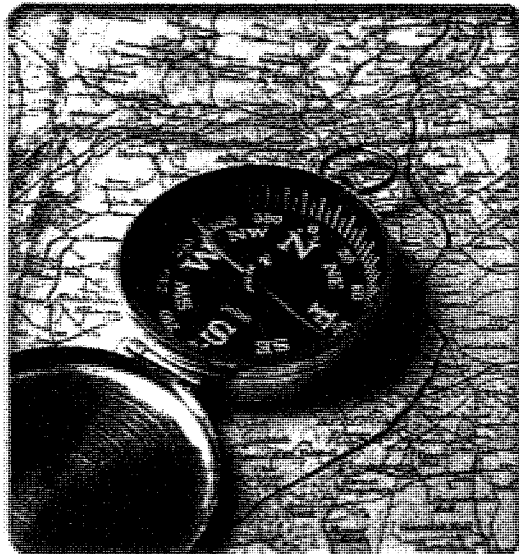




**DIOCESE OF TRURO**  
Diocesan House Kenwyn Truro Cornwall TR1 1JQ

## **Discovering God's Kingdom Growing the Church**



### **A guide to MAPping the Vision In the Diocese of Truro**



**THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**

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## Discovering God's Kingdom Growing the Church

There are many ways in which a parish may discover God's Kingdom and grow the church in their particular place. This leaflet outlines one method called **Mission Action Planning (MAP)** that has been proven to be effective in other Dioceses.

MAPping is not just one more thing to add to the 'to do' list, but something that identifies the actions and activities in which we should be engaged. It helps us to consider whether there are, in fact, activities that we should give up.

The questions the MAP asks are: "What are you busy doing?" and "Is it what God calls you to be doing?"

A MAP aims to help a parish be:

**Purposeful** so that you are doing the things you really believe you should be doing.

**Developing** so that you can do these things better.

**Focussed** so that you are not distracted by less important things.

All of this is underpinned by *prayer* and *reflection* together, to discern God's calling for us.

### Discovering God's Kingdom and growing the church

The church is not like a membership club. We don't just meet together because we are like minded and enjoy singing.

*The church is the delivery system for the Kingdom. The church exists for God's Kingdom, serves the coming of that Kingdom and derives its meaning from it. It is for the church to discover and discern where God is already doing Kingdom work and join in. The Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry tell us that this may not always be where we expect to find it.*

At the heart of any MAP is *mission* or *outreach*, and that is key to the future of the church. When the wider culture around us appears indifferent or even hostile to the Gospel, we are called to make known the truth that is in us. Simply working to keep the show on the road is not enough. It is like patching up an old car. One day the bottom will drop out, and the wheels fall off!



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SWOT analysis grid

**Topic covered:**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>

SWOT analysis – an assessment of **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** is a widely used tool in churches and in business to help in planning.

Please don't think that someone else is bound to have the same idea as you and not bother filling in the grid – you may have an insight others have not seen, and it is helpful to know how widespread an idea or opinion is

**Please return this form to**  
**by**

**Notes:**

1. Strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal characteristics and operation of the church. Opportunities and threats may also be internal, but also involve external factors locally and nationally, such as less familiarity with the church in the general population.



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**Outline for a parish MAPping event**

This is a suggested outline for a parish MAPping event. It is based on experience of what has worked. By having just a morning (or afternoon with the same amount of time available) you are more likely to get participants as they don't have to give up a whole day. You could also do something similar over two evenings, but it is important that they are close together in time otherwise momentum is lost.

**9.30am tea and coffee available**

**10.00am welcome and opening worship**

**10.10am what do we do now?** Warm up exercise to get people talking about what we do as a church. These can be written up on a flip chart.

**10.25am short introduction to MAP.** Outline what a MAP is and why it matters.

**10.35am SWOT analysis of the five aspects of church life.**

Worship and prayer  
Care and service  
Teaching and nurture  
Outreach  
Resources

It is best to go through the SWOT analyses for each area one at a time. You can ask people to call out their responses and write them on a flip chart, or give people post-it notes to write on themselves and stick on the relevant section of the flipchart. The latter approach ensures the participation of the quieter members of your church.

It is advisable to include a short comfort break after the third SWOT topic

**12.15 break and chance to review the SWOTs.** Encourage people to walk around and look at the results of the SWOT analyses and talk to each other.

**12.30 ideas shower from SWOT analyses**

**12.50pm outline the process going on from this event.** If someone can type up the results of the SWOT analyses ask them to do this and share the responses with the rest of the congregation. Let people respond to PCC members if they want to comment or add anything.

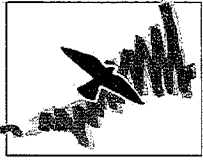
Ask the PCC to reflect on the responses and the ideas from the SWOT exercise and begin to draw up plans. Keep the congregation up to date with discussions and plans.

**12.55 pm closing prayer**

You might want to use this prayer together:

God our creator,  
today you bring us to a new stage of our journey to you;  
May the presence of your Son guide us,  
the love of your Spirit enlighten us,  
until we come at last to you,  
God blessed for ever and ever.  
Amen

**1.00pm shared lunch for those that can stay.**



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## **Reviewing your situation**

When preparing to start the MAPping process you may find it helpful to do some research about the situation of the church. This can be done in terms of what you do in and for the church (from Sunday worship to cleaning the gutters), a profile of the sort of people who come to your church or a survey of community where your church is located. Suggestions for all these approaches are found below.

### **What we do**

This can be done at a parish MAPping day as a warm up to get people interacting. Get people to say what activities the church is involved in and write it up on a flip chart. Include everything that church members are involved in as church members, not just what the vicar does. By writing up what we do church members can be encouraged that they are already doing lots of things and that the church is very much alive. But it can also serve as a useful list of activities which can be reviewed to see if they are still what God is calling us to.

### **Church attender profile**

This involves looking at who comes to church regularly and seeing things like

Age

Gender

Live in or outside the parish

Employed, retired, homemaker, unemployed

Is there a pattern to this? Does your church attract a particular sort of person? Do you know why?

You can do something similar for those who are less frequent attendees.

### **Community Survey**

It may be helpful to compare the results of your survey of church members with the local population profile. Statistical information about your area can be found on the Cornwall Council website at [www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=21887](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=21887). You may need to download profiles for more than one area because these are prepared at what is called the 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs), which have an average population of 1500 people. Your parish might cross more than one of these LSOA boundaries.

The statistical information from the Council website also includes some economic and social factors data. This might be helpful if you are trying to identify particular needs in your parish.

Another approach is to do a community questionnaire. This is more about people's views and needs than statistical information about the parish. A suggested questionnaire is reproduced overleaf.

### **Conclusion**

All of these reviews require work and you may feel that they are not appropriate to your parish at this time. But it is possible that as you move through your MAP you may need to undertake some sort of review of your context.

**Suggestion for a Questionnaire**

Please circle or tick correct answers in ink.

**About you**

Are you  
Male/Female?

What is your age? Under 18 18-29 30-45 46-60 over 60

Is anyone in your household disabled?  
Yes/No

Is anyone in your household housebound?  
Yes/No

How long have you lived in this area? Under 2 yrs 3-5 yrs 6-10yrs 10+years

**About the church**

How far do you live from the church? ½ mile 1 mile 2 miles further away

Do you attend church? Yes no

If yes do you attend weekly fortnightly monthly occasionally?

Which services do you usually attend? (please tick all that apply)

- (i) Early morning service
- (ii) Sunday family service
- (iii) Sunday evening service
- (iv) Weekday services

Why do you think fewer people come to church today than in the past?  
.....  
.....

What changes would encourage you to come to church more often or at all?  
.....  
.....

**About where you live**

Why do you live in this area?  
.....  
.....

What do you like about this area?  
.....  
.....

How could the area be improved?  
.....  
.....

Could the church help with these improvements?  
.....  
.....

Are you involved in any other voluntary or charitable organisation? Please say which  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP PLEASE HAND IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE TO :**



**A suggested way to make a plan**

If you have done SWOT analyses with your parish at a MAPping event or consultation these will have brought out some key ideas for possible future action. Some of these ideas may be very vague, but they will indicate a possible direction of travel.

The next stage involves the PCC looking carefully at the results of the SWOT analyses and the ideas that arose from them. It is advisable to set aside a whole PCC meeting to discuss the outcome of the SWOTs and where God might be leading the church. The PCCs discussions and any plans that emerge should be shared with the congregation and feedback requested.

1. Plans should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced and Timed)
2. Look at the possible courses of action. Some may be good ideas but not right for the church as it is now, and is not what God is calling you to. You don't have to do all of the ideas. MAPping is a process of discerning those things that God is calling a church to, and also those things are no longer fulfilling their purpose and should be stopped or scaled down.

Ideally there should be no more than 5 priorities in these plans which take place over a number of years.

3. Decide which of the proposed plans are achievable in:

- Short term (1-2 years)
- Medium term (2-5 years)
- Longer term (more than 5 years)

Ensure you have some 'quick wins,' that give a sense of achievement and encouragement early in the planning process. It is important to celebrate things that have gone well and learn from things that have gone less well.

4. Identify the resources needed to achieve these plans, which could be financial, personnel or training required. You may have these resources already or have to find them. Look at the skills people have in your congregation or community. Contact Diocesan House for information about training programmes available.

5. Decide how these plans are going to happen. Break the plan down into tasks and assign people to them. It is advisable to draw up a list based on what, when and who;

e.g.

<b>Overall plan</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Who</b>
Task 1	Briefly describe task	To be done by	By whom
Task 2			
Task 3			

A small sub group of the PCC could be set up to manage the plans. This should include people with the relevant management and administrative skills, who need not be members of the PCC.

6. Progress updates to the PCC. There should be regular reports on the progress of plans, and these should be communicated to the congregation and perhaps the wider community regularly. This can be done through the parish magazine, presentations, photo displays and in the notices.

7. Review plans annually. Sometimes plans change because of what has been learnt from the first activities undertaken. God may be showing you a direction you haven't thought about. Plans are guides to help us stay focussed, but are not written on tablets of stone.



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## What is SMART?

Reference is often made to SMART goals and objectives. SMART is an acronym that stands for:

### **S** Specific and Stretching

- A goal should be specific in its what it sets out to achieve.
- Work on producing the best wording will pay dividends in the long-term.
- It should take you on from your current situation.
- It shouldn't simply be a statement of what's already happening!

### **M** Measurable

- It is important to be able to see results and, in order do this, goals need to be measurable.
- Something vague like 'it would be good to see more people in church' is likely to cause disappointment. How many new people; by when?

### **A** Achievable and Agreed

- Unachievable goals lead directly to guilt and anger
- Goals need to be shared and agreed upon, not a pet enthusiasm of the few.

### **R** Resourced and relevant

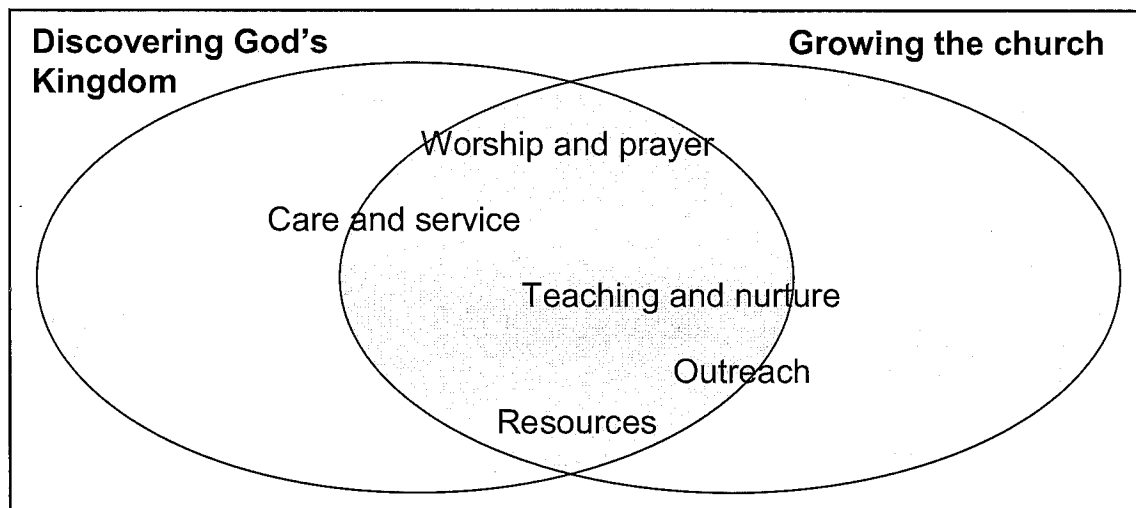
- Make the goal relevant to each situation.
- Ensure that it is realistic for your situation and that you have or can get the resources to achieve it; nothing is more depressing than unrealistic goals.
- It can be good to include some early 'easy wins'. This will give encouragement to all involved in the process.

### **T** Timed

- Say when the goal is to be achieved by. When you get to that time it can either ticked off or reviewed.
- The timing of the goal should be appropriate in terms of what else is going on and what other priorities are set.

## A MAP outline

As a minimum, a MAP should look at the following aspects of church life.



## FOUR STAGES

### 1. Review your situation

This may include a review of worship styles, profiles of people who come to services, activities in the church. You can include consideration of the community surrounding the church and its needs. This is best done in a small group with input from others.

Many churches find the use of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) model very helpful. This can be done as a larger group, at a parish MAPping day for example.

### 2. Choose future priorities

From the review of the situation it may become clear where God is calling you to be as a church.

Choosing future priorities should be done with as many of the church family as possible, so that everyone may be involved and feels involved in this decision making. This might be best done on an 'away day' or series of evening meetings.

It may be helpful to write one sentence that sums up the vision for the church that God is calling you to. This can be used to inspire people to work together for the priorities that have been identified.

*Ideally there should be no more than 5 priorities. Set some short-term as well as medium- and long-term priorities, so that there are staging posts on the way and opportunities to celebrate success when it happens.*

### 3. Make plans

Detailed plans can be drawn up from the future priorities. These should follow the SMART pattern – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**esourced and **T**imed. Break the priorities into smaller steps and give specific tasks to specific people or a group of people. You can summarise this as **What**, **When** and **Who**.

#### **4. Act on the plans**

A small group is best placed to keep track of progress. This group can feedback to the PCC and the church family as a whole. Celebrate when priorities are completed or an activity is blessed. Don't ignore failures; it is an opportunity for learning. God may be leading in a different direction.

*The underlying principle is to do a few things well, not many badly.* God doesn't call us to do everything, and busyness is not the same as purpose. Prayer and reflection help us find what God is calling us to be and do.

MAPs vary widely from parish to parish depending on previous experience of planning, the size of the church, its location and church tradition. It is about what God is calling you to in your place and time.

#### **Communicating the MAP**

Once the action points have been decided, the MAP should be summarised and communicated back to the congregation and any interested community groups that may be impacted by the plans. It is important for those who contributed ideas and suggestions to see what the end result of the consultation has been.

It will help to summarise the decisions and action plans under the five headings used above. Some explanation of how the decisions were made and who is monitoring the progress will also help people understand how it will be implemented. Honest disclosure of the resources needed to achieve these plans is also important at this stage.

Making the MAP public helps to ensure action is taken, as people are interested in how it is progressing. It also reinforces that this is a MAP for the whole church family and not just a small group. Parish magazines, notices, presentations, and photo reports can all be used to communicate the MAP and its progress. Asking everyone to pray for the implementation of the MAP will help everyone feel involved.

#### **Going further**

There is no reason why a MAP could not be produced for a number of churches with the same parish priest so that in an area each church could focus on what it was good at and develop a complementary ministry in the area.

#### **Resources**

SWOT analysis outlines on the parish resources section of the Truro Diocesan website, [www.trurodiocese.org.uk](http://www.trurodiocese.org.uk)

*How to do Mission Action Planning: a vision centred approach.* Mike Chew and Mark Ireland. SPCK £9.99 (less on Amazon)

The Church MAP website: [www.churchmaps.co.uk](http://www.churchmaps.co.uk) has resources for those churches just starting on MAPs for the first time and for those who have experience of planning.