

**On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1:30-4:30pm, Church Urban Fund will be hosting an afternoon of discussion around church growth, discipleship and social action at the Riverside Conference Centre in Exeter. You can book onto the event [here](#).**

These conversations will springboard from the interim GRA:CE Project report. The GRA:CE project is exploring the relationship between social action, discipleship and church growth in the Church of England. Church Urban Fund, Theos and the Church of England are working in partnership on this three year research programme to help us to better understand how these fit together in practice in communities across the country.

The project title, GRA:CE, stands for growth, relationships and action in the Church of England. It also serves as a reminder of the message of unconditional love that is at the heart of the Christian faith, and of the way in which we are to treat one another as human beings, each of great and equal value and dignity.

The project combines qualitative and quantitative research to explore the questions above, and more. The first phase of the empirical research involves interviews and participant observation in more than 60 parishes across England, covering a wide diversity of church traditions, contexts and sizes. This will be followed by survey-based research to identify key trends and patterns at a national level.

The keynote speaker providing a theological perspective on the interplay of these spheres: social action, discipleship and church growth, is CUF Trustee Christina Rees. A leading lay woman in the Church of England, Christina was awarded the CBE for her services to the Church in 2015. This has included serving on General Synod for 25 years, being a founding member of the Archbishops Council as well as being a key spokesperson for the ordination of women. She has been active in many areas of Church life, including combatting institutional racism, supporting religious broadcasting and promoting lay and rural ministry. With over 20 years' experience in preaching, contributing to public debates and radio and television broadcasts we are very excited that Christina is able to join us for this event. Alongside her will be speakers from Theos and the Church Urban Fund GRA:CE research team providing insights from the project so far.

We would be delighted if you could join us between 1:30 and 4:30pm for the event. With many different people from the Diocese of Exeter attending, this is a great opportunity to gather together, discuss the many trials faced by society today and open up fresh conversation about how social action, discipleship, and growth fit together in practice in communities across the country, amidst a wide diversity of church traditions, contexts, and sizes.

If you have any further enquiries about the event, please do get in touch with me or book onto this event [here](#).