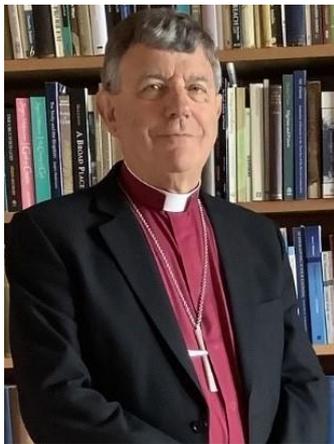


## **UTU 'ZOOM' AGM 2020**



**Saturday, 21 November 2020**

**Speaker: Bishop Stephen Platten**

**JESUS AND THE KINGDOM:  
SUSTAINING A TRANSFORMING  
PARADIGM**

**2.00pm to 4.30pm by Zoom**

### **UTU Kingdom-Evangelism Project and AGM 2020**

The two words *Kingdom* and *Evangelism* have not often been seen in the same breath in a positive relationship, but through the teaching of the new Certificate with John Vincent, I did some work trying to formulate the UTU approach of nurturing disciples to engage more with the mission of Jesus, and the Kingdom-Evangelism phrase came to mind – endorsed by John.

Earlier in the year in pre-Covid January, I attended the Church of England's Estates Evangelism Task Group Residential as representative of UTU (which is an associate of that initiative, through our colleagues in the National Estate Churches Network). There I talked with Rev Robin Gamble who is Leeds (Anglican) Diocesan Mission Advisor and leader of Leading your Church into Growth, who was bemoaning the fact that when he encouraged clergy of a non-Evangelical theology, to come to events using the word evangelism, they would disappear, but were in fact quietly bringing people to faith from a different starting point, and that maybe UTU could do some theological thinking about that. Out of those two events came the idea of a *Kingdom Evangelism Project* – developing some theological and other materials about spreading news to gladden the hearts of people in poverty, of the Kingdom of justice and joy (as Bryn Rees's hymn has it) and encouraging people to become faithful disciples of Jesus, aimed at clergy and church leaders.

Several people, UTU members and others have met twice by Zoom to begin to formulate a core short paper explaining the concept, and others that explore aspects. It will be the topic of the AGM, when we will do some work on the core paper that afternoon, and other members can also sign up to produce short pieces or resources of their own around the topic. The expectation at this point, is that the completed materials will be finalised in February of next year and be available as a set.

At the AGM the Rt Revd Stephen Platten will provide his own particular take on the issue with the title: **Jesus and the Kingdom: Sustaining a Transforming Paradigm?** Although Bishop Stephen Platten is not usually seen as an urban practitioner, as Bishop of Wakefield in the early 2000s he had oversight of the many post-industrial ex-pit villages of West and South Yorkshire, which shared many socio-economic characteristics of areas more typically seen as 'urban'. He supported clergy in trying to develop innovative approaches, including one who was filmed for a TV documentary, to community engagement based on the living and preaching of the kingdom of God. His is one of the voices within the Church of England encouraging a mixed economy of missional theology, by speaking up from within that paradigm.

Bishop Stephen comes to speak at our AGM as part of the *Kingdom Evangelism Project*, to help people — whose starting point is the Jesus mission to spread news of healing and justice especially for people who are poor or oppressed, rather than focussing just on personal salvation — feel more confident that their approach is an important contribution to the task of growing people in faith and confidence and growing churches, and to equip them with theological and other resources.

After Bishop Stephen’s address, we will have the chance to engage with him, and with the materials produced by the *Kingdom Evangelism Project*.

Erica Dunmow  
Chair of Trustees



## **Responding and adapting PhD provision at UTU in light of Covid-19**

From a company providing conference-call-software I had never heard of, to being the most frequently accessed tab on my tool bar, Zoom has transformed the way we work, learn, teach and provide supervision for our PhD team of staff and students.

From the beginning of April we began weekly Monday coffee mornings to enable our students to connect with one another, and provide support and accountability for research and writing. Rather than becoming isolated and detached from one another while we could not meet at UTU, these weekly drop-in gatherings have been a place to keep in touch about university processes and the progress of individual students’ research and writing. It was great to be able to stand alongside Joe Forde as he prepared for his online viva, and to be able to congratulate him on his success. In June supervision and peer review were all by conference call as well as annual and mid-year reviews at Luther King House.

As restrictions lifted and risk assessments were completed at Victoria Hall, both of PhD groups were able to meet at UTU in September, and we offer huge thanks to the team at the Foundry working with the trustees and our administrator Jill to get everything ready. There was a sense of joy and relief as we saw each other face to face and we were able to provide online provision for those unable to travel. This hybrid model of offline and online teaching and learning is likely to be the case for some time to come, with the flexibility of being able to move quickly in response to changing government guidance.

With new restrictions being rushed in from the first week in November, we have yet to decide what form our next session will take before the end of the year, but the ongoing teaching, supervision, encouragement and support for our students will continue both formally and informally.

Four of our students — James Bullock, Sue Burchell, Terry Drummond and Paul Fitzpatrick — are now in the process of completing full drafts of their thesis, and will be joined by newer students — Mike Gillingham, Kevin Ellis and Peter Sidebotham — as we merge two cohorts into one PhD group.

The forming of one group, which has happened naturally online since March allows our students working towards completion to have new insights and reflections from newer students; whilst they are able to learn from the experience and wisdom of those further along the research journey.

As ever, grateful thanks to all our students and supervisors, not forgetting the teaching and admin staff at Luther King House for their willingness to respond and adapt so well and quickly in these strange days.

Christine Dutton

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH DR JOE FORDE**

Joe Forde our latest student to be awarded a PhD, and one of our Trustees, has been interviewed for UTU News:

*Q. Can you say a little about yourself?*

A. When I am not studying I like walking our pug, gardening, listening to the radio, internet blogging, and visiting cafés with my wife, Carole.

*Q. What brought you to the Urban Theology Union?*

A. I took early retirement in 2014 and had time on my hands. I wanted to explore more deeply my Catholic faith and re-engage with academic study, as, in my youth, I had enjoyed my time as a student. A friend of mine mentioned UTU to me and I took things from there.

*Q. What would you say is distinctive about the UTU way of learning?*

A. UTU is flexible and varied in the range of areas it can provide supervision for PhDs. It values group activity as well as one-to-one learning and is ecumenical in its ethos.

*Q. Can you tell us about your PhD?*

A. It's on *Anglican Socialism and Welfare: What approach should the Church of England take to welfare after the financial crash of 2008?* My PhD answers that question by examining it through the lens of the Anglican Socialist tradition, with specific reference to the Blue Socialist thinking of John Milbank. It examines the influence Milbank's thinking has had on the Church of England's approach to welfare since 2008; in particular, its handling of the 'Big Society' project following advice it received in a General Synod paper in 2010 (GS1804) from Malcolm Brown, its Director of Mission and Public Affairs, and it analyses the influences that shaped that advice.

It is critical of the way GS1804 sought to align the Church's positioning on welfare, with the Blue Labour/Red Tory political phenomenon that Milbank's Christendom theology partly underpinned. In significant part, it attributes the favourable response the Church gave to the 'Big Society' project in 2010, 2011 and early 2012 to this. It argues that that response was a theo-political misjudgement, which compromised its ability to hold the Coalition Government to account for the failings of the 'Big Society' project during its first two years. It partly attributes this misjudgement to an inadequacy in its current thinking on the theology of the state, and invites clarification on this from the Church as part of a wider review of how it should engage with the state in the future.

It concludes that the Church should learn lessons from its handling of the 'Big Society' project and the influence Milbank's thinking had on it, and return to shaping its approach to welfare around a defence of William Temple's Welfare Statist legacy, but remaining open to the need for ongoing modernisation of it. It should therefore be sceptical of the broad thrust of Milbank's Blue Socialist vision for determining the Church's role in the provision of welfare.

*Q. So, what now Dr Forde?*

I am continuing with UTU working with Ian Duffield as I move towards publishing my thesis.



## What happens in the USA ...

If you want to get a handle on what's going in the USA, and the ructions about race and gender, diversity and identity, here are four books that may be of interest.

**Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*. Revd edn. New York: The New Press, 2012 (2010).** This is a powerful book, with a very strong message accompanied by facts and figures, legal judgements and Supreme Court rulings, plus a myriad of footnotes, by the 2005 Soros Justice Fellowship winner. Fundamentally, the book tries to make a simple argument about life for African Americans in the USA: as slavery was replaced by Jim Crow as a system of discrimination, so mass incarceration, for example through the War on Drugs, has established a new racial caste system of control, hence the title of the book. The argument is somewhat overwhelming as rhetoric and data are woven together in a powerful sequence that encourages acceptance. Somewhat tendentiously, she exposes the US criminal justice system as, in many ways, “not fit for purpose”; however, she goes further in claiming that the system is systematically rigged against blacks, who are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system. The key question is this: is it legitimate to claim that the US has developed a new racial caste system (which she describes as a cage in which African Americans are “perpetually trapped”) when it is not comparable with other “caste” systems, whether in India or Apartheid South Africa, especially as she acknowledges that the current system “is not explicitly based on race” (p. 185)?

**Carol Anderson. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Bloomsbury, 2017 [2016].** In a similar vein, and with more than a nod to the ‘white supremacy’ accusation, Anderson addresses the racial divide in the contemporary USA in an extremely forceful way, ironically mirroring her title: black rage. In this New York Times bestseller, this historian chronicles structural racism and white resistance to African American social advancement over the years.

**Thomas Sowell. *Discrimination and Disparities* (Revd & Enlarged edn: Basic Books, 2019 [2018]).** A more reliable take on these matters is provided by the black economist and thinker over many decades, Thomas Sowell, a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Sowell demonstrates fairly conclusively that much can be explained by ordinary disparities in life than by racial discrimination as such. Backed up by hard evidence from countries around the world, it acknowledges the gross disparities of opportunity at the same time as it debunks infeasible solutions and false assumptions that fail to take the ordinary realities of life, and of human disparity, seriously.

**Heather Mac Donald. *The Diversity Delusion*. New York: St Martin Press, 2018.** Unfortunately, universities in the USA are not well placed to deal with these matters because of the cultural revolution taking place there, as Heather Mac Donald, Fellow of the Manhattan Institute, reveals in this chronicling of the burgeoning of bureaucratic procedures to control students and handcuff faculty that distracts from the primary purpose of learning and academic excellence. In her book, you will learn about approaches (embraced by not only students, but also by faculty and administrators), which are fundamentally ironic:

- The bias of unconscious bias training
- The aggressiveness of microaggression claims
- The draconian tendency of diversity mandates
- The distortions of parity and equity requirements
- The shrinking boundaries of thought and speech.

Heather Mac Donald demonstrates that it's all crazier than we might have thought.

Ian K Duffield (Director of Research)

## THE UTU PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT

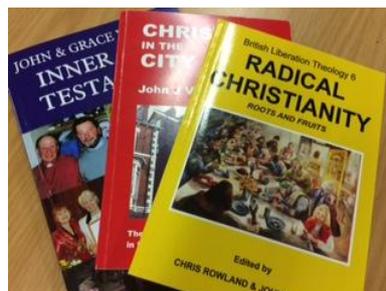
In the Autumn 2019 edition of *UTU News* celebrating UTU's first fifty years, there was an invitation for someone to write up an account of UTU's pedagogical approach to doing theology. It is my pleasure to accept this invitation and to gather the research together. I write now to invite anyone interested in making a contribution to this work to contact me. I am particularly interested in speaking with people about the following areas:

1. The inspiration and vision behind the creation of UTU and the early days of its existence.
2. Those who have taken part in the UTU Study Year and how the approach to study has influenced subsequent life, ministry, and study.
3. Those who have studied for the various Certificates and Diplomas that UTU has offered over the years.
4. Those who have undertaken the Doctor of Ministry programme through New York Theological Seminary/New York State University or the Master/Doctor of Ministry & Theology programme through UTU/Sheffield University.
5. Those who have studied for MPhil and PhD degrees accredited by the Universities of Sheffield, Birmingham, and Manchester and how involvement with these differing institutions may have influenced how the course of study was offered and undertaken.
6. Those who have pursued any other courses of study through UTU and the effects this has had on their lives.

In these days of the Coronavirus pandemic, it may be difficult both to travel or to meet in person, so contact at this stage may principally be through email, telephone, or the postal service. But I would be delighted to hear from anyone who could offer insights about their experience of UTU and its approach.

Please contact me either by email ([jamesc6365@outlook.com](mailto:jamesc6365@outlook.com)), telephone (01623 628067), or writing to my address: St Mark's Vicarage, 112 Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1BP. I look forward to hearing from you!

James Curry  
(2009 PhD Group)



## **MEET TWO PHD STUDENTS COMPLETING THEIR THESIS**

Our PhD cohort comes from different walks of life. We recently asked those at the final stage of writing up their thesis to introduce themselves, by answering the following questions:

- Who are you and what you do when you are not studying with UTU?
- What brought you to UTU?
- What you think is distinctive about learning with UTU.

### ***Sue Burchell***

I am Vicar of St Leonard's Church in Banbury.

I did an MA at St Philip's Centre, Leicester, and after I had finished that, I attended St Philip's Centre AGM the following year. Ian Duffield (our Director of Research) spoke on Contextual Theology at the meeting. I chatted to Ian about my thoughts on doing some research, and he invited me to meet up with him in Sheffield. This I did; and I also looked at doing a professional doctorate at the University of Chester. However, I decided I preferred the UTU way of working and never looked back!

What I think is distinctive about UTU is the collegiate model of the seminar groups, and the mutual support, and also the way that the thesis grows organically from the pieces of work you've written for supervision over the years of study.

### ***Terry Drummond***

Retired, Anglican lay minister ordained as a Distinctive Deacon in 2016

I was introduced to UTU in 1972, when as Church Army Student I was on work placement in Pitsmoor, in Sheffield. I met with John Vincent and was rescued from a very dire placement through the friendship that John and Grace offered me, a relationship that has lasted to the present day.

The opportunity to explore the themes and issues that are key to my research on urban mission and ministry with a disciplined support structure built on friendship and critical support.

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## **THE BIBLE IN CARTOONS**

Andrew Parker's recently completed 8 volumes of Cartoons about the Bible are screaming out to be examined, analysed and critiqued by some PhD student at UTU. I am not boasting when I say that I have read Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, the Baillie brothers and Barclay – to mention only the B's in my theological armour. Parker stands shoulder to shoulder with all these theologians in intellectual strength and ability and would be the first to recommend that we broaden our horizons with reading Juliany Gonzales Nieves and Andrea C. White. But Parker's cartoons are really something else. Check them out:

[www.bibleincartoons.com](http://www.bibleincartoons.com)

Alan Powers (DMin graduate in the 1980s, whose marginal-commented copies of Barth are in the UTU Library).

*Anyone interested in taking up Alan's challenge to do research on Parker's oeuvre, who already has a top quality masters, please contact Ian Duffield.*

## THEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP FOR MISSION A MINISTRY OUTWORKING



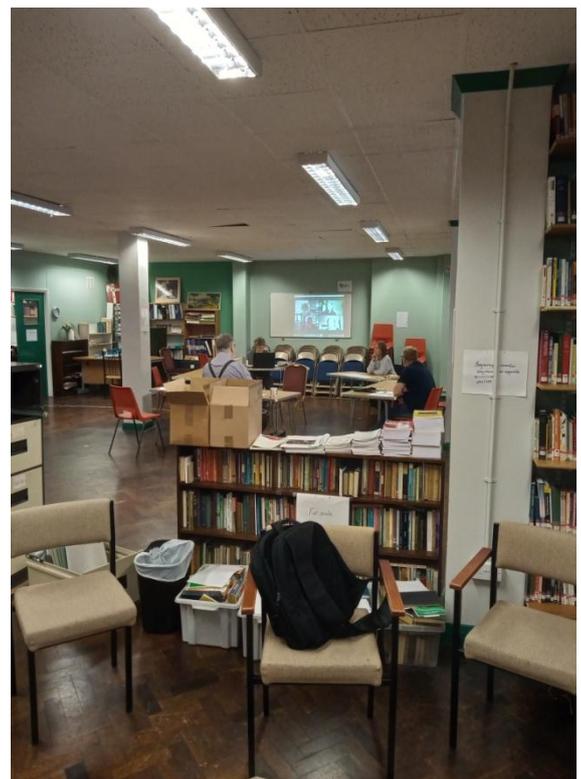
It was a privilege to participate in this UTU course on Theology and Discipleship for Mission along with others who became valued and supportive colleagues. The course was a real blessing in helping me to discern God's calling, as well as enabling me to learn and understand much more about God's word in the bible, theologies I never knew existed, spiritual practices and forming a great bond with the course leaders and other participants.

Focusing on the two greatest commandments (Mark 12: 30-31), the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), and a previous call to pastoral care, I came to hear God's call during April and May to explore a community garden project. I developed a greater love for gardening in lockdown and had

always found it to be a healing, peaceful space. Further discussion and enquiries led me to Gleadless Community Allotment and Gardens. This is a new mission project with the aim of showing God's love through a safe, welcoming and non-threatening space in five different areas of the gardens. There will be areas set aside for quiet contemplation, an allotment to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers, a herb sensory garden, raised beds to suit those with physical impairment and a flower garden. It is our prayer that people who share in this community ministry will find solace and experience the gentleness of God's love, be it through planting, growing, nurturing, talking, listening or simply sitting and enjoying God's creation in nature.

Helen Elliot

Certificate in Theology and Discipleship for  
Mission 2020-2021



## JAN ROYAN



We are sad to report the death on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020, after a courageous struggle with cancer, of Jan Royan. Jan was a lecturer and tutor at UTU, and a valued member of Core Staff from mid 80's to the 90's. You can read an article she wrote on 'A Spirituality for Inner City Vocation' in *Liberation Spirituality* (UTU, 1999).

### JAN ROYAN TRIBUTE (by Fr. Don):

*"This week, many priests and people throughout Hallam Diocese will have been sad to learn of the death of Mrs. Jan Royan. Known not just for the excellent meals she provided for the clergy for over 25 years but for her work for Justice and Peace. She came to Maltby with me in 2003 [from Pitsmoor] and loved St Mary Magdalene's and the many friends she made, especially in our Parish CAFOD, Foodbank and Scripture Groups. Children revelled to go on her walks down Maltby Crags with Roly the dog. Our prayers go with you Jan. Rest in peace."*

Kind regards and God bless,

Andrew Crowley

(UTU Trustee and Member of the UTU Operations Group)

### **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

We are very grateful that you support UTU and hope that you will continue to do so.

**Please check that your 2020/21 membership renewal is set up for the correct amount:**

**£45 full membership  
£16.50 concession**

Don't forget that you can pay monthly- see [www.utusheffield.org.uk](http://www.utusheffield.org.uk)



Jill Wagg – Part-Time Administrator

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Sheffield S1 2JB (front entrance opposite Superdrug in Chapelwalk,  
back entrance off George Street)