

## SOUTH WEST MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE

### A protocol for the observation placement

#### **Introduction**

The observation placement provides an opportunity for candidates to learn from a church context very different from their own. The placement seeks to build on the understanding of church being developed in SWMTC Year 1, by making comparisons with the home church as to overall character and self-understanding, and as to the way ministry is understood.

The core staff will invite suggestions from the candidate as to what placement might stretch his/her experience. The staff tutor will then propose an appropriate location, and the candidate will negotiate the precise timing and detail of the placement. The duration of the placement will be 20 hours, including two Sundays and a midweek meeting.

**Primary Aim of the observation placement:** to enable candidates in SWMTC Year 1 to compare an unfamiliar church context with that of the home church, in terms of descriptions of church and understandings of ministry introduced on the course to date.

Objectives: by the end of the placement candidates will be able:

- to compare the placement church with the home church in terms of size, character and 'story'
- to reflect in particular on the role of the minister — again, by comparison with the home church.
- to reflect on how ministers co-operate with lay people — two interviews with lay people will be a standard element in the placement.

**Learning Outcomes:** the candidate's assessed work will permit assessment of the degree to which:

- ❑ the candidate has observed with insight, going beyond the superficial
- ❑ the candidate is able to compare different ecclesial and social contexts
- ❑ the candidate is able to compare different understandings of ministry, lay and ordained.

#### **Reporting on the placement**

The report on the placement will be 1500 words, which will form part of the portfolio for the Ministry Development Module in Year 1. It will count for 20% of the overall mark for the module, and must be passed for the module to be passed as a whole. Unless there is a good reason for an extension, the report will be handed in to the candidate's staff tutor within three weeks of the completion of the placement, as a check of whether the work has been carried out satisfactorily.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE CANDIDATE ON OBSERVATION PLACEMENT**

1 To meet with the placement minister to set a schedule of activities. The total time given to the placement should not be less than 20 hours. The activities scheduled should include:-

- Observing two main acts of Sunday worship and talking informally with members of the congregation
- Observing one midweek meeting for study or devotion
- Interviewing the placement minister for 90 minutes as to his/her understanding of ministry in that context
- Interviewing two lay people from the church for 60 minutes each as their understanding of the church and how ministry is being carried out there.

2.To keep a log (not for assessment) of activities carried out, observations made, and initial connections made with prior learning, this to form the basis of the report discussed below.

3.To draft a 1500-word report on the placement which indicates what activities have been carried out, and indicates what has been learned in the following categories of assessed learning outcome:

- that the candidate has observed with insight, going beyond the superficial
- that the candidate is able to compare different ecclesial and social contexts
- that the candidate is able to compare different understandings of ministry, lay and ordained.

### **Proforma for reporting on the observation placement**

1. Briefly indicate how the placement church resembles and differs from your home church in terms of a) location b) size and character of community c) denomination, size and age-range of congregation, and idiom of worship. (300 words)

2. Indicate what particularly struck you, from comments made at services or meetings, or in the interviews, about the church's self-understanding (as to its identity and vision, and/or as to challenges it faces). Where this differs markedly from your home church, comment on this, and on whether you see lessons to be learned for one church community or the other. (500-600 words)

3.Briefly outline how the placement minister understood ministry in that place, and indicate whether the impressions of the laypeople interviewed were congruent with that understanding. Where possible, try and tie these views to scriptural or denominational understandings. Comment on what signs there were of clergy/lay collaboration in a) planning b) performing ministerial tasks. Did this collaboration seem effective? Again, draw a comparison with your home church if you feel lessons could be learned on either side. (600-700 words)

Attach a log of observations carried out (not for assessment).

It will be helpful to discuss elements of the report with your personal tutor before reaching the version that will be handed in to your staff tutor.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PLACEMENT MINISTER**

1. To meet with the candidate to set a schedule of activities. The activities that are scheduled should include the candidate:

- a) Observing two main acts of Sunday worship and talking informally with members of the congregation
- b) Observing one midweek meeting for study or devotion
- c) Interviewing the placement minister as to his understanding of ministry in that context
- d) Interviewing two lay people from the church as their understanding of the church and how ministry is being carried out there.

2. To undergo a 90-minute interview by the candidate as to the character and self-understanding of the church, and the minister's own understanding of how ministry is being carried out there.

3. To invite two laypeople from the congregation, likely to have different perspectives on the church and its ministry, to undergo 60-minute interviews by the candidate.

8<sup>th</sup> December 2001