



## URBAN LIFE

Cultivating mission in marginal places

### **Faithful Improvisation.** A learning journey from **URBAN LIFE**.

At Urban Life (UL), we know first-hand that questions emerge when people engage in marginal contexts. These questions often challenge the theology we hold and the way we seek to practice faith. **Faithful Improvisation** (FI) is a bespoke learning process which helps teams, co-workers, communities or groups from within a specific marginal context to reflect together on these questions. This means that every learning journey will be unique, with its own twists and turns and its own destination, reflecting the 'Faithful Improvisation' of the group itself. Faithful Improvisation is facilitated by a theological accompanier who helps the group reflect together through six 2-hour sessions. This process has enabled missional groups to clarify their theology which, in turn, has fueled more confident and intentional practice.

UL has three theological accompaniers all of whom have theological training and experience in engaging in marginal communities. Carmel trained in youth and community work, is an accredited Baptist minister and co-led the Urban Expression team in Cobridge (Stoke-on-Trent) for nearly 7 years. Anna's doctoral research focused upon the practice of the Eden Network, she has lived as part of a church community in Openshaw (Manchester) and has trained and accompanied teams and workers in mission and community engagement for 14 years in roles with the Eden Network, Livability and Urban Life. Andrew lived as part of a Salvation Army community in East End Park (Leeds) for 10 years. He has recently completed his studies looking at the political implications of the practice of relocating to low-income neighbourhoods.

If you feel that your team or group would benefit from some intentional time to reflect together, take stock of your mission activity and be accompanied in theological reflection, then Faithful Improvisation may work for you.

#### **Faithful Improvisation involves:**

- 6 facilitated 2-hour sessions for a group of between 4 and 10 people, delivered over 6 months. Groups are helped to articulate their journey in mission so far and to generate questions using Power, Presence and Place as overarching themes. These questions then shape the ongoing learning journey.
- FI takes a practical theological approach, starting with the experiences of the group in their ministry and mission. The sessions are shaped around the questions which arise from the group and facilitators introduce reading or resources as they are deemed helpful and according to the appetite for reading within the group.

- FI takes an integrated, or whole-person-in-community approach to doing theology. We believe that learning is life change and that life change involves our whole selves. Therefore we craft each session to engage our bodies, spirituality, emotions, relationships and intellect.
- We seek to be both liberative and participatory, believing that all people are made in God's image and have revelation to share. Therefore we are careful to be attentive to power and privilege in both our learning and our mission.

### Previous participants have said...

*"It gives us a greater clarity about what we're doing and why we're doing it. ...the process allowed us not just to talk airy fairy about theories but actually deal with a real life situation in a way that was really helpful because it gave us safety to explore."* Jackie Hird, Joanna Project.

*"...it was great, really enjoyable, hard work, used my brain but yes a really positive experience."* Dave Myring, Langworthy Community Church

### Faithful Improvisation 2020:

Costs	The cost of a Faithful Improvisation learning journey (6 sessions over 6 months) is £2150. We appreciate that this is a significant investment for teams in marginal contexts and encourage participants to explore any financial support for training that might be available from their church, denomination, networks or local funding pots. We also have a bursary fund which may be able to contribute to the cost, although we require a minimum of £500 to be raised by the team themselves. If you would like to apply to the bursary fund please get in touch.
Dates/times	The sessions are arranged monthly on a day and at a time which works best for the life of the group.
Venue	Groups would host the sessions in their community spaces, churches or homes.
Contact:	To request a Faithful Improvisation learning journey for your group, or for more information contact Andrew Grinnell, Core team member, Urban Life, <a href="mailto:andrew@urbanlife.org">andrew@urbanlife.org</a>

### About URBAN LIFE

We are a group of people collaborating to explore new approaches to mission and Christian presence among marginalised people groups and neighbourhoods in UK society. We began in 2014 and work with a wide variety of denominations and organisations across the country.