

Notice

Ecclesial Futures MA Prize Details

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THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF the MA prize in Mission is a new venture between Churches Together in England, the national ecumenical instrument, the Mission Research Network UK, and the British and Irish Association of Practical Theology. In this inaugural year of the prize we received twenty-five entries from students based in a wide range of locations from Falmouth, Cornwall, to Barrow in Cumbria and representing a range of denominations.

The aim of the prize is to draw out good-quality research at the MA level from students completing their studies at a UK-based college or university around the topics of mission, evangelism, and church planting with a particular focus on mission in the UK context.

This year's winner of the prize was Daleen Ten Cate, whose MA dissertation, "*A Critical Examination of the Theological Basis of a Christian Charity Engaged in Community Ministry*," was deemed by the judges to be a robust and rigorous piece of work which clearly engaged a community of practice out of deep relationships. Her MA in Contextual Theology was taken through Luther King House in Manchester. Daleen is an ordained URC minister

based just outside Blackburn. She currently works for the United Reformed Church as a Missional Discipleship mentor alongside thirty-seven churches across Lancashire. Originally from South Africa and an Afrikaaner, she moved to the UK twenty-two years ago, initially learning English at a local village school.

The judges were particularly impressed by the passion and level of engagement that Daleen showed in her work and the way in which she had rolled up her sleeves, got her hands dirty volunteering for six months, and built significant relationships. They felt the level of reflexivity was particularly rich. Her abstract is set out below.

ABSTRACT OF THE MA PRIZE WINNER

This dissertation is a critical examination of the theological basis of a Christian charity engaged in community ministry. Through using Theological Action Research (TAR) as my methodology I identified the “Theological Voices” of this charity and hopefully enabled formative transformation for practice, but also to allow practice to contribute to the transformation of theology. In undertaking the research I conducted ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and also administered twenty-four questionnaires. Based on the three theologies of mission, according to Bevans & Schroeder (2005, 35–72), Type C: Transformation and Liberation was endorsed by the participants as the charity’s espoused theology. However, data also revealed that Type A: Mission as Saving Souls and Extending the Church and Type B: Mission as Discovery of the Truth were also prominent theologies. Yet despite these differences and the different denominations of staff members, the charity clearly unites in practice. Their key biblical text headlining their website, expressing their vision, is Isaiah 61:1, which is in line with the espoused theology of transformation and liberation, became their normative theology. Incarnation and kenosis were unanimously endorsed by interviewees as an appropriate operant theology for this charity. This operant theology is brought in conversation with the formal

theological voice of John Vincent and his vocational cycle (2013, 59) and the transformation that took place through the eyes of his discipleship cycle (2013, 61).

This theological methodology used in conjunction with interdisciplinary dialogue in this dissertation took place alongside theologies of mission, such as Bevans & Schroeder (2005, 2011), Bosch (1991), Davey (2010), and Frost & Hirsch (2003); as well as reflecting on and dialoguing with different models of community work and social action such as Ledwith (2005), Morisy (1997), and Ballard & Husselbee (2007) and finally also by listening to the challenging voices of liberation theologians such as Vincent (2013), West (1999), and Brueggemann (1998).

Four Other Shortlisted Finalists Were:

Tiffany Jackson, whose MA in Theology, Ministry, and Mission from Trinity College in Bristol explored one of the earliest examples of a mission document found in Mark 16:9–20 by exploring the themes of power, truth, and allegiance. By studying Mark's longer ending through a missional hermeneutic and in dialogue with Charles Kraft's model, Jackson opened up a discussion around the miraculous and mission.

Robin Ham's MA in Theology and Ministry from the University of Cumbria reflected on the experiences of church planting in a small town in the north of England in conversation with Tim Keller's planting model for cities.

Mark Nam in his MA asked, "What can the Church of England learn from East Asian theology in terms of contextualizing the gospel?" Describing the five marks of mission as a template for mission and polity in the C of E and drawing on Bevans and Schroeder's prophetic dialogue, Nam asks what role, if any, East Asian theologies might bring to bear in C. of E. contexts in twenty-first century Britain.

Christopher Collins, who was awarded an MA in Theology and Transformative Practice from the Queens Foundation in Birmingham, asked the seemingly simple question, "Is the

present-day Methodist Church as prophetic as it could be or as it perceives itself to be?” Collins argues that by drawing on the work of John Hull the Church could give greater attention to the inter-subjective witness to injustice and broader engagement with the complexities of truth and power, challenging injustice rather than focusing on relieving its effects and becoming less self-interested for the sake of justice.

All these dissertations and a wide range of other PhD- and MA-level work may be accessed via the new Churches Together in England Mission Research Library at the following: <https://cte.org.uk/mission/research/#/>.