dealing with sin – they are more like offering '3-dimensional prayers of dedication and thanksgiving', while the one rite of atonement for 'real' sin is not actually a sacrifice – see Leviticus 16!

But this is getting off the track – which you are encourage not to allow the group to do, by spending undue time speculating on the possible meaning of what seems to us an obscure law (again, I've a few favourites – living in bushfire prone Victoria, I like Exodus 22.6, while the contrasts in Exodus 23.19 completely baffle me!).

Preparation: Again, while the group does half the preparation in details, you do it all! As you do so, have ideas to offer support to both groups as they prepare their presentations.

To make summaries of each group's presentation, have ready large sheets of paper ('butcher's') and pens, or a data projector and laptop (which you are familiar with).

Group Work: After a brief opening, move the group into its two halves, ensuring that each has reasonable privacy to do its work.

Move between each group a few times, as needed – or leave them to their own devices, if that is more helpful.

As in previous Sessions, keep an eye on the time, perhaps giving some indication to each group when they should move on to the next task.

- 1-3 These Tasks should be completed before the mid-way break, but be flexible.
- 5 Allow 8-10 minutes for each group to make its presentation.
- 6 Keep this fairly brief: members are likely to be tired by now. More importantly, the Certificate looks to encourage each person to do their own learning, rather than feel they should work towards what the group as a whole 'ought to' conclude ...

Ending the session:

Use the reflections from Task 6 as material for reflection and/or prayer.

Before people leave, suggest that they start to think about their assessments. Also, note that the prophets are considered over two Sessions, 5 and 6, which may alleviate worries about the Preparation for Session 5 a bit daunting!

Session 5 - God's messengers

Once more, a lot of biblical material is covered in the Session – you may need to encourage those who are feeling a little swamped: they are now past the half-way point of this Unit!

Preparation: Complete the Preparation work yourself, as usual, noting any scriptural passages which you think might be confusing or puzzling to group members – explore these with a commentary or friend if you think this is needed, but don't prepare so much that the group will spend its time listening to you!

NB: The chart of prophets has been added to quite a bit in the 2009 edition. Moses is traditionally seen as the first of the line, though he held a unique position in Israel, as was noted in Session 4.

To make summaries of each group's presentation, have ready large sheets of paper ('butcher's') and pens, or a data projector and laptop (which you are familiar with).

Group Work: As in previous Sessions, the meeting starts with the full group, but quickly breaks up into small groups – allocate these to mix up the group in new ways, if possible.

- 1 This Task should be given a good deal of time – it grounds people in the scriptural evidence, which may challenge some members' assumptions about prophets.
- 2 Keep the reporting process tight, using the paper or laptop to summarise, and keep this in sight for the small groups to use when they resume.
- 3 The point of this Task is to consolidate the work just done, not get into great detail – but a little humour about the exercise will not go astray!
- 4 Again, keep the reporting tight – assess for yourself whether a public summary will be helpful, or slow things down too much. (Your meeting break could come just before or follow Task 4.)
- 5 As with Task 1, allow a good deal of time for this work, designed to help members explore one prophet in more detail (Amos).
- 6-7 This task should be allowed 10-12 minutes at most – it is designed to 'update' the exploration of prophecy, but a lot of steps in the development are skipped!

In particular, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Church at Pentecost is the key theological factor shaping the New Testament churches' acceptance and development of the ministry of prophets beyond its Old Testament trajectory.

So don't get too tied up in debates, let alone arguments, about the lists! Note that for many people today, a prophet is someone who speak out about political / social issues. The truth in this is that God's message always calls for corporate as well as personal change – but Christian prophecy centres in the first place on God's message as enfleshed in Jesus Christ, i.e. the gospel 'according to the scriptures', and the implications flowing from that, rather than starting with the implications (which will include social concerns).

This is in part why three 'offices' are included in the dot points – archbishop of Canterbury, pope and parish priest, 'prophetic' ministries in New Testament terms. The US President is included to stir the pot a little – opinions are likely to depend on which one is being spoken about, making the point that 'office' and 'person' need to be seen as distinct yet interactive, when it comes to issues of ministry.

Ending the session:

As previously, prayer or meditation based on a prophet's message should be used – several possibilities have been explored by group members in this Session.

Remember to enquire about group member's ideas for assessment topics or projects.

Session 6 - God's demands

The notes for Session 5 apply generally here. It is likely that group members will be less familiar with the contents of this Session, however, because it delves rather more deeply into the life of the prophets than is usually preached about or considered in Bible study groups.

The issue of divine 'mind-changing' might get some thinking – the sentence about 'plan' aims to give this a wider context. It may be useful to realize that the traditional concept of divine 'immutability' does not mean 'God does not change' (which would contest the truth of God's forgiveness) but 'God cannot be caused to change'. Likewise, divine 'impassibility' does not mean 'God cannot experience passion' (which would deny the truth that God is love) but 'God cannot be caused to experience passion'.

But back to this Session:

Preparation: The five biblical passages set for reading are substantial, and quite intense: more than ever, it is important that you do the Preparation carefully yourself.

Group Work:

- 1 Don't take too long on this – it is intended to form a 'bridge' between the Sessions.
- 2 As in Session 5, give reasonable time to the small group work – in this Session, it could well require all the time up to the break. In moving between the small groups, pay special attention to group members who may find the prophets' suffering raises difficult questions for their understanding of what God requires.
- 3 A good way to call the full group back together after the break – but keep the reporting as tight as possible – it is not suggested that public summaries on paper or laptop be made on this occasion, but if it helps, use it.
- 4 Allow 20-25 minutes on this, keeping an ear open for group members who are troubled by the idea that these oracles were not in the first place spoken as prophecies about Jesus as the Christ.
- 5 Jesus' ministry as prophet is traditionally seen in terms of his healing and 'nature' miracles, teaching of the disciples, and engagement with opponents – in each case with the emphasis being on his incarnate embodiment of these prophetic roles (to which Ezekiel comes closest from the Old Testament prophets).
Keep this discussion brief: the point of including this Task in an Old Testament session is not to focus directly on Jesus, but to acknowledge that as Christians we cannot help but read the Old

Testament scriptures apart from what they reveal about Christ, in and through our receiving them as scripture in their own right.

- 6 Leave up to 10 minutes for this – while facing the prophetic challenge to costly living, be careful not to give the idea that the essence of Christian life is having a ‘martyr mentality’!

Ending the session:

Some quiet reflection on the costly experience of one or two of the prophets explored could be a helpful way to conclude the meeting.

Again – follow-up regarding group member's ideas for assessment topics or projects.

Session 7 - Poetry, praise and lament

Hopefully this will be an easier Session, since of all the scriptures in the Old Testament, the Psalms are probably the best known to Christians today.

Preparation: As well as doing your own Preparation, think about what are our favourites, and why – this may become useful to aid the group's discussion.

The reading takes up the scholarly work of the past century, but is unlikely to raise issues for members. However, people in western cultures – including Christians – tend to see the individual as primary, and society / the group as built from that.

The ancient world, including Israel (and parts of the modern, notably indigenous Australians) saw things the other way around world, starting from the corporate life and only then considering the individual. This might need discussion in the group.

Group Work: Open using one or more passages from the Psalms – perhaps asking people to share some of their favourites.

- 1, 2 Allow a good amount of time for this, so people have enough space to work with the psalms themselves.
Here and below, don't let the groups get too much into details about Christian practice: the point is to offer a 'Users' Guide' to the Psalter, with Christian ministry usage as the 'excuse'.
- 3 A good way to call the full group back together, leading into the break.
- 4-5 Encourage each pair to work fairly quickly – the outcome looked for is not great texts, but members better equipped to enter into this dimension of the Psalms.
- 6-7 Keep in mind the comments made above, about Christian practice.

Ending the session:

If appropriate, group members could read some of the laments they have penned, though do not force this: some may have written of personal matters which it would be wrong to 'open' to others. These could be accompanied by a few verses from Lamentations.

Similarly, some closing praises focusing on God's love could be accompanied by a few verses from the Song of Songs – its use in this way is not banned just because some don't want to 'hear' it as about sexual affection and love!

Get firmer about finding out group member's ideas for assessment topics or projects, and approving them.

Session 8 - Stories and wise sayings

Possibly the most 'obvious' Session thus far in terms of method – but then there is only more Session to come! The contents of the texts studied, however, are far more 'obvious', not only in the 'in-your-face' nationalism of Esther, or the agonised, circular wrestling in Job, but also in the seemingly 'obvious' optimistic teaching of many Proverbs and the pessimism of Ecclesiastes ...

Such a situation calls for continued care-full listening to our groups members, whose response to these texts are likely to vary widely, depending on their own life-experience.

One virtue of the scriptures explored in this Session is that no particular historical or social context is needed in order to interact with them – but don't thereby assume that they speak 'easily' across the millennia separation them from our times.

Preparation: Work through the reading of the scriptures and comments carefully, noting your own preference among the books: those who love Ecclesiastes often view Proverbs as simplistic, while fans of Proverbs can be dismissive of Job, for example.

Reflect on why you tend to prefer some of these books rather than others – and why the people of God have refused to exclude any from the canon. This will help you in being open to the likely variety of attitudes in your group, and listening well.

Group Work: This Session falls into two broad topics – Ruth and Esther, and Wisdom – each of which needs to be given reasonable time.

One approach would be to allocate Tasks 1-4 for the time up to the break, and Tasks 5-8 to the second part of the meeting, but this is only a suggestion.

After a brief opening, allocate people to small groups and encourage them to work reasonably quickly, since both 'halves' of the material need to be given time.

- 1 As usual, encourage people to read from prepared notes, rather than extemporise.
- 2 This exercise can be expanded into people identifying with Orpah, Ruth, Boaz and Naomi in turn, explaining how their character 'felt' as the story progressed, and how they reacted to the others in the story – but this meeting is not the time to do so! It is mentioned because this method is very useful for 'entering in' to narrative.
- 3 Try to avoid 'explaining away' what we find uncomfortable – let it stand.

- 4 Useful for re-gathering into one group before the break – keep the feedback tight!
- 5-7 See 1 and 3 above, and allow 15 minutes for Task 7.
- 8 This is intended only as a brief 'reframing' from a Christian perspective, not as a major exercise – and it should lead into

Ending the session:

Don't be too careful about which scriptures are used in the closing prayers / meditation: it is impossible to keep a 'balance' in these matters, and as Luther famously said about our real-life living – 'sin boldly, but trust God yet more boldly!'

By now each member should have had their assessment method considered and approved by you, the tutor: if not, get cracking!

Session 9 - Old and new

This final Session for Unit 2 considers chapters which many find a barrier to reading the rest of the Old Testament – Genesis 1-11. Hopefully, by now your group will have gained sufficient maturity and skill in using the Old Testament scriptures that you won't be facing arguments about 'evolutionism' and 'creationism'.

Preparation: As you undertake your Preparation task, gain a settled sense of your own convictions about issues such the ways in which the 'seven days' of creation are depicted, the historic 'fall' and the like – not so that you can foist these on the group, but so that you know your own mind and are comfortable with it.

Since this is the final Session in this Unit, arrange to have some treats to share and celebrate the group's life and work together.

Make sure you have enough Evaluation forms for the group, and a stamped addressed envelope for their return to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator. Before the meeting, ask a suitable group member to be willing to receive and send on – unread! – the completed forms.

Find out the details of when and where the next Unit in the Certificate is being held (even if not in association with your current ministry location).

Group Work: As always, watch the timing, especially since more will be spent in the full group than has been customary in this Unit.

Work out ahead of time when the break may best take place – no later than after Task 5, however. The treats could be shared then, or at the end.

Open with a short time of prayer based on the theme of creation.

- 1-3 People may find themselves a little 'thrown' by discovering the close similarities between the Epic of Gilgamesh and Genesis 6-9. The point, however, is not to contest this, but for group members to learn to appreciate the milieu in which this key Old Testament account is set.
- 4-5 This could get into a lot of detail – try to keep the groups focussed on the main point of comparison, the 'new humanity' notion.
- 6a-c, 7 Arrange for each small groups to start with a different task from a-c, so that, if you time runs short, each is covered. These passages are much less likely to get people off the track into inappropriate detail than those in Task 4 – but keep things moving!

- 8-9 These are very much 'review and evaluation' matters, and should be kept to a few minutes only.

Ending the session:

Share around the treats (if any are left after the break!), during the eating of which you should

- a) Explain that you need to receive the assessment papers or projects within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
- b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
- c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
- d) Inform the group as to when and where the next Unit is being held (usually this would be Unit 3, User's Guide to the New Testament).

When all this done, a time of quiet reflection could be 'guided' like this:

1. Ask members to thank God for what each has gained from the Unit. (leave silence for about a minute)
2. Ask members to commit themselves to seek to live out what they have gained from the Unit. (leave silence for about a minute)
3. Ask the group to hold hands (if appropriate) and join together in the Lord's prayer.

Say your farewells, complete your 'roll' and get ready to start marking!

Unit 3: Users' Guide to the New Testament

*If you have not been a tutor for a Trinity Certificate Unit previously,
STOP - DO NOT READ ON!
Go back and work through the Introduction to this Tutor's Manual.*

Introduction

This Unit assumes that each group member has worked through Unit 1, and so has become familiar with the learning strategies of the Trinity Certificate. Ideally, they will also have completed Unit 2, Users' Guide to the Old Testament, and so have become used to working with the scriptures – and have a foundation for interpreting the New.

In seek to facilitate this unit, keep in mind that all group members will have some familiarity with the contents of the Gospels, and some passages from the letters ... But they are also likely to have fairly strong ideas as to what the New Testament 'means', and many will have a high commitment to taking as 'gospel' what it seems to them to teach. This is fine – after all, it is what the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia commits members to – but perceptions of readers may not be well-informed. In particular, some are likely to have a negative view of Paul – though often without reason, or based on a few specific texts!

The New Testament is a fairly small library, but the variation between its documents is often not appreciated. Many 'ordinary' Christians have never thought about the differences between the Gospels, or realised that each letter was written to a specific situation.

The novels listed in *Further reading* are excellent easy-to-digest introductions to the New Testament: if you are a little concerned about your own knowledge, they are highly recommended!

Session 1 - Setting the scene

This first Session is a straightforward 'setting the scene', as the name says! This sort of material used to be given much attention in older theology course, but it is possible that you have not encountered it previously – if so, do the Preparation with particular care.

Work through 'Preparation – particular' in this Manual as applied to Unit 3.

Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all group members know one another already, prepare some tags with each member's Christian name in large print.

Make sure that the meeting-place is ready, and that a cuppa is available.

Preparation: Contact group members a fortnight or more prior to the first session, giving them the meeting dates, time and place. Suggest that they do some general preparation such as reading the Bible book summary, Wangerin or Theissen, and reminding them to bring a copy of the New Testament to each group meeting.

As usual, do the preparation yourself: as with Unit 2, the reading has been carefully written to avoid raising unnecessary problems for group members, whatever their 'doctrine' or approach to the scriptures.

If necessary, consult a Bible dictionary or similar resource if you anticipate facing questions beyond your own knowledge or understanding – but don't prepare so thoroughly that you feel you have to give a lecture!

If possible, bring to the session a map of Palestine and the Middle East in the time of the New Testament – many Bibles include these, and the internet is a good source.

Ideally, all members will have shared earlier Units together, but as this is the first session, prepare name-tags for each group member.

Opening the meeting:

Open in prayer, then introduce yourself and the Session list for Unit 3. If someone is new, allow time for her or him to be introduced *briefly*.

Listen actively and carefully during the meeting, especially if this is your first experience as a tutor!

Group Work:

- 1-2 Give reasonable time to this – the exercise is designed to allow group members to share their perspectives on the New Testament as much as anything else.

- 3 This can be done more briefly – each of the responses has some truth in it. Again, part of the intention is to allow members to appreciate the variety of relationships which people sense existing between the Testaments.
- 4 A good way to either gather before the break (probably better) or reassemble after it.

Tasks 5-7 move from very general matters to one very specific text and context:

- 5 Reading the text aloud can be varied by having people read a paragraph each – but be sensitive to those for whom public reading may be a strain.
- 6 Keep this time fairly short – you could use pairs rather than small groups if that saves time in moving around.
- 7 These issues are perennial in New Testament interpretation, and the Unit returns to them several times, so don't try and solve all the problems at this first meeting!

Ending the Session:

- 8 is a good suggestion ...

At some stage in the meeting explain clearly the schedule of meetings, and indicate that next week you will introduce the issues surrounding assessment.

Session 2 – Paul: the man and his message

This Session follows on easily from the opening one, and should present few issues, though some participants may be puzzled as to this Unit does not start with the gospels.

Apart from the issue of dating documents, you may need to emphasise the point that for the first generation of believers (25-30 years) they only had the oral tradition of Jesus, as maintained and communicated by the surviving apostles in and around Judea, and the letters of Paul outside that region.

Preparation: Complete this yourself. In addition read through Galatians in both a 'traditional' (phrase by phrase, word-based) translation (e.g. NRSV) and a 'contemporary' on such as *The Message*, making your own summary of the argument, so you are familiar with the letter.

Also, be ready to explain the assessment process and options.

Group Work:

- 1 The quote from George Bernard Shaw in the Assessment section is typical of many Anglican attitudes to Paul – in the discussion, allow people to express their own perspective, but ensure that the group pays attention to the evidence from the texts.
- 2 This is not intended to be a hugely detailed exercise, but to help group members 'place' Paul as writing real letters to real situations, not dominated by literary conventions but adapting them for his purposes.
- 3 Allocate one passage to each group, so that this task does not take too long.
- 4 Watch the time – your break could resume with this task for the full group.
- 5 This Task, which may take as much as 25 minutes, should be done by small groups or pairs from the same local congregation, as far as possible. In moving around the groups / pairs, be alert to re-frame debates about the congregation concerned towards reflection on the letter to the Galatians.
- 6 Insist that each pair / small group simply reads their letter aloud, rather than explaining or introducing it, before any general comments are made.

Ending the Session:

Task 7 explains itself – remind group members to keep their letters with their Unit 3 workbook, and to start thinking about their assessment ideas.

Session 3 - A tale of two churches

This Session is not the place to work through every one of the many issues raised in 1 Corinthians – there many! The main focus is on getting to know something of two very different Christian churches, and the ministry of Paul as a ‘way in’ to understand their early life.

Preparation: As well as doing the Preparation tasks, read all of Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians. If you are not as familiar as you would like with the major differences between Jewish Jerusalem and pagan Corinth in the first century AD, do some further reading – Bible dictionaries, online websites and the like are useful here.

Group Work: The range of material is wide, so in moving between groups, keep an ear out for debates over details, and encourage group members to try and identify *why* they differ (where they do).

1-2 Allow good time for this, having worked out ways by which the small groups can be encouraged to keep moving through the Tasks.

3 Your break is best taken after this Task, since this Session's work falls into two reasonably equal halves.

4 Usually, people return to the same small groups in the same Session, but this may be an occasion when group members could be ‘mixed up’.

The four ‘headings’ are by no means exhaustive, and to some extent impose contemporary issues on the Corinthian letter – encourage groups to use them as a guide, not a straightjacket.

5 The Preparation reading cites Barclay's suggestion that ‘division’ (and presumably ‘unity’) is the underlying theme, which may reflect the interest of the 1960s in ecumenism. The letter covers so many topics – from sex and money to resurrection bodies – that seeking one overarching ‘message’ could mis-read Paul!

6-7 Be careful to avoid letting group members’ vent their spleen against their local congregation! Again, the point of this Session is not to tie down two ‘solutions’ to issues of members’ time and place, but help the group to become more effective ‘users’ of the New Testament. This entails careful ‘reading’ of both ancient texts and contemporary ministry contexts – an art more than a science!

Ending the Session:

Task 8 does the job nicely – but don't make group members feel that they have to pray aloud, and be ready to ‘cut in’ if someone goes on and on and on ...

Remind group members of assessment proposals before the meeting ends.

Session 4 - Mark's Good News

Preparation: As well as your own completing of the Preparation tasks, use the outline in the 'Books of the NT' section to become familiar with Mark's structure – if time, use a Synopsis to gain a quick idea of how it differs from the other Gospel in terms of their structures, and the major stories included or not.

Group Work:

- 1 As always, move around the groups to listen – if people spend too much time on issues of Mark's date, origin etc., encourage them to focus on its main message, and portrayal of Jesus.
- 2 This Task should be finished to allow time before the break for
- 3 The notion of 'Markan sandwich' is not widely known, but is useful for the purpose of coming to grips with the passage to be studied – it is a particular example of how to 'use' this gospel as Christian persons and communities.
- 4 This type of exercise is very useful when considering narratives – encourage groups members to think about what is *not* told about their character, for example.

The group should have at least five members, so the process of dividing it into this number of small groups is practical! I is probably better for the tutor to be part of one of the small groups – moving between in this case is likely to be too 'bitty', but this will depend on the group concerned.
- 5 You may be overwhelmed by the insights offered – make sure that each 'character' has sufficient time to give adequate and useful feed-back.
- 6 As always, watch that group members don't get too 'down' on the church life they experience – or themselves!

Ending the Session:

- 7 should be sufficient, but (again) ensure that no-one feels 'pressured'. If you would like a prayer which focuses more on Mark, the Collect for St Mark's day (April 25) from APBA offers a useful alternative to the Grace.

By now, you should have an idea of what each group member intends to do for her or his assessment – if not, follow up each person (being sensitive to appropriate privacy).

Session 5 - The Gospels: the same view?

For many Christians, the 'synoptic problem' – as it is usually unfortunately called, since it is better described as an opportunity! – presents a challenge. Many have never thought about such an analysis of the texts, which are often assumed to 'speak' to readers in small chunks, rather than as part of larger structures and perspectives. This is a challenge which needs to be faced in this Session – but not in the spirit of 'criticising' the Gospel, so much as being honest about them: this is the ethos within which the Preparation reading has been written.

Conversely, once the idea is grasped, most being very excited, and start to appreciate the depth in the accounts. Further, 'redactional' perspectives – realising that each gospel has been brought together with an overall theological emphasis and particular needs in mind – can help churches realize that their situations can be addressed quite particularly, without undoing or contesting the character of the Gospels as 'sacred scripture'.

The amount of possible material to be taken up in this Session is large: in some groups, the tutor should consider abbreviating some Tasks, but others, whose members are already familiar with the Gospels, may have time to consider both passages in Task 4.

NB: A 'Synopsis' volume (Huck's is the classic) is a very valuable aid in studying the Gospels, though the book form limits the possibilities for grasping their multiplex relationships – here an online Synopsis is ideal. The University of Toronto provides several, including parallels in the Gospel of Thomas and Paul: www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis.

Preparation: As always, do the Preparation for yourself, and think through *your* responses to the possible reasons for the different emphases in each Gospel.

Also, read through Matthew as a whole, in both 'traditional' (e.g. NRSV) and 'dynamic equivalence' versions (e.g. *The Message*), with an eye to getting a sense of its overall thrust. The main structure, as sketched in 'The Books of the New Testament' section at the beginning of the Unit 3 workbook, may be helpful here.

Group Work:

- 1 This is set as a task for the full group, and is likely to need some time – so keep an eye on the group's discipline (and ensure that no-one's opinion is brushed aside).
- 2, 3 If time is short, have the small groups do Task 3 rather than 2 (the latter being covered in the reading, and in part in Task 1). As always, move around the groups to listen and encourage.

- 4 Probably a useful way to re-gather the small groups, in most cases. As noted in the workbook, if there is time, Task 4 could conclude the pre-break first half, and the temptation narrative exercise done in small groups before Task 5.
- 5 This exercise has two functions: to get to grips with one distinctive aspect of Matthew (the 'sermon on the mount', whose contents are distributed across Luke rather than gathered together), and also to move towards helping groups members 'use' the gospels. Try and keep the group on some sort of balance!

Ending the Session:

- 6 For this, have a couple of passages in mind, so that if a passage does not emerge from the meeting there is no 'blank spot'.

By now, each group member should have nominated an assessment task which you have approved: if not, follow up soon!

Session 6 - Luke's two-part story

There are significant scholarly differences about Luke-Acts, which may affect the discussion in your group – here are some examples:

- A century ago their historical nature was strongly contested, but (as with the Pentateuch) more recent study and archeological finds have restored confidence in the way these books are set in the Graeco-Roman environment.
- A newer issue is the relationship between Acts and Paul, between which (on any view) there are differences, especially surrounding on how the circumcision debate arose and played out – Walter Wangerin's *Paul: a Novel*, portrays this brilliantly.
- Some have seen Luke as too much of a 'peace-maker', painting an idyllic view of the early churches – and many want to read him in this manner! However, his account is more subtle than this, as the reading notes: but it is important not to minimize his seemingly quiescent attitude to Roman authority – that the 'pax Romana' allowed travel and thus mission is true, but these years were also the age of Caligula and Nero.
- On the other hand, the positive stance of Luke-Acts towards the ministries of women, and the care shown towards those in many forms of need, have seen the reputation of this two-volume work enhanced – but further cultural changes may alter this!

Finally, note that western cultures currently emphasize the individual, and Australians generally favour anyone who thumbs the nose at authority!

So coming to grips with the struggle in Acts over how to re-receive the Old Testament revelation of God about the entry-requirements to the people of God (circumcision for males) in the light of Jesus and the Spirit can seem to us unreal – 'why didn't they just break up into denominations?' is a common response to such divisions today.

How do we discern what is true in God's self-revelation in Christ, through the Spirit, according to the scriptures? Just think about gender issues and the churches over the past generation!

Preparation: As well as your own completion of the Preparation tasks, read through Luke and Acts 1-17, if not the whole book, keeping an eye on the structure outlines given.

Group Work:

- 1 Preparation Task 1 may not be at the forefront of people's minds once they have read 'A two-volume blockbuster', but it is important to keep the group focused on this at first, so that a 'bridge' from Session 5 is established.

Make sure that some time is given to Preparation Task 2. Allow members to bring their learnings from the reading – trying to say what was missing can be speculative, but a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' balances a 'hermeneutic of trust'.

- NB: no full group feedback is planned for the above Task: the learning involved will be taken up later in the meeting.
- 2 As usual, move around the small groups, encouraging people to stick to working with the text!
 - 3 It is important that this Task is finished before the break, so that sufficient time is available for the work on Acts which follows.
 - 4 This is a key discussion, about a central passage in Acts (followed through in the account of the Council on chapter 15) so ensure that groups have sufficient time to come to grips with the enormous change in Peter – and why he accepted it. (Wangerin's book on Paul is excellent on this issue, as noted above.)
 - 5,6 Keep these Tasks reasonably brief – the point is learn how to use Acts, not take apart the local congregation (or come up with utopian plans!).

Ending the Session:

- 7 Allow at least 10 minutes for this, and take care that all group members have been able to make some reasonable integration about the issues raised in this Session, which are of perennial significance for Christian churches.

Session 7 - According to John

Hopefully a straightforward session, though some group members may be 'put off' by the scarce data available regarding the background and context of the author!

As usual, there is a lot of material to be covered, including reflection on both baptism and the holy communion/eucharist, so as you prepare, keep in mind how the members of your group may best be led in the meeting – these are areas where you may need to be careful to 'hide' your own views occasionally, so that group members do not shrink from saying what they believe.

Be firm with any 'cheap' criticism of positions with which a group member may disagree.

Preparation: As well as completing the Preparation tasks yourself, read through John at least once in full, noting the structural outline in 'The Books of the New Testament' at the beginning of the workbook for Unit 3.

Group Work:

- 1 The main point here is to continue the discussion of the relationships between the gospel, not get into detail about baptism – if necessary, point that that Jesus' baptism was different to ours: his 'real' baptism was his passion.
- 2 Allow reasonable time for this discussion since it is the only opportunity which groups members will have to think about John as a whole – but discourage getting into minutiae about who wrote it, when etc.
- 3 Keep this brief – it is intended to orient group members to the next Task.
- 4 As always, keep group members to the actual texts as you move around the groups!
Some may be aware of the differences between Luke's account of the Last Supper (chosen because it is the one most commonly used as the basis for liturgical texts, including BCP) and those of Matthew (26.17-30), Mark (14.12-26) and Paul (1 Corinthians 11.17-34): acknowledge this, but keep the discussion as far as possible to the relation of John to these other accounts.
- 5 Keep this disciplined – it is not the place to debate Eucharistic theology or practice! The break should take place after this Task if at all possible.

- 6 This exercise has been carefully worded: ideally, members will appreciate that John offers an integrated theology of grace, feeding on Christ through both Word ('the food of the soul' as Thomas Cranmer put it) and sacrament.
- 7 If numbers are small, some groups may be just one person – the exercise is designed to give each person a chance to reflect on one of John's larger narratives, and also
- 8 to hear major insights from several of these.

Ending the Session:

The suggestion regarding prayers should be helpful – as always, be careful to allow groups members to participate as they are comfortable, and yourself have some prayers prepared.

If people have not finalized their assessment proposals, now is the time to insist that they do so!

Session 8 - Revelation and reflection

This Session perhaps attempts the impossible – to survey the most difficult type of literature for modern readers of the New Testament, and to reflect on group member's response to their studies of the whole Bible! Usually these two tasks would be given equal time, but if you think it appropriate for your group, spend most of the meeting on apocalyptic and Revelation.

Since this is the last Session for this Unit, make sure there are some special treats to share during the break, or at the end (which could be taken a little earlier – and see below).

Preparation: If at all possible, as well as your own Preparation, read through the whole of Revelation in a contemporary version such as *The Message*, as if you were looking at a music video – allow the images (mostly visual) to wash over you.

Group Work:

- 1 Start the discussion by asking people to reflect on their reading of the two passages from Revelation, before moving to their responses to the reading.

Avoid unhelpful debate about the extent to which Revelation 'foretells' or 'forthtells' what God is revealing about the Lord Jesus and his ultimate reign.
- 2 This (and the previous chapter) is one of the better-known passages in the book – and given rise to many usages in literature and now videos.
- 3 The comparison with Ephesians 6 helps readers see the images of the book of Revelation in terms of another New Testament use of the 'warrior' metaphor (all of whose equipment, note, apart from the message of the gospel, is defensive).
- 4 If you are giving equal time to each topic for this Session, the break comes after this Task: otherwise, it will come in the second half of the meeting.
- 5-7 These tasks are straightforward enough – and you may decide to keep the whole group together for them all, rather than using small groups and then feedback.

Keep in mind that what each group members sees as their learning is not contestable, even if other members wish they had learnt something else!

Ending the Session:

- 8 explains itself – and group members will no doubt want to thank you for your assistance: allow them to do so!

If the treats have not been shared in the break, you might like to have these handed around during Task 7, to accompany group members' reflection of their learning about the scriptures as a whole.

In addition, before members leave,

- a) Explain that you need to receive the assessment papers or projects within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
- b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
- c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
- d) Inform the group as to when and where the next Unit if being held (usually this would be Unit 4, *The Anglican Church – our story*).

Say your farewells, complete your 'roll' and get ready to start marking!

Unit 4: The Anglican Church: our story

*If you have not been a tutor for a Trinity Certificate Unit previously,
STOP - DO NOT READ ON!
Go back and work through the Introduction to this Tutor's Manual.*

Introduction

Unit 4 assumes that each group member has worked through Units 1-3, and so has become familiar with the learning strategies of the Trinity Certificate. But the nature of this Unit means that some people may be interested to do it on its own: if so, ensure that each understands the learning strategies employed in the Certificate.

There are several significant differences in Unit 4 from earlier Units:

- a) The material will mostly be unfamiliar to group members, so greater emphasis is placed on reading in Part A – Preparation for the Session. Also, while ‘Further reading’ is given for the Unit as a whole, none is provided for each Session, because people would be in danger of being swamped with information, rather than reflecting on what being church today means.
- b) The second part of each Session Group Work focuses on the Projects (which are also the assessment for this Unit. This means that ‘auditing’ the Unit is basically impossible, since a great deal depends on people doing ongoing research into their local congregation.
- c) The Unit design assumes that members are Anglicans from the same congregation or parish, but this will not always be the case. Different congregations can be explored where people come from different ones, or numbers make this more feasible. If any member is not an Anglican, or does not have a link with an Anglican congregation, he or she should join one of the Anglican groups, offering the perspective of a friendly ‘outsider’ to the work.
- d) You will need to keep careful records of how each Project is going for each members: in this Unit, assessment matters cannot be left to the end of the Unit!

James Michener's *The Source* was recommended as a useful historical novel introduction to the Old Testament: its later chapters continue the story of Judaism, touching on several areas of Church History on the way. Rutherford's novels are based on excellent research, and very readable.

Session 1 - A celebration of difference

This first Session is rather sweeping - covering in one go the whole Anglican Communion! But keep the overall picture in mind - there are eight more Sessions, and for them to be effective, each group member must feel that their experience is taken seriously, and also feel secure enough so that each can take others' experience just as seriously. Enabling this, and getting the Projects under way, is the aim of this Session - not having to referee fights about whose view of being 'Anglican' is pure and perfect!

Preparation: Work through 'Preparation - particular' in this Manual as applied to Unit 4.

Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all group members know one another already, prepare tags with each member's Christian name in large print.

Contact group members a fortnight or more prior to the first session, giving them the meeting dates, time and place. Suggest that they do some general preparation such as look up the Anglican Communion website, or locate any history of their local congregation or parish.

As usual, do the Preparation yourself: in this Unit, the reading is what matters, but has been carefully written to avoid raising unnecessary problems for group members, whatever their view of the Church or Anglican tradition.

Have large sheets of paper ('butchers') and felt-tip pens ready, or laptop and data projector which you are comfortable using, for taking notes.

Make sure that the meeting-place is ready, and that a cuppa is available.

Group Work: It's been said many times, but keep this moving!

Open the meeting with prayer, and brief introductions as necessary.

- 1-2 Allow plenty of time for this, so that each person has had a say - AND has their opinion noted on the paper.
- 3 If there are people from different congregations in the group, try and mix them up, rather than staying in the same small group. Move around the small groups, listening especially for any 'chips on shoulders' or sharpness between members.

- 4 This is probably a good way to resume after a break – don't get into too much detail, though those who have completed Unit 3 will find it much easier than others. The aim is to start thinking about 'ecclesiology', the doctrine of the Church, in practical rather than idealistic ways (which is common among non-clergy members).
- 5-7 The remainder of the meeting will need to be taken up in some planning: ensure that each church to be researched is identified, and that each member has a clear idea of what they are to do: suggest that each person record their involvement in their workbook, or on a separate piece of paper.
Make sure that you keep a record of all decisions made, even though each group will in time do its own planning – the large sheets of paper or laptop can be of assistance here.

Ending the Session

What is suggested in the workbook should work well, but don't hesitate to bring a prayer of your own, or use some from *APBA* relating to the Church, its mission and ministry.

Session 2 - Light in early England

This Session is typical of what is to follow in this Unit: reading which sketches a picture of a particular time and place, with more detail arising from stories of particular people. Some may want to discuss this material in detail, which is fine – but the overall point is to use it as a resource to reflect on the mission and ministry of the churches being studied in the Projects, as ‘sample’ of the wider Church in Australia and the West today.

Preparation: Complete the reading and tasks as usual, but be sure that you are familiar with the Timeline, so you can help group members ‘place’ the events and people considered. You are welcome to read more – a Dictionary of the Church, or the internet, are good places to start – but be wary of preparing a lecture!

Group Work: You may to open using a prayer from one of the English saints mentioned: these can readily be found on the internet. (A table of feast-days for the English saints commemorated in APBA is given as a brief Appendix to the Preparation reading.)

- 1 Allow wide-ranging discussion – different people will find different things of interest, and this is the first opportunity for this in Unit 4.
- 2 The questions is worded carefully – nowhere in the New Testament is there any planning for evangelism, and scholars have come to the surprising conclusion that no Father in the patristic age (100-450 AD) address the topic in a sermon or writing! Our assumptions arise from what evangelism means in ‘post-Christendom’ contexts where Christian faith is the ‘background’ rather than new.
But this observation is just food for thought!
- 3, 4 If possible, allocate members to different small groups than those used in Session 1.
- 5 If possible, have this tasks completed prior to the break.
- 6 These statements represent a ‘chain’ of attitudes taken to mission today (especially as evangelism, church-planting and making disciples). Although they tend to range from the most ‘conservative’ to the most ‘radical’, all have solid reasoning behind them.

Few Christians who have addressed these issues would accept any one exclusively. It is important to recognize that whichever approach is taken may well depend on the context in which it is employed.

- 7 This notion, termed *mission Dei* – ‘mission of God’ – is widely accepted today, without denying the importance of active communication of the Christian message.
- 8 Leave 15 minutes or so for this Task, allowing group members to raise practical questions about their projects.

Ending the Session:

What is in the Workbook should work OK.

Session 3 - Martyrs and mysteries

Hopefully this Session will not reinforce the popular idea that all things 'medieval' are cruel, oppressive or ignorant! The very real corruption in the churches must be acknowledged, but without the faithful witness of public and private Christians such as Thomas Becket and Julian of Norwich, our generation would not have received the gospel!

Again, the focus of the Session should blend interest in the Middle Ages with its relevance for the Project, and thus the ministry and mission of churches today.

Preparation: Look out for further prayers or meditations from Thomas and Julian to use in the opening and closing moments of the Session, along with your own Preparation.

Group Work:

- 1 Allow reasonable time for this general Task, sufficient to give each member the opportunity to have their say about the Middle Ages.
- 2 – 4 These tasks are likely to take up the remainder of the first half of the meeting, up to your break.
- 4 Don't allow sweeping generalizations about these examples – the prayers and readings for use on Anzac and Australia Day in APBA seek to walk the tightrope involved in this issue very carefully! In each crisis addressed, Anglican leaders took a lead, seeking to act in an ecumenical spirit of service.
- 5 Allow groups to spend some time in quiet, if that is helpful, and in your moving around avoid encouraging a 'chatty' or overly 'busy' air on this occasion.
- 6 Give 15 or so minutes to this ongoing Project work.

Information on clergy selection methods is available in the Parishes Act (or similar title) for each diocese: if the details look like being important, a phone call to your Registry will soon uncover this information: what follows is a general summary.

In the Anglican Church of Australia, generally the archdeacon calls an 'incumbency committee' consisting of representatives elected by the parish Annual General Meeting, and other elected by the Synod. This committee considers names, often interviews potential appointees and makes a recommendation to the diocesan bishop.

This process seeks to blend the 'congregational' and 'diocesan' dimensions of being a church in a society where democratic processes are normal. (The committee's work is

conducted in strict confidence – the knowledge that a priest is being considered for another parish can damage his or her ministry where they are.)

The diocesan bishop must approve each appointment, and will then issue a 'licence' for the clergyperson to minister in the parish concerned. In some circumstances the bishop has the power to make the appointment, though usually a committee-type process is still used.

- 7 Take care in moving from the 'bureaucracy' of parish appointment procedures to the stillness of quiet meditation – but both are valid forms of being a disciple!

Ending the Session:

See notes for the first two Sessions as regards closing prayers.

As regards Project 1, in the next Session people will be asked to consider its buildings – if they have not been to the place yet, now is a good time to encourage them to do so, considering the questions asked at Task 5 of Session 4 Part B - Group Work.

Session 4: Reformation

Of all Sessions in this Unit, this should start to stir the hearts of long-time Anglicans, especially those raised on the *Book of Common Prayer*. But the main aim is not to re-fight the battles of the Reformation, nor the merits or otherwise of the Reformers, but to reflect on the heritage which the events of the English Reformation has given us – for good and ill.

There is a huge literature on Tudor England and the English Reformation. If people are interested in Cranmer, Colin Buchanan's *What did Cranmer think he was doing?* (Grove Liturgy Series 7), is a superb overview of the development of his eucharistic doctrine, and where this led in later BCPs up to 1662 – all in 32 pages!

Henry VIII is often maligned in popular culture, mainly due to his succession of marriages. But that he was able to reign for so long, gave England independence from Continental powers, and put in place religious reforms which lasted, show that he was a capable monarch, if cruel – and the evidence shows that he sought live as a Christian king, acting out of godly motivation as much as anyone does.

Note on theories of Christ's presence in the sacrament of his body and blood

No Church teaches, or has officially taught, that the bread is turned into Christ's literal flesh, or the wine into Christ's literal blood – this is called 'carnalism'. Conversely, it is widely agreed today that Christ is present in a personal way – in receiving the body and blood of Christ we communicate with a 'him' not an 'it', as it might be crudely put. This realization eases many of the tensions over 'real presence' (which Cranmer heard as 'carnalism', hence his speaking of 'true presence').

The issue which led to the formation of the doctrine of 'transubstantiation' was the question of whether Christ's presence was 'localised' in the elements in some way. In a Platonic world-view (basically the philosophical platform of Christian reflection for the first millennium) reality was perceived in mystical terms, under which such a question raised few problems, since 'where' was understood flexibly.

This base shifted towards Aristotelian philosophy in the pragmatic Holy Roman Empire: the debate before Charlemagne (who, upon inaugurating the Holy Roman Empire, wanted the issue settled) between Radbertus and Ratramnus ('Bertram') in the ninth century was to revive in the English Reformation, when Nicholas Ridley (Thomas Cranmer's chaplain) re-discovered it.

In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas' great achievement was thoroughly reworking Christian faith in Aristotelian terms, in responding to Islam. Here

reality is what can be seen, felt and touched empirically – ‘where’ involved a specific location. The bread clearly did not look or taste different after ‘consecration’ – in Aristotelian terms, its ‘accidents’ did not change. What defined it as bread – its ‘substance’ – changed to what defines Christ’s body, but ‘substance’ was not considered to have geographical properties.

Ultimately, the point of this theory (and others) is to assure recipients that Christ’s offer of himself in the sacrament of his body and blood rests on God’s promise and gracious initiative, not on a human work, whether of the priest, or the receivers.

Preparation: Bring enough copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) to the meeting so that each group member has access to one: if your local parish has none, try op shops. If this fails, the text of the Holy Communion service can be downloaded from www.ely.anglican.org/~sjk/liturgy/bcp/hc.rtf and printed off.

Group Work: As is now becoming familiar, the meeting falls into two parts: around 65-70% of the time should be allocated to the reading questions, and the remainder to project-oriented tasks.

- 1, 2 The latter question is designed to open up group member’s understanding of the changes which took place in Tudor England, not start new battles!
- 3 Listen for unhelpful polemics in responses to these questions: as noted already, the point is not to resolve Eucharistic controversies, but engage with our heritage.
The Lambeth Conference of 1988 accepted ARCIC’s *Agreed Statement on the Eucharist* (1971) and *Elucidation* (1979) as expressing adequately what Anglicans believe. What is written below is informed by these Agreements. Amazingly short and readable, they are available at www.pro.urbe.it/dia-int/arcic/doc/e_arcic_eucharist.html
4. This exercise involves reading some very dense texts, about every phrase or work of which much ink has been spilled! Don’t get into too much detail – much debate in this area is about denying what others are held to believe: the Exhortation seeks to offer a positive statement, and the ‘translation’ in *APBA* supports this.
No feedback for Tasks 3 and 4 is provided: the aim is to help each group member reflect on the issues, not for the group to reach agreement.

5. The topic moves from doctrine to buildings and furniture – deeply connected in the Anglican tradition, from debates about where the priest stands to whether people who have not paid for their pew should be made to stand! Give reasonable time to this, focusing discussion on the project churches more than on the Reformation.

Each of the multi-purpose examples is drawn from Anglican parishes, in each case with the permission of the bishop.

- NB: The term 'secular' comes from the final words at the end of prayers in Latin – *per saecula saeculorum*, rendered as 'for ever and ever' in English. When worshippers heard these words (said aloud, after the silent Mass prayers) they knew that the 'holy time' was passed, and 'ordinary' things could be done! 'Secular' has come to take on an 'anti-religious' tone in recent decades, but is not so intended here.

6. Allow a good deal of freedom here – and if any creative ideas come out of the discussion, pass them on to your parish priest, bishop, or the General Secretary of General Synod!

Ending the Session:

7. This explains itself: you may like to use the Litany for Unity (*APBA* page 195), Prayer 39 on page 213 - drafted for the Accession of by Queen Anne in 1702, as a sign of her desire to have the Church of England be more generous to Dissenters. Prayer 40 on page 213 was drafted by a Roman Catholic-Anglican association to promote Christian unity in the 19th century, whose Roman Catholic members were eventually ordered to discontinue ...

As the workbook notes, Project planning should be well under way, and some hopefully started.

Session 5 - Revolution and revival

This session starts to bring the story into trends and practices which remain alive today. Try and ensure that group members with Dissenting, Non-conformist or 'Free Church' (i.e. free from establishment control, not necessarily free in their forms of worship!) backgrounds, as also those who identify with the Evangelical tradition, are treated neither as strange, nor as experts!

That the Commonwealth, Restoration and Wesleyan revivals produced a variety of spiritual traditions in the English-speaking Christian world is true, but these have continued to change over the centuries and decades since. It is important to realize that the huge shifts in Anglican churches which have taken place in the past 50 years – notably far-reaching liturgical revision, the ordination of women, and the dominance of visual technology in social culture. In particular, demonizing or sanctifying the Anglican Diocese of Sydney as 'typical Evangelical' today can be very unhelpful in coming to terms with the influence of that tradition on the Project 1 church.

In regard to George Herbert, his *Country Parson* has often been read as encouraging a culture of a busy 'maintenance mode' of ordained ministry, which has limited relevance in many places today: Justin Lewis-Anthony, *If You Meet George Herbert on the Road, Kill Him: Radically Re-thinking Priestly Ministry*, Mowbray, 2009 provides a stimulating antidote to 'Herbertism'!

As regards the Evangelical tradition, and the setting of 18th century England, William Hague's magnificent biography of William Wilberforce is highly recommended, not least because as well as being an historian, Hague is an expert on the English Parliament (he once led the Conservative Party), which was by far the main engagement of Wilberforce's life. English democracy then, let alone Church, is not quite what we might have expected!

Preparation: As well as your own workbook reading, you may like to read the relevant chapters in Stephen Neill's *Anglicanism*. But don't do so much preparation that you give in to the temptation to start giving lectures!

Have large sheets of paper ('butchers') and felt pens ready for recording, or a laptop and projector set up which you can use easily.

Group work:

- 1 Keep this reasonably brief, noting that the contemporary forms of the traditions noted have been through many changes since.
- 2 Trust that each small group doing one part will lead to good discussion in the full groups – everyone does not have to do everything!

- 3 This idea has been noted in Unit 3 – keep the discussion in the context of balancing the personal and corporate dimensions of Christian life, noting that today most congregations are much more ‘gathered’ than 50 years ago: visitors stand out in a way that they once did not.
- 4 This Task is a good one to announce before the break and start after it – members may start to share their own ‘once / twice born’ orientation over coffee! Again, this was noted in Unit 3, and it may be important to emphasise that neither is ‘right’, and that for many there is a mix of ‘datable transformation’ (sacramentally, related to the once-for-all act of baptism) and ‘ongoing journey’ (sacramentally, related to the repeated meal that is the Holy Communion).
- 5, 6 Allow good time for these Tasks, seeking to keep the focus on the Project 1 church being considered. If necessary, separate members into groups considering a particular church congregation.

Ending the session:

If some members are starting to lag in their project preparation, do not nag, but seek to help them work through what is holding them back, meeting one-on-one if necessary.

Task 7 should be straightforward – this is a delightfully terse, elegant yet ‘simple’ poem!

Session 6 - From England to the world

Similar comments apply to this Session as to the previous one – the Oxford / Tractarian / Anglo-Catholic movement continues to be alive in the Anglican Church of Australia, though (as with the Evangelical tradition) it has gone through significant changes, especially in recent decades as regards liturgical revision and the ordination of women. Don't let any of your group become 'trapped' as a spokesperson OR harsh critic of the movement!

This Session begins the Australian story, which will be picked up in the Group Work for later Sessions, since the present influence of the first decades has lessened considerably (especially outside Sydney), though knowing something of these origins is important.

Preparation: Last Session's advice still applies: as well as your own workbook reading, you may like to read the relevant chapters in Stephen Neill's *Anglicanism*. But don't do so much preparation that you give in to the temptation to start giving lectures!

Have large sheets of paper and felt pens ready for recording, or a laptop and projector set up which you can use easily.

Group Work:

- 1 It is quite likely that some / most members will have little or no sense of being part of a world-wide Communion: be careful not to 'judge' this, but seek to encourage them to explore how their reading for this Session may have changed this.
- 2 This is important, but (as noted above and in the workbook) this is the beginning of a move towards an explicit Australian focus.
- 3 The point of the list is not to 'bless' or 'damn' any one of the practices listed, but to help people realize that parish church life did indeed change! As you go around the small groups, be especially alert to people being (self-)categorized, as noted above.
- 4 This would be a good way to close off the first half of the meeting before your break.
- 5 Hopefully this balances the more 'inward' look of Task 3 with a more 'outward' focus – which is precisely what the Anglo-Catholic Movement would want! But leave at least 20-25 minutes for the remaining Project Church tasks.
- 6-8 Hopefully members have done some preparation on this, and you are in for an exciting time!

Ending the Session:

This should be straightforward – the Collect for Purity is one of the most loved prayers in all sections of the Anglican tradition.

Session 7 - Changing world, changing church

If internal church differences were to the fore in Sessions 5 and 6, it the various responses to external issues which are to the fore in this Session – once we have got over the difficult path which Australian Anglicans walked towards a Constitution! Be sensitive to people who may have strong political views (including yourself!) – not to suppress them, but to encourage them to relate these to Christian teaching and outlook.

Preparation: In doing the reading, note personal experiences which might enlighten or distort the *group's* learning, so that you don't over or under-use them in the meeting.

Have large sheets of paper and felt pens ready for recording, or a laptop and projector set up which you can use easily.

Group Work:

1-3 Keep an eye out for people becoming unduly depressed over this somewhat dismal story – and watch the time, because this is an introductory exercise compared to the main learning aimed for in the meeting.

4-5 Task 4 is straightforward, but the ideas raised in Task 5 may come as a surprise to many: key thinkers who have contributed to this shift include G. Studdert Kennedy ('Woodbine Willy', a famous WWI army chaplain), Dietrich Bonhoeffer and especially Jurgen Moltmann (*The Crucified God*).

As a more 'popular' level, the notion of God as defined by 'love' has pushed aside images such a king and warrior – perhaps into too 'wamr and fuzzy' territory! The writings of Philip Yancey and Eugene Peterson are more open to such ideas than 'traditional' stress on concepts such as immutability and impassibility.

Also, some pastoral responses to women who have suffered sexual abuse have appealed to the 'crucified God' idea – but some who have suffered find this discomfoting, looking to a Saviour who is indeed powerful and strong.

These are not simple areas – some people might like to look at the way God is addressed in *APBA* to see how this might reflect shifts of emphasis from *AAPB* (in which a lot of 'Father' imagery appears) and *BCP* (in which royal imagery is predominant).

6 This discussion would be a good way to end the first half of the meeting – and don't suppress differences, because wrestling with what is right in a situation is essential.

- 7 Each small group should be asked to begin with one question, before moving on to the next (if at all).
Allow some 10-12 minutes for this Task.
- 8-9 When thinking about 'the Anglican Church' and its response or otherwise, if possible keep in mind its national, diocesan and local expressions - which will lead you into the final Task, engaging with the Project church.
If a cathedral visit has taken place, people's responses could be shared in this part of the Session, especially in relation to some of the issues listed.

Ending the Session:

What is suggested should work well - a time of silence for members to pray for one another as they seek to respond to the pressures of daily living might be a useful addition, especially if some tensions or sharp differences have emerged.

Session 8 - Church down under

This should be an interesting Session, since members will be looking at events in which they are likely to have been involved!

Preparation: Think carefully about your own involvement in the various issues discussed, both so that you can contribute from your distinctive experience, and also be aware of the 'angle' you bring to the meeting.

Re-read the opening sentences for the previous two Sessions, keeping in mind that the issues discussed in this Session are very much alive today.

Group Work:

- 1 Beginning with money might sound odd, but this factor sets the Australian churches in quite a different context to the UK and US, which are generally well-endowed (let alone the State churches of Europe, funded through taxation). And since some group members are likely to have been on a parish council, they will know the reality of trying to be mission-oriented and live by faith when resources are scarce!
- 2 This is quite a personal exercise, but important in helping members appreciate the changes which they have experienced, often without realizing their extent. Watch that time does not slip away unnecessarily through lots of anecdotes!
- 3 The full group reflection on Tasks 1 and 2 should be completed with enough time for the small groups to have completed the next Task before the break.
- 4-5 These are complex issues, but if a small group can work through both options under each Task, so much the better!
- 6 Allow time for each of the four Tasks to be discussed, but keep a close eye on the time, so that there is sufficient space to take them up in relation to the Project church, in Task 7.

Ending the Session:

Keep this simple, as group members are likely to be quite drained by reflecting on the weight of current challenges and opportunities facing their churches.

Session 9 - Your and your Church

As is evident, this is very much a summary Session, focusing on helping group members bring together their Project work. It would be a good idea to plan the meeting so that you are able to spend some time with each Project church group, helping them know how to finalise this.

Also, since this is the final Session, bring some treats along to share during the break or at the end, as a small celebration of much reading, reflection and hopefully learning!

In addition, before members leave,

- a) Explain that you need to receive the Project and cathedral visit reports within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
- b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
- c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
- d) Inform the group as to when and where the next Unit is being held (usually this would be Unit 5, *Confessing our Faith*).

Say your farewells, complete your 'roll' and get ready to start marking!

Unit 5: Confessing our faith

If you have not been a tutor for a Trinity Certificate Unit previously,

STOP - DO NOT READ ON!

Go back and work through the Introduction to this Tutor's Manual.

Introduction

By the time group members have reached this Unit – the fifth – they should have become quite familiar with the ethos, learning strategies and intentions of the Certificate. Hopefully, they have also gained some confidence in using the scriptures and reflecting on their own faith and that of the Church. Which is precisely what this Unit is about – and since members are assumed to have put down some deeper foundations in faith, it does not shirk from a ‘question-focussed’ approach.

Yet it is quite likely that some will be disturbed by facing questions about basic Christian beliefs, especially if it has not occurred to them that they have been and continue to be explored, both within and beyond the Church. Further, in the experience of many who teach ‘systematic theology’, it is quite often *orthodox* beliefs which cause problems – what is accepted as ‘sound’ teaching is not uncommonly the latest ‘popular’ notion, or an over-simplification. For example, Christmas faith is not that ‘God became man’ (which sounds like the eternal Creator turned into a creature) but ‘the eternal Word assumed our human flesh’ – a much deeper, less ‘obvious’ truth.

So ... keep encouraging group members to be unafraid to raise questions, but be sensitive to the notion that Christian faith has no resources to offer in response. Questions (and prayers!) rarely receive precise *answers*, but do receive *responses* (which, as the opening Session emphasises) often take the form of more questions!

As regards further /supportive reading, the most recent book listed, Tom Wright's *Simply Christian*, is highly recommended, not least because of its strong materialistic / ‘new creation’ emphasis: no vague ‘heavenly’ spiritualism for the good Bishop!

Session 1 - A question of faith

The title says it all!

The reading has been carefully written so as to get away from the (commonly encountered) idea that 'scripture', 'tradition' and 'reason' are 'things', let alone different packages of propositions or sentences to be lined up alongside each other! Certainly the scriptures are a 'thing', but tradition is a *process* (whose content derives from the revelation of God according to the scriptures – cf the Creeds), and reason is an *instrument* by which we think.

Also, it may be important to clarify that by 'experience' is not meant just the 'immediate' sensory experience of a rock concert, fashion parade or football match, but the wider sense which our cultural, family and other life experiences shape our understanding, assumptions and beliefs.

Preparation: Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all members know one another, prepare tags with their Christian name in large print.

Contact group members a fortnight or more prior to the first session, giving them the meeting dates, time and place. Suggest and suggesting that they do some general preparation such as 'confessions' in *APBA* - see pages 37 and 123; the Athanasian Creed and 39 Articles are printed at the back of each edition.

As you do the preparation, be alert to reflecting on your own approach to faith, and experience of life, so you lead from 'within' rather than 'on' or 'at' the group – but be careful to encourage group members to share theirs in the first place.

Make sure that the meeting-place is ready, with places for the small groups to meet with some privacy, and that a cuppa is available.

Group Work: Open with a familiar prayer – the Collect of Purity (at the beginning of each Holy Communion service in *APBA*) is one possible choice.

Introduce the Unit briefly, and check that each member understands its intentions – deflect discussion of the 'questions' approach until later in the meeting.

- 1 Form small groups quickly and get them going, visiting each briefly. Alternatively, the full group could do this Task, though watch the time if you choose this.
- 2 Avoid detailed reporting on Task 1 – the point is to get people starting to reflect on how they have found the Certificate's learning processes relating to this Session.

- 3-5 It is suggested that each small group start with a different situation in Task 3, so that in Task 6 each has been covered to some extent.
- Arrange some signal to encourage that groups to move on through the three fairly different Tasks in the small groups – and continue to move around them.
- If time starts to run short, you make like to suggest that people get a cuppa and have a short break during these Tasks, or break and resume with Task 6.
- 6 Give reasonable time to this Task – which is one in which you will need to listen carefully, encouraging each members to be honest and open, yet watching that no-one is 'put down' because they have a slightly different approach to the majority of the group. Keep the lid on your own experience if it gets in the way!
- 7 This is a different exercise, close to members' earlier experiences in the Certificate, so should be straightforward enough. It is important that it not be skipped or passed over quickly, so that members realise that the approach is based in the scriptures, not imposed upon them.

Ending the Session:

- 8 This should work well – again, don't hurry it!

NB: ask people to bring with them a copy of the Bible for each Session in this Unit.

Session 2 - Jesus the Saviour

This Session reflects on possibly the most dense yet personally significant topic in Christian theology – the ‘person and work’ of Christ. This topic is fundamental to Christian faith, so needs to come early in the Unit, but don’t try to cover every angle – trust the course to tease out further dimensions of its implications as your group’s meetings continue.

As with some other Session in earlier Units, this topic is also one in which sensitivity needs to be shown to different members’ perspectives, including the possibility that some may be in reaction against overly simplistic ideas they have heard or taken on board in their Christian experience.

The work book notes seek to be positive but care-full about the profound theological issues involved, but ensure that, if members ‘hear’ others denying what they hold as precious truths, then what is actually thought to be denied is clarified. Which means that some prayer for your group before the Session is advised, as always.

Preparation: Provide hymn books for use during the Session, and have some large sheets of paper (‘butchers’) and felt pens ready for recording, or have a data projector and laptop ready to show a variety of hymns and be used for recording ideas.

Do your own preparation as usual, perhaps trying to think yourself into images for the cross which do not appeal immediately to you, but seem to appeal to others: this may help you in being critically empathetic during the meeting.

Group Work: Suitable opening prayers include the Prayers of the Day for Holy Week (found in the full (red) edition of *APBA*).

- 1 Work through this Task quickly, accepting all suggestions without comment, and ensuring that each member makes a contribution.

The exercise about putting the descriptions into two lists will need more time. It is likely to show that few names / titles applied to Jesus can be neatly fitted into either the ‘human’ or ‘divine’ box – it was one person walking around the Holy Land, not two!

In particular, although ‘son of man’ is commonly thought to be about his humanity, its Old Testament use is twofold: to mean ‘mere mortal’ in Ezekiel, but ‘heavenly being next to God’ in Daniel! How a reader of the New Testament ‘hears’ the term will depend on their attitude to Jesus – and the only person other than Jesus to use it is Stephen (Acts 7.56).

Likewise with 'son of God': for John, it reflects the unique father-son relationship which Jesus enjoyed with God, but in ordinary Hebrew and Greek it means someone who is godly.

The main point of this exercise, however limited it may be, is not to reach 'right' responses, but to encourage the group to appreciate the wide diversity of names / description used of Jesus in the scriptures.

- 2 This looks like a straightforward task, but each verse has loads of debate, richness and reflection surrounding it! Be content to have group members gain an overall view of the range of images used for the cross, and the breadth of God's achievement in and through it.

As you visit each small group, avoid the temptation to give lectures - keep them moving through the scriptures listed.

- 3 Recall Session 2 of Unit 1, where people's favourite hymns were considered: as then, don't allow any arguments between members about why this or that hymn is 'wrong'! Because the words will probably be more familiar to people, and the images will relate to their Christian experience, this task may be more 'lively' than Task 2, but by the end of both Tasks each member should have worked through a range of key resources and have come to realise their rich complexity.

The Session break should take place no later than the end of this Task.

- 4 Keep the focus in the sharing to what is in common: if a small group contributes what has already been said, move on to their next contribution - or take just one contribution from each small group in turn until, no more ideas are put forward.
- 5 This Task should be kept brief - it forms a 'bridge' between Task 4 and Tasks 6-7.
- 6-7 Have group members return to the same small groups, and keep them focussed on the task of finishing a statement - none will be perfect, all will have inadequacies, but each can be a very helpful way of enabling members to bring some integration into what often feels like a mass of disparate images.

Ending the session:

Task 8 should be adequate for this purpose – and as well as another Prayer from Holy Week, the following form could be used, based on APBA Holy Communion (Second Order) Thanksgiving 1:

Tutor: We do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Group: **Christ has died.**
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

NB: for a detailed, fascinating treatment of the main titles used of Jesus see Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament* (SCM, 1969).

Session 3 - New life!

If the previous Session involved a good deal of theological reflection, this one raises the issues of how God works in and through history.

Some group members may find the idea that 'resurrection' cannot be fitted neatly into a historical framework challenging – while on the other hand, others may think that were Jesus' bones to be discovered tomorrow, we could still believe in his resurrection! And when ascension is brought into the picture – whose theological meaning, that 'Jesus is Lord!' is evident in the New Testament, well you may have a discussion on your hands! The notes seek to encourage participants to engage with these issues, and what difference they may make in their Christian living.

Preparation: In your own preparation, be as honest as you can with yourself in relation to the various 'creedal statements' cited, and the resurrection / ascension of Jesus. The point in this is not to be able to give a lecture, but so that you understand where group members may be coming from, and are better equipped to lead the meeting.

As has often been the case, have some large sheets of paper ('butchers') and felt pens ready for recording, or have a data projector and laptop ready to show a variety of hymns and be used for recording ideas.

Have enough copies of the New Testament available for Task 8 – or run off copies in two contrasting versions (e.g. *NRSV* and *The Message*).

Group Work: Opening in prayer, you might like to use one of the Easter collects from *APBA*.

- 1 Don't comment on what people say at this stage – get all responses recorded before opening up the discussion.
- NB: This Task is an opening-up exercise, and not intended to be exhaustive discussion about who Jesus is, so move to the next Task fairly quickly.
- 2 While this focuses on the ascension, the intention is to engage the issue of the *significance* of Jesus' resurrection and ascension and their relationship to history.
- 3-4 Allow reasonable time for this – you may need to keep the small groups to just 3 people with time in mind. As you 'visit' each group, encourage them to work towards their written statements rather than debate about differences.

- 5 This would be good way to bring the group back together after the break.
- 6-8 If appropriate, these task could be done in the same groups of 3 as in Tasks 3-4.

Ending the session:

Task 9 should be sufficient – if a form of confession and absolution is needed, the following is suggested (from *APBA* page 21):

All:

**God of all mercy,
we humbly admit that we need your help.
We have wandered from your way.
We have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and have failed to do what is right.
You alone can save us.
Have mercy on us, wipe out our sins
and teach us to forgive others.
Bring forth in us the fruit of your Spirit,
that we may live the new life to your glory.
This we ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.**

Tutor:

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.
God pardons those who humbly repent,
and truly believe the gospel.
Therefore we have peace with God,
through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Session 4 - Journeying into God

Some may find the idea of considering unfamiliar ways of understanding God challenging (especially when gender is taken into account – a topic raised gently here). All the attributes or characteristics of God noted here have scriptural support, however.

Preparation: As at other times, have some large sheets of paper and felt pens ready for recording, or have a data projector and laptop ready for recording ideas.

Be quite particular in thinking through your own responses to the Tasks, and how you might find yourself responding to quite different ones.

Group Work: Task 1-4, 5-6 and 7-8 each raise huge theological / pastoral questions: if necessary, and with the group's permission, you might find it more helpful to work on just two of these areas in the group meeting.

- 1 This is a very important exercise, and may need 15-20 minutes. 'Tell me about the God you don't believe in' is a good question to ask someone who seems too negative about God, but can't let go. As you record people's responses, be careful not to react – just get them down! – and ensure that other members listen to others' contributions.
- 2 Gender and God is a much newer question, but a lot has been thought through in the past 50 years. In particular, many theologians and clergy now avoid using masculine pronouns for God (and the pre-incarnate Christ), and some hymn writers have been exploring feminine images (cf *Together in Song* 182).
- NB: Using 'Father God' to start a prayer has become increasingly common in recent years: this is highly questionable, as it tends to *define* rather than *describe* God as 'father'. In the scriptures, 'father' language is always relational – i.e. 'father of' Israel / the king / Christ / the Son / God's children / lights: 'Our Father' is the classic case – and thus 'Our Mother' is much less problematic than 'Mother God'.
- 3, 4 Listen to what people are sharing in the groups, paying attention if anyone seems to be finding it hard to be heard. The readings have been deliberately chosen to appeal to different types of people, and very few will like (or dislike) them all.
- 5 This Task is probably best done after the break – when on this occasion you might want to re-arrange the groups, especially if there has been friction.

- 6 A great deal of work has been done on Genesis 1 and environmental issues (the 'Fifth Mark of Mission' for the Anglican Communion): the point here is not to debate these (the meaning of 'dominion' in particular), but reflect on the nature of God in relation to living creatures.
- NB: It is sometimes held that Christian faith is 'anthropocentric', i.e. sees everything through human eyes, rather than being 'biocentric', i.e. seeing life (of whatever kind) as central: that Christ was incarnate as a human is then seen as problematic. That humanity - including Christians and the churches - have often seen other creatures as merely there to be 'used' is sadly true, but human beings simply do have capacities to 'rule' other creatures. More problems can arise from denying some degree of 'anthropocentricity' than accepting it - and the deeper truth is that we humans are accountable to God the Creator for how we live with other creatures.
- 7, 8 Another huge topic! Moltmann (and Studdert Kennedy) is not denying God's power, but insisting that this power is best seen through divine self-limitation, climaxed in the cross.

Ending the Session:

Task 9 in this Session is more important than usual: allow 10-12 minutes at least: each member should leave the group challenged, but not undermined in faith.

Session 5 - Breath of life

This Session covers two areas of Christian faith – the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity. These have contrasting emphases in many people's minds – the Spirit is felt to be about experienced faith, the Trinity about intellectual faith (with people often preferring one to the other depending on their personality!).

There is simply no way that both topics can be covered adequately in one Session, so you may want to make some decisions about which parts of the Group Work to give more focus to. And in Christian history and theology, reflecting on the *doctrine* of the Holy Spirit turns out to be even trickier than trying to understand the *doctrine* of the Trinity ...

Preparation: The notes seek to be sensitive to these issues, side-stepping a number of controversies (including the Arian controversy, with just a hint at contemporary discussion about gender and God).

If you wish to be more informed about these areas, then Charles Sherlock's book (see Further Reading) gives a readable introduction, with further bibliography.

Group Work: Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 focus more on Spirit; 5 and 6 on Trinity: if you think you need to be selective, work out ahead of time which Tasks you might omit or abbreviate.

- 1 There can be no 'wrong' responses to this type of question – but you may need to gently insist that each group member's response is taken seriously, especially if some relate experiences of 'speaking in tongues' which others find uncomfortable.

Forming a joint statement, even in a pair, may thus be harder than it looks at first sight! If some pairs are taking more than 15 minutes for this Task, consider asking them to join another pair and consider their discussion in the light of the other pair.

- 2 An important factor in discussing the scripture passages is the question of whether nor not a capital 'S' should be used (especially in the Old Testament). Many Christians assume that each 'S/spirit' reference is to the third Person of the Trinity, but this concept is a development much later than either Testament – though it has its beginning there.

For group members to appreciate the 'openness' of the scriptures at this point can be a liberating rather than threatening experience, however.

- 3,4 These questions are formulated in a way which hopefully will encourage group members to respond in the light of trinitarian faith, not an understanding of the Spirit as 'independent' of this. This is a problem both when the Spirit is over-identified with the church as institution, and also when considered mainly in relation to 'charismatic' experience independent of the realities of church life.
- 5 This is the classic 'outsiders' question, to which the images of 'economy' and 'monarchy' still have their usefulness - but group members might come up with more contemporary ones! The crucial issue is the person of Christ - if the exalted Lord Jesus is truly human, and worshipped as truly divine, then God must be more than a 'plain oneness'.
- 6 This is the classic 'insiders' question (albeit in the modern dress of gender language issues): how do we relate 'essential' understandings to the limitations of human speaking?
An important response here is affirming a proper sense of the *mystery* of God the Trinity, who (by grace) may be 'apprehended' but never 'comprehended' by creatures.
It also points up the importance of speaking of our '*comm*-union' in God (ie participation in the Christian mystery) rather than 'union with God'.
- 7 If you get to this question, you will have done well! It poses very acutely to 'gap' felt by many between what the Creed espouses - and here the term 'Lord and giver of life' is key - and how many Christians speak of their experience of God.

Ending the session:

The printed prayer is strongly 'economic' in its trinitarian theology - hence the suggestion of using a Trinity Sunday prayer from *APBA* which has a more 'essential' emphasis.

Session 6 - Believing in the Church

Session 6 is rather a contrast to previous Sessions – the Unit ‘comes down’ from the lofty realms of reflecting on God to thinking about ‘Church’. In the Group Work, what is meant by ‘Church’ at various points needs to be clear in members’ minds – local congregation, regional diocese, ‘visible’, universal etc. Different small groups may come up with quite varied responses, depending on their assumptions: being clear about these can help avoid conflict and clarify contributions.

In recent decades, some Anglican leaders in Sydney have come to argue that, according to the New Testament, ‘church’ only exists as a visible reality when it gathers – which leads to great reluctance in speaking about ‘the Anglican Church of Australia’ or similar, because it never gathers.

The positive point here is that ‘church’ in the scriptures does indeed have a strongly active sense, close to being a verb – ‘we are going to church’ taken as something about to be done, rather than an address towards which we are headed. A good sense of this is conveyed in speaking of ‘churching’ – but the vast majority of theologians do not see the scriptures restricting this to local gatherings, but allowing a wide range of ‘levels’ and aspects of ‘churching’.

Preparation: As you work through the Preparation material keep to the fore your own experience of ‘churching’ – both for good and ill – and the ministries you exercise. This will help you be aware of your own assumptions and ‘interest’ as you guide discussion.

Group Work:

- 1-3 These Tasks are designed to have a range of perspectives ‘on the table’, not to decide who is right and wrong! However, it may be important to note that Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons, while derived from Christian groups, are not regarded as holding to the apostolic, trinitarian faith by the churches.

Though the Salvation Army is certainly a Christian group, until the 1980s it did not want to be described as a ‘church’, seeing itself (given its historic roots in 19th century England) as a mission agency.

- 4 Augustine’s point was that a hospital is for sinners, as a school is for learners – and the church exists in the first place to save sinners, not merely educate them! But ultimately both are true (as he recognized).

You might like to suggest that members think about this in the light of Hooker’s Church ‘visible’ and ‘mystical’ perspectives.

- 5 Again, what is meant by 'church' here will shape the responses given – and few will be 'wrong' or 'right'. But 'relevant for what?' needs to be asked. Much depends on the context, the pastoral situation or time of year / life: a key art in theological reflection is to know what applies and when!
- Some group members may not have given much thought to 'churching' beyond the local level, and there are long-standing differences of approach.
- NB: Anglicans (and other episcopal traditions) see the *diocese* as the 'local church', gathered around the bishop, who authorizes other deacons and priests to be ministers of the Gospel in particular congregations and other settings.
- Many parishioners, however, will see the 'diocese' as merely 'central administration' ... 'them' (in contrast to 'us') rather than 'the local church of which we are a part'.
- 6-8 If time is short, Task 6 could be omitted as a full group exercise, with the small groups continuing their work from Task 5 to 7, taking it into Tasks 7 and 8.
- 9 Again, be clear as what 'level' of church is under discussion – and whether visible, mystical, local, global, ecumenical etc.!

Ending the Session:

This explains itself: praying for other churches in your area can be both eye-opening and liberating. It helps us 'see' what God is about beyond our immediate boundaries, and appreciate what we have in common in Christ.

For Session 7:

Allocate members to Group A and Group B for the Preparation tasks.

Session 7 - Belief and disbelief

This is perhaps the most difficult topic in this Unit – and one which might stir group members' passions ... So it is essential that you know your own mind about the issues involved, not to impose them, but to enable group members to consider and shape their own responses. The Reading has been written with great care, especially as regards appropriate scriptural texts.

Preparation: It may be wise to check with group members a couple of days before the meeting that they know which small group they have been allocated to, especially if anyone missed Session 6, ay which notice as given.

Group Work:

- 1, 2 This exercise is designed to get the discussion under way – don't spend too long on it (especially the 'who decides' issue) but move towards the Session's main topics.
- 3 This Task is not anticipated to any great degree in the Preparation reading: the range of possible responses is wide, and the aim is not to reach detailed agreement, but allow group members to explore their own beliefs.
- 4 By now you will be likely to be close to break time, but get the two Groups going, perhaps encouraging them to include a cuppa in their discussion if time runs away.
- 5 In the full group, be careful to ensure that each position is given its due, and if necessary allow group members to indicate that their 'role-playing' position is not their personal belief – to enter into both takes both integrity and energy!
- 6, 7 This is less central to this Session than Tasks 3-5 in terms of creedal confession, but is probably more pressing in terms of group members' living – it is impossible in a few minutes to do more than begin to reflect on 'inter-faith' issues, but it is essential that it be done, and in such a way that it is taken seriously.

Ending the Session:

- 8 The notion behind the de Mello quote is foundational in much missiological reflection today, but its lack of reference to Jesus Christ raises questions – nevertheless, it is a useful way to draw the threads of the Session together.

Other prayers can be found in *APBA* under the Collects for Good Friday, though the 'litany' form printed in the notes is perhaps more engaging.

Session 8 - We believe ...

This Session should look after itself – and though experience shows that most participants want to draft incredibly ‘orthodox’ creeds, the primary aim is to have members express honestly their belief, now informed by their learning in this Unit.

Preparation: Arrange for some treats to share and celebrate the group's life and work together.

Make sure you have enough Evaluation forms for the group, and a stamped addressed envelope for their return to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator. Before the meeting, ask a suitable group member to be willing to receive and send on – unread! – the completed forms.

Find out the details of when and where the next Unit in the Certificate is being held (even if not in association with your current ministry location).

Group Work: make sure that sufficient time is given for Task 3

Ending the session:

Share around the treats (if any are left after the break!), during the eating of which you should

- a) Explain that you need to receive the assessment papers or projects within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
- b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
- c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
- d) Inform the group as to when and where the next Unit if being held (usually this would be Unit 6, Serving Christ Today).

When all this has been done, the following pattern is suggested as a way to conclude the Unit:

1. Ask members to thank God for what each has gained from the Unit (leave silence for about a minute)
2. Ask members to thank God for each person in the group, and commend each to God's guidance and love (leave silence for about a minute or two)
3. Ask members to commit themselves to seek to live out

what they have gained from the Unit
(leave silence for about a minute)

4. Ask the group to hold hands (if appropriate) and join together in the Lord's prayer.

Say your farewells, complete your 'roll' and get ready to start marking!

Unit 6: Serving Christ today

*If you have not been a tutor for a Trinity Certificate Unit previously,
STOP - DO NOT READ ON!
Go back and work through the Introduction to this Tutor's Manual.*

Introduction

This will usually be the concluding core unit of the Certificate. So you should be able to expect that participants will know each other well enough, and have sufficient biblical and theological background, to enter into the various areas of Christian living discussed with some robustness.

Although each group member's home will be reasonably close to others', so that they shares a good deal in common culturally and socially, each person lives in distinctive circumstances and has a unique life experience. This needs to be taken into account when particular issues are raised.

Also, the issues raised in this Unit are far from simple - some members may need to recall what they learnt in earlier Units about using the scriptures as the 'first cab off the rank' resource to guide God's people. And don't be shy yourself about saying 'I don't know', or 'I'm pretty sure about this aspect, but am still learning about that one'. Modeling a 'life-long learning' approach to your own Christian life will help others more than trying to have all the answers off pat.

As the Sessions continue, you will hopefully find the Occasional Prayers in APBA pages 202ff to be useful to 'pray in' the areas of life considered. For the closing of each Session, the various 'commitment' prayers at the end of each Sunday service may be both helpful and familiar, and assist members in linking their Certificate Sessions with the regular 'service' in their local congregation: see APBA page 28 #27; page 40 # 17; and page 144 #31.

The books and websites listed for *Further reading* endeavor to offer 'next step' resources for effective living - don't hesitate to recommend others, but please let the Certificate Coordinator know so these can be updated.

Session 1: The journey so far

This session is straightforward enough, based as it is around a reflection on Joshua 24.

Preparation: Check that your list of participants is up to date. Unless you are confident that all members know one another, prepare tags with their Christian name in large print.

Contact group members a fortnight or more prior to the first session, giving them the meeting dates, time and place.

As you do the preparation, be alert to reflecting on your own approach to Christian service, so that you lead from 'within' rather than 'on' or 'at' the group – but be careful to encourage group members to share their approaches in the first place.

Ensure that paper and pens are available for the 'mapping' exercise. Since these will be used again in Session 8, they need to be retained: the group may prefer you to keep them safe so that people don't forget them for that later Session.

Make sure the meeting-place is ready, with places for the pairs to meet with some privacy, and that a cuppa is available.

Group Work: Open with a familiar prayer – the Dedication prayer at #50 in *APBA* page 216 is one possible choice.

Introduce the Unit briefly, and check that each member understands its intentions.

- 1 It is suggested that the maximum time for each person to report on their Preparation Tasks be no more than 5 minutes – with eight members plus yourself, this will take 45 minutes, i.e. effectively all the time up to the break!

Where this preparation has not been done, simply ask the next person to report. This will not only avoid wasting time - unprepared comments are rarely succinct - but also make it clear that the Certificate only works when Preparation is done.

- 2 Ideally, this Task can be completed as part of the first, with the break following.
- 3 It is suggested that up to 20 minutes be allowed for this – it is a very significant exercise, and should not be rushed.
- 4 Try to allow no more than 7-8 minutes: after about 3 minutes, signal that the other person should start to explain their map.
- 5 Watch that inappropriate confidences are not shared, but encourage all to contribute.

Ending the Session: Task 6 explains itself.

Session 2: Living in two worlds

The Preparation reading covers a lot of ground, and some may be unfamiliar to participants. The Group Work seeks to balance opportunity for discussing this material, with the more demanding task of giving participants opportunity to reflect on how they experience and live out the kingdom of God.

NB: the title, 'Living in two worlds', is not used until the final sentence of the Preparation, a sentence which also contains the only reference to the Spirit – an observation which might stimulate some reflection if raised!

A note on 'within / among you'

One text deliberately omitted from the reading is the (in)famous translation, 'the kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 17.21). This is cited time and again – both in popular speech and the mass media – to teach that God's rule is a private, personal, 'internal' matter, with little of any bearing on social relationships, for example in the film *Chariots of Fire*.

Two responses can be made to this:

- a) The word 'you' is here in the plural, not singular: Jesus is trying to get across to some Pharisees that God's reign is already present 'among you' – as modern translations render the verse, or in slang, 'among you lot'.
- b) The kingdom of God is everywhere else depicted as being public, having observable effects, even though it is seen by faith. And in this case it can even be seen in a group of Pharisees, who, however badly they are portrayed in the gospels, here are at least coming to Jesus with questions.

Preparation: Be diligent in doing our own assessment of your life as a 'citizen of heaven', being prepared to share your insights as a group member – but give space to the others to share their learning first, possibly sacrificing your own preparation work.

Group Work:

- 1 Watch that the discussion does not become too focused on issues about terminology, church / kingdom relationships etc: it is the next Tasks which are at the core of the Certificate's approach
- 2, 3 Make a draft allocation of pairs prior to the meeting, linking people with different backgrounds, family relationships, interests etc. – and avoiding potential conflicts! But the final allocation should take into account people's preferences.
- 4 This task should be kept fairly brief –it should round off the pre-break time or open up discussion as the group resumes.
- 5-6 The time Task 5 need not be long – it leads into the key Task for this Session, 6 ... and do watch the 'confidences' issue.

Ending the Session: Task 7 explains itself.

Session 3: All are called

The note on 'lay' and 'clergy' is important, but is not raised in the Preparation reading itself, since a focus on this can bog down discussion, and not encourage group members to consider what God is calling them to be and do in ministry.

It may be worth noting that the New Testament does not support the idea (popular since the 1960s) that 'every Christian is a minister' – yet every Christian is seen as having an active part to play in the ministry which is Christ's, and given to the Church *as a whole* (the 'royal priesthood'). Similarly, the phrase 'priesthood of all believers' does not mean the 'priesthood of each believer'. A careful reading of the New Testament shows that only particular people who were authorized to do so engage in the 'ministry of the Word', notably Peter, James the brother of Jesus, Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy.

This said – keep the focus of the group on how God, in and through the Spirit, is calling each one to participate in the ministry of Christ!

Preparation: Make sure that paper, pencils and crayons/felt-tip pens are available for this Session.

In addition, arrange for a full-time ordained minister (if you yourself don't belong to this category) to be at the meeting to take part in Task 8 – and watch that s/he does not dominate the discussion ... They should be asked to arrive after your break.

Task 2 involves people working alone – work out beforehand how each member can have sufficient privacy.

Group Work:

- 1 This is an introductory Task, to orient the group as a whole to the issues, but keep an eye out for anyone for whom the topic seems to raise significant challenges.
- 2 Allow no more than 7-8 minutes for this – it is an opening-up exercise, not intended to go into great detail.
- 3, 4 Be careful to ensure that each person's viewpoint is respected – this Task is not about what is a 'right' view of 'church', but how people experience their own participation in it. It is likely that some member's pictures will be rather too rose-coloured, and others quite pessimistic – this is not a therapy session, but be sensitive to people for whom church involvement may be depressing or fall short of their expectations.
- 5 Allocate members to the small groups so that there is a mix of viewpoints, as shown from Task 2-4, and circulate among the groups to listen to what is being shared.
- 6 This is probably a good way to resume after your break.

Allow reasonable time for group members to make suggestions about support – and keep an eye out to welcome the clergyperson: it will do harm for s/he to hear this and the net discussion, but they should not speak until Task 8.

- 7 This should be kept short – it is a ‘reality check’ exercise, alerting people to the issue: and it may be worth noting that properly speaking, ‘lay ministry’ is not in the first place about filling Sunday service rosters, but how *all* the baptised (including the ordained) live when *not* ‘in church’.
- 8, 9 Hopefully you won’t need to intervene in the dialogue itself, but ensure that each group member has the opportunity to comment, and that none dominates. Ideally, this Task should alleviate misunderstandings and open up recognition of the breadth and depth of each Christian’s vocation / calling to ministry.

Ending the Session:

- 10 This Task explains itself – and if appropriate, you might ask the ordained Christian to give a blessing to the group members for their varied participation in the ministry of Christ.

Session 4: Decisions, decisions ...

This Session is one of more dense in the Certificate course, introducing the whole discipline of Moral Theology / Ethics in one go! So prepare well, especially if the material is new to you – but NOT with a view to preparing lectures, so much as being better able to help group members gain skill in making better decisions as Christians. The point is not to learn the names of a lot of ethical theories, but become more deeply wise disciples.

One issue hinted at in the Preparation reading is the widespread assumption in western societies such as Australia (especially in cities and towns) that 'choice' is an unqualified good, and the more of it the better! In 'popular' Christian thought this is often viewed as part of the gospel, given the stress on 'deciding for Christ' in the past century, and its accompanying individualistic spirituality. Whatever you may think of the Catechism and 39 Articles, it and Article X will disabuse anyone of such notions (see *APBA* pages 815ff and 827)! The discussion of Joshua 24 in the Preparation readings takes great care here.

Preparation: It may be helpful to nominate 'role players' for Task 4 ahead of time, inviting them to prepare together.

Group Work: Given the density of this topic, and the length of Preparation reading, it will be more important than usual to keep an eye on the time – but as said above, the main point is equipping.

- 1 Keep this short – the idea is to give opportunity for responses to the *general* idea of 'moral theologising'.
- 2 This will need a lot of time, probably 30 minutes. The ideal small group size is three, thus avoiding 'competitive' discussion but making allowances for its likely density.
- 3 The full group resumption is probably a good way to round off the first half of the Session, leaving time for second half Tasks.
- 4 This exercise could easily get out of control time-wise if the role players are not prepared – hence the suggestion above.
- 5 Use the same small groups as in Task 2, and allow 20 minutes or so to give adequate time for group members to see how the scriptures and ethical methods suggested can inter-connect.
- 6 Watch confidentiality issues again – hopefully there will be at least 10 minutes available for this Task!

Ending the Session:

- 7 This approach is suggested in order to assist with issues of maintain confidentiality – prayer times, sadly, can descend into spiritual gossip ...

NB: *if possible, have copies of the Survey ready to hand out for Session 5.*

Session 5: And now the Good News

This is a much less dense Session than the last – but probably more challenging, especially as the Preparation asks group members to make contact with people who are not participants in church life. It is important that you undertake this task yourself, to model it for the group.

Preparation: It may be helpful to provide group members with half a dozen copies each of the Survey form.

Have several wall-charts ('butcher's paper') and working felt-tip pens ready for Tasks 2-5 where each small group will meet.

Group Work:

- 1 This Session begins in small groups, but an opening prayer with the whole is also suggested. If possible, allocate members to different small groups than for Session 4 so that a variety of engagement is offered across the members as a whole.
Each small group will need wall-chart paper and pens – allow reasonable time for this, as people will have stories to tell!
- 2-3 Keep the reporting as tight as possible – this Task is a step to using the small-group work to produce a common Wall-chart.
- 4 This Task is likely to bring the group to the point where a break is appropriate, resuming afterwards in
- 5-6 the same small groups as for Task 1, giving good time for this, and circulate to encourage each group to produce a 'definition'.
- 7-8 Hopefully there will at least 15-20 minutes left for these tasks, which seek to bring together the group's understanding(s) of the Good News in the light of their reflections on the Survey inputs.

Ending the Session: Task 9 explains itself.

A note on 'evangelism' and 'mission'

Session 5 focuses on 'evangelism', a key element, but not the full extent, of 'mission'. The Anglican Communion understands 'mission' as primarily *God's mission (missio Dei)* in Christ, empowered by the Spirit. As its website puts it,

For the Anglican Communion, God's mission is holistic, concerned for all human beings and the totality of a human person; body mind and spirit. It is concerned for the totality of God's creation. This holistic understanding of mission is expressed in the Five Marks of Mission as shown below:

- *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
- *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
- *To respond to human need by loving service*
- *To seek to transform unjust structures of society*
- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*

Session 6: Believing and belonging

This Session could go haywire if members fail to distinguish the sense(s) which they are giving to 'church' in discussion – and not realising that the term is itself an image or model in the New Testament.

A convention that can help is spelling it 'Church' when the 'universal' or 'ideal' is meant, 'church' when a particular embodiment is being addressed (typically congregation, congregations in a town or suburb, diocese), though this does not help when speaking about it!

NB: What it means for Christians to confess their faith in the Church is not taken up in this Session – see Session 6 in Unit 5.

Preparation: Have two wall-charts ready for use, with felt pens that work.

In preparation for Task 5, allocate members into three groups and assign each one of the positions outlined there.

NB: Each Task 5 position is defensible, and in essence they all say very similar things, depending on how the wording is understood. The point is not to win a debate, but grasp the interactive nature of the key elements in the church's being.

Group Work: Open the meeting with prayer – e.g. #29 from 'Prayers for Other Occasions in APBA' – before going to small groups.

- 1, 2 Keep this discussion to 12-15 minutes in order for enough time to be available for later Tasks.
- 3 This is a data gathering exercise – insist that discussion wait until all responses are up.
- 4 Typically, most practising Christians tend to swing between too idealistic and too pessimistic a view of C/church. A helpful discussion will illuminate the inevitable gap between ideals and reality as we live in a world in which sin and evil are familiar.
- 5 This Task can continue into the break, during which time the three members who will speak can finalise their notes.
- 6 This Task is likely to need 25-30 minutes – the conclusion is more likely to want a combination of positions rather than just one, but none should be ruled out.
- 7-9 Depending on the group, and the 'churching' experience of members, these Tasks will call for different amounts of attention – they can be regarded as variations on the one theme of how

Ending the Session: Task 10 explains itself.

Session 7: 'Accept and use our offerings for your glory'

This is a very 'earthed' session – and raising issues about money, skills etc. can be quite threatening. Those whose income is limited tend to be quite 'private' about their resources, whether from humility, the 'I don't want charity' syndrome, or simply feeling guilty about not being to contribute much to church or charity. Conversely, those on generous incomes, who have no dependants to support etc., can be embarrassed about appearing boastful if they give generously – say 25% of their taxable income – or having complex tax arrangements which run close to evasion rather than minimization.

In view of these realities, the Preparation aims to get participants to begin with discerning the *positive* grace of God in their living, by whatever means. One problem with living in a modern economy is that we easily come to think of money as 'real', rather than being an effective symbol of tangible wealth – and wealth is a much larger and deeper reality, the sum of all the resources available to us (health, relationships, influence, skills, wisdom, learning etc.).

A wide range of issues can quickly arise – should we regard the tax we pay as part of our giving? Does taking out insurance show lack of faith – and if so, should we refuse to pay our Medicare assessment, compulsory third party car insurance and the like? How much time and money should Christians give to support organizations without Christian connections?

Depending on the time, the budgeting exercise in Task 6 can be repeated for a typical household (Task 7). But if so, maintain appropriate privacy is essential: the exercise is best done for a 'typical' case, e.g. couple with a primary and secondary school child, a retired self-superannuated couple with a grandchild with special needs, a single pensioner living alone etc.

NB: 1 Chronicles 29 is often read as if 'we' own things and 'give back' some of them to God. While well-intentioned, this idea easily avoids the scriptural truth that God is the 'owner' of all, and that we are the agents / stewards / recipients of this divine bounty. The lifestyle question is then no longer, 'what proportion of my time and money do I/we return to God?', but 'How do I / we employ and enjoy the riches God has given us?'

Even worse is the (dubious) idea that 'tithing' is a 10% 'God tax', after which we can do what we like – in fact, tithes in the First Testament are used for lavish parties (see Deuteronomy 14.22-27): if you are generous with the first-fruits of the crop, you are very likely to be as generous as God with the rest!

Preparation: As always, doing the work yourself is important: the Preparation are likely to test your own boundaries around privacy.

Group Work: open with a brief prayer, then break into small groups of three (four at the most). Watch that the allocations put people together who have not unreasonably dissimilar levels of skill and resources.

- 1 This exercise is likely to need 3-4 minutes for each speaker, hence the need for the groups to be small – offer some signals to indicate that it is time to change speakers.
- 2 This is intended as a summary exercise, not a deep exploration.
- 3, 4 Note that each passage at first sight reads to us as if it were about personal life, but it does not take long to realise that each is about communal relationships – very challenging in an individualistic, ‘secular’ environment.
This Task should be finished by the break.
- 5 This Task could be done in the Full group, if you think time will allow it – but the final Tasks will need at least 30 minutes.
- 6 For this ‘role play’, you should play the part of the Parish Council / Vestry chair, guiding the discussion but holding back on your own view. Ensure that each person is able to have their say, and work towards reaching an agreed conclusion.
This Task is likely to take at least 20 minutes, but using more than 30 is likely to prove unproductive in terms of learning.
Once the role play has finished, get the group to ‘come out’ of role by going around and getting each person to say what church they really belong to.
- 7 There is little hope that this Task can be completed! It is designed as a transition exercise, to get participants to evaluate their own lifestyles – personal, church and communal. Such a process will need to be done with a high degree of privacy (cf Matthew 6.1-4), and as noted in the introduction above, will vary according to their circumstances – but forms a very practical form of Christian ‘metanoia’, ‘turning around to Christ’.

Ending the Session

- 8 Explains itself!

Session 8: What next?

This is either the easiest or the most challenging Session in the entire Certificate course! The Preparation and Group Work tasks are straightforward enough, but their implications are far from simple ...

Preparation: It is more important than usual that you undertake your own work and are ready to share it with the group (though it is possible that you may not get the opportunity).

Arrange for some treats to share and celebrate the group's life and work together.

Make sure you have enough Evaluation forms for the group, and a stamped addressed envelope for their return to the Trinity Certificate Coordinator. Before the meeting, ask a suitable group member to be willing to receive and send on – unread! – the completed forms.

Since this is the final Unit of the Trinity Certificate, contact the Certificate Coordinator to get ideas for certificates and a graduation event for those who have completed all six Units.

Be familiar with the various possibilities for further studies through Trinity (see the last page): again, contact the Certificate Coordinator to get the latest news.

Group Work: Open the meeting with prayer, then allocate participants to small groups – either join one yourself, or move between them, taking the opportunity to share your own ideas as appropriate, but also keeping an eye on the time.

- 1, 2 You may need to allow 30 minutes for these Tasks, but be flexible.
- 3, 4 You may decide not to have a break in this Session, but end a little early to give time for a party. But a break should fit nicely between Tasks 3 and 4.
- 5 Allow 15-20 minutes for this, and ensure that no-one feels under pressure to share their commitments or ideas.

Farewell – and hello?

- 6 This suggestion is quite an open one – it is made because experience shows that Christians who have not had the opportunity to be part of a small group can find it quite liberating. Yet a group without a sense of agreed purpose – from sharing life and prayer together, continuing study, taking up a particular course of action or whatever – is likely to become inward-looking and frustrating.

Ending the Session / Unit / Course:

- 7 Share around the treats (if any are left after the break!), during the eating of which you should
- a) Explain that you need to receive the assessment papers or projects within two weeks (unless some particularly important reason has been given for a later lodgement) and that you will return them, marked, no later than two weeks after each has been received.
 - b) Check that you have accurate contact details for each member.
 - c) Hand out a copy of the Evaluation form to each member, asking that they be returned to the nominated group member, who will return them (unread) to Trinity. This process allows people to be honest in what they write.
 - d) Inform the group as to when and where a graduation event is planned for those who have completed all Units – encourage all members to come along and support those who will graduate.

When all this has been done, the following pattern is suggested as a way to conclude the Unit:

1. Ask members to thank God for what each has gained from the Unit
(leave silence for a minute or two)
2. Ask members to thank God for each person in the group, and commend each to God's guidance and love
(leave silence for a minute or two)
3. Ask members to commit themselves to seek to live out what they have gained from the Unit
(leave silence for about a minute)
4. Ask the group to hold hands (if appropriate) and join together in the Lord's prayer.

Say your farewells ... and get ready to start marking!

Many, many thanks for the time, commitment and wisdom you have given to the group members and to the ministry of Trinity College Theological School through your being willing to be a tutor in this Certificate Course.