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Theology and Action Research Network News – May 2026

Dear Friends,

I've just enjoyed reading Adrian Peck's recent article in Practical Theology (19.1:3-15) in which he discusses the four voices of theology in relation to the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. The original vision for theological action research was that it would cross traditions promoting dialogue and this newsletter continues to offer opportunities that do that:

beginning with upcoming events, please take note of the TARN Training Days from 3 to 4 June, the TARN Seminar on 11 June, and the Launch of the Congregational Studies Symposium Special Issue in July. We also wish to draw your attention to our next symposium, which is scheduled for September 2027.

The newsletter closes with links and news about recent publications of the TARN team. Please send us news items such as doctoral thesis and publication about theological action research, and do share your ideas for future TARN seminars, by writing to: tarnetwork1@gmail.com.

Enjoy the updates and we hope to see you at a TARN event very soon,

Helen on behalf of the TARN team

TARN Training Days: 3 and 4 June 2026

From 8.45 to 12 noon (BST) on both days.

To participate in our next training, you can [sign up here](#).

The training is designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills to embark on your own theological action research project. The training is run by **Dr Helen Cameron**, Director of Research at Regent's Park College, Oxford and **Dr James Butler**, Pioneer Training Leader at the Church Mission Society, Oxford and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Roehampton, London. It will be interactive and conversational. To find out more about our training sessions, please follow [this link](#).

This is what other people say about our TAR trainings:

"Three key insights: "Be prayerfully attentive to the data. The formal voice can include other disciplines. TAR is about discernment through conversation."

"The exercises in groups and general session were informative. I really loved the polyphonic and dialogical nature of the methodology. Stimulating and inspiring."

"I have definitely learned about the power of conversational method through this training especially group conversations we had."

TARN Seminar

11 June 11.00am-12.30pm BST.

The Four Voices of Theology in Teaching with **Prof Hans Schaeffer** and **Dr Alistair McKitterick**.

This TARN seminar, in partnership with the Practical Theology Seminars at the

University of Roehampton, explores the ways the four voices of theology from theological action research are being used in the teaching of theology beyond practical theology methodology. Drawing on experience from their own teaching Hans Schaeffer and Alistair McKitterick will join others from the TARN team to explore how the four voices are being used in different ways within theological education helping students to make sense of their Christian practice, and to develop as theological reflectors. The seminar takes place online.

To sign up for this free event, please [use this link](#) to book yourself a ticket.

Launch of the Congregational Studies Symposium Special Issue

Helen Cameron, Stefanie Conradt and Julian Gotobed invite you to the online launch of the special issue of the journal Practical Theology on Congregational Studies. By publishing the papers of a 2025 Symposium it offers a resource for teachers and researchers of ministry and mission. To access the articles of the special issue, in which Julian Gotobed, Helen Cameron and Stefanie Conradt were heavily involved, please follow [this link](#).

**The launch will take place online, on Wednesday 1st July 2026
from 4:00 - 5:00 pm (BST).**

You can book your tickets via Ticket Source:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/centre-baptist-studies/congregational-studies-practical-theology-special-issue-launch-event/2026-07-01/16:00/t-aaazqdn>

Save the Date: Colloquium 2027

**St John's College, Durham
9 - 10 September 2027**

Following the Ecclesiology and Ethnography Conference of the [E&E Network](#), this event will be held at the same venue: St John's College, Durham, making it easier for those wishing to attend both events.

The Colloquium is run by the TARN Team: **Dr James Butler**, pioneer Training Leader at the ChurCh Mission Society, Oxford and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Roehampton; **Dr Helen Cameron**, Director of Research, Regent's Park College, Oxford; **Dr Stefanie Conradt**, Research Officer of the Susanna Wesley Foundation; and **Prof Clare Watkins**, director of TARN and Lead Researcher of Conversations, Culture and Communion, Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham University.

Learning Review Project

Leicester Diocese

Deadline for proposals: June 30th 2026.

Opportunity to design and conduct an independent Learning Review for the Shaped by God Minster Communities.

Funding:

Funds available: £7500

Deadline for proposals: June 30th 2026.

Form of application: An outline tender document of no more than 2 sides of A4 outlining your approach and capabilities to conduct this review.

Proposals to be sent to: Claire Bampton (Diocesan Programme Manager).

For an informal conversation around Minster Communities please contact Stuart Burns: Stuart.Burns@LeicesterCofe.org or Claire Bampton: Claire.Bampton@LeicesterCofe.org

Secure a copy of recent publications by the TARN team

Edgy Faith and Edgy Learning Report

We are delighted to announce the report of the Edgy Learning Project. Working with 7 sites which are in some ways "edgy" this theological action research project explored faith and how it grows, develops and is passed on in places experienced as "edgy". Some were "edgy" in relation to church, like chaplaincy and pioneering ministry; others were "edgy" socio-economically, facing challenges of unemployment and cost-of-living; and others were "edgy" in other ways concerning race, ethnicity, and working with prison leavers. What we found were the joys and challenges of faith in those places of edginess. We reflected together on a wide range of issues that arose from the work within the sites: the challenges of faith being passed on; the ways in which faith is discerned in these different contexts; the effect of pressures from funders and sponsoring denominations on work at the edges; the importance of agency and being known for people living at the edges; the glimpses of what edgy spirituality looks like; the things more mainstream churches can learn from such edgy experiences; and questions of how such work might – and might not – be replicated in other places. The research was carried out by Clare Watkins and James Butler working at the University of Roehampton, and Ian Jones from the St Peter's Saltley Trust. The research was funded by the the St Peter's Saltley Trust and the Susanna Wesley Foundation. The report can be read here: [Edgy Faith and Learning - project report - The Susanna Wesley Foundation](#).

Holy Communion Online Report

The report from the theological action research project looking at the practice of Holy Communion Online in the Methodist Church is also due to be released. Contributing to the work of the Methodist Faith and Order Committee making their recommendations to the Methodist Conference, this research looked at 5 different groups currently engaging in Holy Communion Online in the Methodist Church. It was carried out by Ashley Cocksworth and James Butler at the University of Roehampton and funded by the Susanna Wesley Foundation. The research seeks to contribute to the conversation around the celebration of Holy Communion online by drawing on the theology developing within the actual practice. We found that not only did people experience it as meaningful communion, but for many it was experienced as an intensification of that experience. The report explores the ways in which the lived practice of Holy Communion online contributes to the theological discussion. Read the report here: [Online Communion - The Susanna Wesley Foundation](#).

Christian Faith and Christian Learning

There are still some copies of the book available to buy at a significantly [reduced rate here!](#)

Theological Action Research Field Guide

To secure a hard copy, please visit the website of the [Susanna Wesley Foundation](#). You will be guided through your order step by step. Once you have placed your order, you have the opportunity to offer a voluntary donation via PayPal. We recommend £15 as a voluntary donation for one hard copy, which includes shipping to the UK and the EU.

You can [download a digital copy here](#). It is important to us to offer the PDF download free of charge, as well. If you wish to support the work of the Theology and Action Research Network with a donation, you can adjust the price in the ticket section.



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