

# REV DR ASHLEY JAMES BARKER

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		<b>Date of birth</b>	13 July 1969

## Summary

Husband to a force of nature (Anji) and Dad to two amazing children (Amy and Aiden), Ash has spent over 30 years living and serving on the front line of urban poverty and has a passion to release the unique potential of urban people and places through Jesus.

Since 2014, the Barkers have been planted in Winson Green, inner city Birmingham, UK. They founded Newbigin House which started two new local congregations as well as innovative organisations such as Newbigin Community Trust (NewbiginTrust.uk), Red Letter Christians UK (RedLetterChristians.org.uk) and Urban Shalom Society (UrbanShalomSociety.org).

Ash and Anji are also United Reformed Church Ministers of Lodge Road Community Church in Winson Green with Anji also leading Newbigin Community Trust (NewbiginTrust.uk).

A strategic focus for Ash is leading Seedbeds (Seedbeds.org), the new name for Newbigin School for Urban Leadership. Seedbeds grows leaders and communities into fullness of life and includes: 'School for Urban Leadership' accredited programmes and 'Change Makers' emerging leaders programmes.

An inspiring speaker and lecturer, Ash earned his PhD on the rise of urban poverty from the University of Divinity, Melbourne. He has lectured in Theological Colleges around the world, as well as designing and leading accredited programmes with Nazarene Theological College (University of Manchester), Stirling Theological College (University of Divinity, Melbourne) and Tabor College (Melbourne). Ash is the author of eight books including *Risky Compassion*, *Make Poverty Personal* and *Slum Life Rising*.

Ash is an instigator. For over 20 years he co-founded and led Urban Neighbours of Hope (UNOH.org 1993-2014) beginning in his native Melbourne in 1993 before relocating to Bangkok's largest slum in 2002 for 12 years. Ash led UNOH to grow 12 neighbourhood transforming teams in five cities in Australia, New Zealand and Thailand as well as developing training, conference and publishing arms. He also started and handed on leadership of Surrender Conferences (Surrender.org.au 2003-2007), Urban Shalom Society (UrbanShalomSociety.org Nov 2012-2018, formerly known as International Society for Urban Mission) and Red Letter Christians UK (RedletterChristians.org.uk 2018-20) all of which are led by others.

## Qualifications

PhD (Missiology), 2012, MCD University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia.

Master of Arts (Ministry), 1995, Pacific College of Graduate Studies, Melbourne, Australia.

Bachelor of Arts (Theology), 1989, Harvest Bible College, Melbourne, Australia.

## Career History

September 2015 to present

### **Founder/Executive Director, Seedbeds (Seedbeds.org)**

'Seedbeds' grows leaders and communities into fullness of life. We release the unique potential of urban people and places through leadership development. 'Seedbeds' began in Birmingham as 'Newbigin School for Urban Leadership' in 2014 and has expanded to see capacities for community building grow in the UK and around the world. Areas include: School for Urban Leadership, Change Makers emerging leader programmes, Seedbeds Local, Seedbeds Global and The Greenhouse at Barnes Close.

- September 2020 to present **Minister, URC Lodge Road Community Church**  
Re-planting a new congregation to be a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's coming Kingdom in Winson Green, Birmingham.
- September 2017 to present **Pioneer Minister**, Bishop Latimer Local Ecumenical Partnership. Winson Green. Started Fresh Expression 'Church in a Yurt' not led by Anji Barker.
- September 2016 to present **MA Tutor**, Nazarene Theological College, University of Manchester.  
Teaching and research focus: Foundations for Urban Ministry, Global Urban Contexts, Compassionate Ministry, Community Engagement, Resilient Discipleship, Social Justice, Social Entrepreneurship. Includes helping design, develop and lead 4 new MA units.  
Supervisor: Dr Deirdre Brower Latz and Dr Peter Rae
- September 2016 to present **Research Fellow**, Bristol Baptist College, Aberdeen University.  
Research focus: Urban poverty, development and theology. Registered to supervise PhDs.  
Supervisor: Dr Stuart Murray-Williams
- October 2018 to 2020 **Founding Director**, Red Letter Christians UK ([RedLetterChristians.org.uk](http://RedLetterChristians.org.uk))  
Role: Working with Tony Campolo, Shane Claiborne and a core group of UK Christian activists, communicators and leaders to establish a new Christian movement in the UK. Includes leading retreats, speaking tours, media and campaigns. Now led by others.
- April 2012 to 2019 **Founder/Co-Convener**, Urban Shalom Society. [UrbanShalomSociety.org](http://UrbanShalomSociety.org)  
(Formerly International Society for Urban Mission)  
Activities and focus: A coalition formed between World Evangelical Alliance, Micah Global and Lausanne to represent 600 million Evangelicals at UN Habitat III, Quito. This is resulting in 5 cities hosting Urban Shalom Forums, the book '*Urban Shalom and the Cities We Need*' and a pod-cast/social media campaign to help Christians engage with urban challenges, opportunities and the UN's New Urban Agenda. This work came out of ISUM which had started including: *New Urban World* journal; ISUM Summits in Bangkok, Thailand and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Lima, Peru; ISUM Publishing; forming *Urban Shalom Project* and eventually joined together as *Urban Shalom Society*.
- July 2014 to 2018 **Research Supervisor**, Australian College of Ministries, Sydney College of Divinity  
Research focus: Practical theology, mission and theology.  
Supervisor: Associate Professor Darren Cronshaw.
- July 2014 to Dec 2015 **Senior Lecturer**, Springdale College, York St John University.  
Teaching and research areas: Urban community development, leadership and mission.  
Supervisor: Dr Martin Robinson
- January 2012 to Nov. 2014 **Lecturer and Adjunct Faculty**, Stirling Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne.  
Teaching and research focus: Designed, developed and taught 4 urban development, theology and mission subjects and taught a 'Preaching'.  
Supervisor: Dr Andrew Menzies.

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- Jan 2005 to Nov. 2012      **Lecturer and Adjunct Faculty**, Tabor College Victoria (now Eastern College), Melbourne.  
Teaching and research focus: community engagement, leadership development, spirituality, theology.  
Supervisor: Dr Les Henson
- March 2003 to Feb 2012      **PhD Candidate**, MCD University of Divinity, Melbourne.  
Thesis Title: *'Enfleshing Hope: Toward a Christian response to the rise of urban slum and squatter neighbourhoods.'*  
Supervisor: Prof. Ross Langmead and Dr Les Henson.
- Feb. 1999 to Nov. 2002      **Co-Director**, Praxis Training, Melbourne.  
Teaching and research areas: Developed, wrote and had Australian nationally approved "Certificate IV in Gospel Ministry" (an alternate pathway for ministry endorsement with Churches of Christ for leaders from disadvantaged backgrounds) with Churches of Christ and VTAC
- July 1993-March 2002,      **Director for Urban Mission**, Churches of Christ (Vic/Tas)  
Role: Support, teach and encourage Churches of Christ congregations to engage people living in urban poverty. This was especially through missional designing and facilitating leadership development programmes such as FORGE, UNOH, Gospel Ministry Course.
- Feb 1998- Dec 2001,      **Trainer, FORGE Mission Training Network**,  
Teaching, programme design and research area: Missiology, leadership development, spirituality, theology, bible.
- 1993-present,      **Visiting lecturer**, with many Colleges and Universities including: Whitley College, Tabor College, Harvest Bible College, Churches of Christ Theological College/Stirling, Bible College of Victoria, Morling College (Aus); Wheaton College, Eastern College, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Ozark Bible College, Johnson University, Cincinnati Christian University, Lincoln Christian University (USA); Springdale Theological College, Moorlands College, CMS, Bristol Baptist College, Spurgeons College (UK), Carey Bible College, Laidlaw Bible College (NZ).  
Teaching areas: Missiology, leadership development, spirituality, theology.
- 1993-present,      **Presenting papers and speaking**, at various conferences and think-tanks including: International Missional Team (Church of Christ in UK, Aus, NZ – 1999-2002), Lausanne 2004 (with "Transforming Cities track), Strength to Love conferences, International Urban Associates 2000 with Ray Bakke (Manilla), Surrender Conferences (Melbourne), International Society for Urban Mission Summits (Bangkok 2013 and Kuala Lumpur 2014), National Missionary Convention – USA ((2010, 2011, 2012,)), Churches of Christ's conferences, retreats and ministry refreshers and in Australia, NZ, US and UK. Conferences in the UK including New Wine, Greenbelt, Spring Harvest, New Parish Conferences.
- 1990-1993      Youth Support Worker, Youth For Christ Melbourne,  
Role: Leading visiting programmes Youth Detention Centres and starting CRIB youth clubs, mentoring and camping programmes.

## Grants and Awards

2013      *Living Pioneer*, Conference of Churches of Christ (Victoria and Tasmania), Melbourne.

- 2012 *Vice Chancellor's Scholar*, MCD University of Divinity, Melbourne.
- 2008 *Sir Garfield Todd Award for Community Services*, World Convention of Churches of Christ, Nashville, USA.
- 2007 *Make Poverty Personal* short-listed, Australian Christian Book of the Year.
- 2001 Endorsed as *Minister of Religion*, Churches of Christ Victoria/Tasmania, Melbourne

## Publications

### Books

- Barker, Ashley. *Risky Compassion*. Birmingham: Urban Life Together Publications, 2014.
- Barker, Ashley. *Slum Life Rising: How to en flesh hope within a new urban world*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2012.
- Barker, Ashley. *Make Poverty Personal: Taking the poor as seriously as the bible does'*. Grand Rapids; Baker, 2009.
- Barker, Ashley. *Make Poverty Personal: The Bible's call to end oppression*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2007.
- Barker, Ashley. *Surrender All: A call to sub-merge with Christ*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2005.
- Barker, Ashley. *Finding Life: Reflections from a Bangkok slum*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing), 2003.
- Barker, Ashley with John Hayes. *Sub-merge: Living deep in a shallow world*. Melbourne; GO Publications 2002.
- Barker, Ashley. *Collective Witness: A theology and praxis for a missionary order'*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2000.
- Barker, Ashley. *Making Connections: Stories, exercises and questions to help encounter Jesus today*. Melbourne; Vital Publications, 1998.

### Chapters in Books

- Baker, Ashley. 'Listening In the Inner City' in David Cole (ed) *Celtic Prayer: Caught up in love*. Abingdon, BRF, 2022.
- Barker, Ashley. 'Klong Toey and Transformations in Urban Slum Settlements' in Cathy Ross and Colin Scott (editors), *Missional Conversations: A Dialogue Between Theory and Praxis in World Mission*. London, SCM Press, 2018.
- Barker, Ashley. 'Urban Shalom and Conversions of Discipleship' in Andre van Emeryn (ed), *Urban Shalom and the Cities We Need*. Birmingham, Urban Shalom Publications, 2018.
- Barker, Ashley. 'Evangelicals in the City' in Brian Stiller (ed), *Evangelicals Around the World*. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2015.
- Barker, Ashley. 'Christians in the City: Challenges to faith and mission in the first Urban Century' in Darren Cronshaw and Rosemary Dewerse (eds), *We Are Pilgrims: From, in and with the margins of our diverse world'*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2015.

Barker, Ashley. 'Enfleshing Hope: Incarnational approaches to emulate' in Stephen Burris and Doug Priest (ed), *Rivers of God*. Eugene; Wipf and Stock, 2012.

Barker, Ashley. 'Challenges and Possibilities for a New Generation of Mission Workers' in Scott Bessenecker (ed), *Living Mission: The vision and voices of New Friars*. Downers Grove; IVP, 2010.

Barker, Ashley. 'The Spirit is Upon Us: Taking seriously the heartbeat and mission of Jesus' in Cheryl Catford (ed), *Following Fire: How the Spirit fights injustice*. Melbourne; UNOH Publishing, 2006.