

UTS Alumni gather in the United Kingdom

David Fraser-Harris
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Bonsall in Derbyshire provided warm sunshine and a comfortable small “upper room” in the local community centre for the nine UTS alumni and other academics who gathered for the yearly forum last Saturday, 25th May. This was actually the 10th such gathering, making it almost a landmark.

The first session had as its backdrop the shifting sands of morality in the country. Colin Turfus presented some thoughts “Towards a Community-centred View of Morality”, arguing that basing morality on such things as rights (i.e., to equality), and law may be unworkable and unhelpful. In line with some of these thoughts, Don Trubshaw argued that we should shift our focus towards the promotion of virtues, both on the individual and the family/society levels.



Chris Le Bas spoke on “Doubt and Uncertainty in Religion and Science”, telling of his students’ awakening to the reality of uncertainties in science; highlighting the parallels between the two worlds (i.e. that both religion and science involve model-making and (sometimes unwarranted) extrapolation from those models); and suggesting that perhaps we need more of an engineering approach (trial and error, evolve patterns, focus on local needs and objectives). William Haines, staying close to our theme, Thought and Action, spoke on “The Implications of the Way We Interpret Stories”, offering a somewhat extended analysis of the Biblical narrative of the blessing(s) given by Isaac to Jacob. By looking at the wider biblical narrative and incorporating rabbinical insights, William managed to present a thought-provoking challenge to Unification praxis.



After a delicious spread prepared by Yukashi and Sophie Redihough, we enjoyed a short and not-too-strenuous walk, hugging fairly close to the village, but getting just enough sunshine and fresh air to be ready to resume.

The final session featured a presentation by Graham Simon, one of two FFWPU trustees present, on “Ownership and Stewardship”. This raised a lot of valid questions related to the management of the charity’s assets in the UK, particularly with regard to the relationship between the national body and regional activities and properties. Towards the end David Fraser-Harris shared some thoughts and experiences from his recent years in the Middle East.

Contributors have been invited to upload their papers to the UK alumni website, which is www.delegateselect.com/community/uts/