



Mission Partnership Newsletter
May 2018

Dear Friends,

You may have heard about our *Leading for a Change* programme. We take a group of ten to fifteen people, give them some basic tools in community organising, and invite them to make a difference to Milton Keynes. We give ongoing support through what we call “action learning sets” as people wrestle with what to do and how to go about it and see what happens. This is our second year and I am very much looking forward to seeing what emerges this year. The community organising model we use is much the same as that utilised by Citizens:MK and which has resulted in a variety of projects which are making a real difference to the city: the Campaign for a Real Living Wage, Refugees Welcome, Weaving Trust, the Fight against Hate campaign and more. Quite a number of people from the churches have been involved in these projects, often taking leading roles. The main twist we have made in our course is to set that community organising model within a Christian framework so that faith becomes the ground note of any project. We set that up explicitly in the taught course at the beginning of the programme, but experience during our pilot year suggested that we needed to keep reinforcing that over the period of the action learning sets. Accordingly, I have been constructing material which can help provide that reinforcement.

What struck me as I was writing the material was that such reinforcement was necessary not just for *Leading for a Change* but for everything that we do in and through our churches. It is all too easy to start off with a bright idea and then lose sight of *why* we are doing it or forget to examine *how* we are doing it. In the material I have put together for the programme, I ask questions about the purpose of a project, about its values, about the use of power and the quality of listening; I probe vocation and discipleship, witness and prayer.

Here, with minor alterations, are the first batch of questions I put to those in our action learning sets:

- Can you describe in a sentence how what you do contributes to the purpose of God?
- What values does your project promote? Do they ring true with Christian faith?
- How does what you do express your current vocation?
- How often does your project feature in your prayers?

If you were to apply those questions to the things that you are involved in, what would need to change?

In my last letter, I wanted to follow up our Assembly theme of loneliness and encourage you to see what could be achieved through the churches to address it. It may be helpful to “loneliness proof” your activities, using the first two questions here as a starting point. Let me know how you get on.

Every Blessing,
John

