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Notes for Tutors on TLS Lite Course Material – Interpretation of and Permissible Departures from Printed Material

Please read these notes in conjunction with “[TLS Lite Courses – Requirements for Course Organisers and Tutors in Southern Synod](#)”, agreed by the Synod Ministries Committee, 27 June 2012”

1. “Getting to Grips with the Bible”

Study Day - Previous students and tutors have felt it preferable to have three sessions rather than four as this enables the chosen topics to be covered in greater depth. This is acceptable.

Previous course tutors have felt that the suggestions in the course material for a Study Day programme would merely lead to repetition of what has already been covered in tutorials. Tutors are accordingly free to offer a range of topics exploring further the implications of the various forms of Biblical criticism outlined in the course, or illustrating how the Bible could profitably be used in personal devotions or public worship. On occasion the Synod may offer “Getting to Grips with the Bible” study days, offering a range of workshops both to TLS Lite students (from various groups) and other interested parties. Such study days are approved ways of providing the study days for locally organised courses.

2. “Theology: Talking about God”

Study Day - Previous students and tutors have felt it preferable to have three sessions rather than four as this enables the chosen topics to be covered in greater depth. This is acceptable.

It is important that the topics chosen for the Study Day help students to prepare their chosen assignments. It may be desirable, in order to offer a range of topics, for courses run in different places to join forces and offer alternative sessions run by different tutors, or to enlist the help of an additional tutor. If you wish to do this, speak to the Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner or Development Officer for Education and Learning.

Assignment topics. The word limit is unduly small in relation to all three assignment options, necessitating approval of several departures from the instructions:

- In relation to LCW-1 (God and a situation), tutors may allow students to write up to 100 more words in relation to each part of the assignment.
- In relation to LCW-2 (Gifts of the Spirit), tutors may allow students to write up to 800 words in total.
- In relation to LCW-3 (The kingdom of God and the non-Christian world), great difficulty has been experienced through because of the sheer verbosity of the description of the task and the number of sub-questions. Tutors may negotiate with students a more narrowly focused question exploring the general subject (The kingdom of God and the non-Christian world) or allow students a word limit of approximately 1,600 words.

3. “Leading Worship”

Study Day 1 – A flexible approach is necessary. The approach needed may depend on the number of students involved. What is essential is that the Study Day cover ‘Different worship

styles' (comparing significantly different approaches to worship), 'Language' (ancient and modern; inclusive) and 'Practicalities'.

4. "Preaching – God's Word for Today"

Some of the "Doing-It-Together" exercises necessitate all students "having a go", which will have a significant impact on the use of time at tutorials. If you have a large number of students, you will need to prioritise the use of tutorial time and may not be able to cover everything the course booklet envisages you would discuss at tutorials. Concentrate on the aspects that seem most potentially beneficial to trainee preachers.

Assignments

Assignment LEW-1 It is acceptable to assess the sermon by hearing it preached in public worship rather than reading the script (the essay reflecting on the writing of the sermon would still be required).

Allow students, if they wish, to submit a revised version of sermons they preached at the Study Day, provided that the sermons meet the criteria for a "special Sunday".

I suggest as a rule of thumb that the sermon should be no longer than about 1,400 words and the accompanying reflections no more than 1,000 words.

As a tutor I recently gave the following guidance as to the interpretation of "special Sunday": a

"Interpret "special" in "special Sunday" as referring to

- a. the importance of the occasion in the Christian tradition and to the central tenets of our faith (e.g. Easter, Pentecost – you may also include Maundy Thursday, Good Friday or Christmas), or
- b. unique "named" Sundays that have by long tradition become a regular part of the Christian year (e.g. Harvest, Remembrance), or
- c. other "named" Sundays have recently come to be marked by *some* churches (e.g. Back-to-Church Sunday, Christian Aid Week).

(Conversely, a normal preaching, communion or baptism service on the "umpteenth Sunday after Pentecost" does not count as a "special Sunday", even if you're grand-child is being baptized or it's your wedding anniversary and it's therefore special to you!)"

Assignment LEW 3 – I added to the list of books from students might make their choice David Day, *A Preaching Workbook* (2004) and Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching*. Both are well known and well regarded.

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