

## Facilitators' musings

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If the work of MAP-ping seems like a scary journey into the unknown for many congregations, so is it for those working with them! Tyro facilitator Gill Reynolds speaks of 'standing at the Rectory door literally shaking with nerves at the thought of being responsible for helping this congregation to respond to the call for Growth. In spite of careful training by the diocese, useful insights from fellow facilitators, a week of frenzied re-reading of all the available material and much heartfelt prayer, I felt inadequate to the task'.

But not for long! 20 minutes later, standing this time in front of a flip-chart and a really positive, friendly and determined Vestry, I asked them to think about the first strand on the vine - and there we were, recording helpful and useful insights about prayer, worship and spirituality. It was a revelation, a huge pleasure, and a moment of understanding that growth definitely includes the facilitator. No doubt there will be bumpy moments along the way, but I'm definitely expecting further moments of fulfilment for us all'.

Reflecting likewise upon the initial stages of the process, another facilitator comments upon three encouraging aspects of the experience:

- **the warmth of welcome** from the congregations, and the older the people were, the warmer their welcome; particularly striking since that welcome had been set against a chorus of worry about everyone being too old.
- **the willingness of people to engage** with the process and become more mission-focused.
- **the amount the churches are already doing**, noting that while presently this is largely focused upon the *church's* needs, it wouldn't take much to turn some of these inward-focused activities *outward* in a mission direction.

As such accompaniment continues, so the relationships deepen. Liz O'Ryan reports: 'As the Rector, the congregation and I reached each milestone on this exciting, God-led journey, the next step seemed to clarify before us, and the sense of developing together grew. During discussions, vital questions were raised and began to be addressed. During reflection, the nature of who we are and what we are about began to be explored. Throughout it all, we found much to enjoy and laugh about. Although we have not yet produced our MAP, we are well on the way, and I can honestly say it has been a privilege and a joy to share this time together. I look forward with anticipation to sharing the next steps and developments, and in hope to the fruits of our work.'

As indeed we look forward to many more encouraging stories in the months ahead from the 19 charges now engaged in MAP-Ping.