

<b>Institution: King's College London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 33</b>
<b>Title of case study: Living together with difference: A Framework for Cooperation in the Anglican Church</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Revd Professor Richard Burridge's work on the biographical genre of the Gospels in comparison to Graeco-Roman literature has impacted significantly on how the Gospels are used within churches and wider society, nationally and internationally. Ideas emanating from this research – specifically through Burridge's commentary on John's Gospel and subsequent writings – have provided ways for the Anglican Communion across the globe to build relationships and live together through a period of deep disagreement and potential division, especially over women's leadership in the Anglican Church and homosexuality. This was particularly evident in both the run-up to and during the Lambeth Conference of 2008, and also in the course of the subsequent 'Bible in the Life of the Church' project across the Anglican Communion worldwide. Furthermore, the impact of this research on Anglican relations with the Roman Catholic church was made clear by the announcement on 21 June 2013 that Burridge had been chosen as the first non-Catholic recipient of the prestigious Ratzinger Prize, viewed by the Vatican as 'the Nobel Prize for Theology'.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Revd Professor Richard Burridge is Dean of King's College London and Professor of Biblical Interpretation in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. A Category A staff member, he has been a full time, research-active member of staff at King's since 1994.</p> <p>For most of the twentieth century prior to the 1990s, scholarly orthodoxy typically viewed the Gospels as constituting a unique, 'sui generis' form of literature, with the focus often on the pronouncements, 'sayings', or parables of Jesus, and certainly not as biographies of Jesus. For the last two decades, Burridge has been a principal proponent of the view that the Gospels should be read primarily as a form of Graeco-Roman biography. He has explored and developed this view through a series of ground-breaking books and articles involving literary, historical and exegetical research, which, in its later stages – including a revised and expanded edition of <i>What are the Gospels?</i> (2004) – sought to articulate what was to become an emerging consensus within this scholarly debate.</p> <p>By looking at literary genre theory and at Graeco-Roman biography, the research sought to demonstrate the biographical nature of the four canonical Gospels, establishing narrative Christology at the heart of their hermeneutic. Thus their portraits of Jesus are central to their interpretation, and their account of his deeds and actions are as important as his words and teachings. This requires continuous narrative reading rather than picking isolated verses or paragraphs (pericopae). Burridge disseminated this approach more widely around the world through the various editions and translations of the more accessible <i>Four Gospels One Jesus?</i> (1994, 2005, 2013) and in his Commentary on John's Gospel (1998b).</p> <p>What was especially striking about this new 'biographical' approach to reading the Gospels was the new kinds of orientations it was able to provide – directly from within the discipline of Biblical Studies – for assessing how questions of Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy, or questions of right Christian teaching and living, should be judged. More precisely, the suggestion advanced by this 'biographical' reading – that the deeds and actions of Jesus must be as normatively foundational for assessing questions of right Christian belief, interpretation and action as are his words and teaching – meant that the guiding norms for adjudicating differences of view among Christians must be as much ethical (i.e., with attention to the life that Jesus lived) as they are doctrinal. Thus, one of the most important features of this new approach to interpreting the Gospels, beyond its impact in Biblical Studies per se, was the new biblically grounded basis it laid for living together with difference, even deep and seemingly intractable difference in matters of Christian practice. The fuller ramifications of this were explored in what would later become an inclusive 'New Testament Ethics' in Burridge's <i>Imitating Jesus</i>, 2007. Burridge is currently undertaking new research into Anglican ways of interpreting the Bible around the world, with especial attention to how the New Testament under this new interpretation can be used in constructive new ways for speaking to contentious moral debates about money, sexuality, war and violence, abortion and euthanasia.</p>

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Many of Burrige's writings have been published in a number of versions internationally (UK, American, Australian) translated into Italian, Korean, Indonesian, Russian, and have been the subject of several revised and updated editions. All of the below are peer-reviewed.

- 1) *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, New revised and updated edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004)  
This book has been acknowledged as a 'standard for future work' (Religious Studies Review), a 'truly astonishing tour de force' (Biblical Interpretation) and an 'immensely learned volume...that breaks new ground' (Catholic Biblical Quarterly). Graham Stanton, former Professor of Theology at Cambridge, in his foreword to the work maintains that 'few books on the Gospels have been read more widely or have influenced scholarly opinion more strongly'. Moreover, the translation of *What are the Gospels?* into Italian (2008) is evidence of the impact this approach has had also in Roman Catholic circles, leading to his award of the Ratzinger Prize in 2013 by Pope Francis.
- 2) *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*, New revised and updated edition (London: SPCK/ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005)  
This 'classic' text, in the words of Ian Markham, Dean of Virginia Theological College, was heralded by Archbishop Desmond Tutu as 'erudite' and 'accessible' scholarship. It was also described as an 'invaluable source for students and parish groups alike' by Phillip Aspinall, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia.
- 3) 'About People, By People, For People: Gospel Genre and Audiences' in Richard Bauckham, (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark/ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 113-145
- 4) *John* The People's Bible Commentary Series: English edition (Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1998); new edition for Lambeth Conference 2008 (with Foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury)  
This has been described by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, as one 'of the finest and most accessible of modern studies'.
- 5) 'Gospel Genre, Christological Controversy and the Absence of Rabbinic Biography: some implications of the biographical hypothesis', in C. M. Tuckett and D. Horrell (eds.), *Christology, Controversy and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David Catchpole* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) pp. 137-156
- 6) *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007)  
Frank J. Matera of the Catholic University of America praised this work as 'comprehensive in scope...with a full range of scholarship...one of those rare studies that moves the discipline forward'. David G. Horrell of the University of Exeter has suggested that this work would 'inform and shape the way in which crucial and heated debates are pursued in the churches, offering a challenging version of inclusive practice'. Likewise, Alan Verhey of Duke Divinity School commends it for helping contribute to an 'inclusive community'.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Burrige's research has resulted in three distinct but overlapping impacts, all of which have played a significant role in bridging differences and tensions inside the Anglican Church and also in building bridges between the Anglican and Roman Catholic communities.

#### Impact A: Living together with difference: The 2008 Lambeth Conference

At the time of the Lambeth Conference in 2008, the Anglican Communion was facing serious danger of a major break around an array of issues but especially over deep-seated disagreements about women's leadership in the church and homosexuality. It was no accident in this context that the new 2008 edition of Burrige's *John* commentary was chosen by the Archbishop of Canterbury,

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Rowan Williams, as the key text to be used by all delegates in preparation for the conference (see 5.3.3 below). Accompanied by a daily reading plan, 1,632 copies of the book were sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury, between January and July 2008, to all Anglican bishops and other delegates. During the course of the conference the work was also used in a series of Bible Study seminars and workshops for all delegates, focusing on living together with difference. One of the key implications of the biographical approach, as outlined in section 2 – that using biblical texts to dismiss opponents is itself unbiblical – had the impact of providing a basis (as shown in the testimonials presented) for enabling bishops of strongly diverging views on matters of Christian practice to listen to each other in new ways, and even while not reaching consensus, to live and converse attentively together despite these persisting differences.

In addition, Burridge's work on NT ethics (2007) was also used in confidential sessions among bishops seeking to tackle issues of human sexuality and the Bible, with reference analogously especially to the book's analyses of how the Bible has been used both to justify and critique apartheid in South Africa. Tim Thornton, The Bishop of Truro (see 5.1.2) underlined this, acknowledging that 'the early morning bible studies in small groups was a key element of the Lambeth Conference. They enabled strong relationships to be built between bishops'. As Chuck Robertson, Canon to the Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church (5.1.4), has also noted, 'works offered by Prof. Burridge, have proven themselves to be invaluable tools for my own bridge-building work and that of others'. Canon Kenneth Kearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion (5.1.3) endorsed this view: 'Professor Burridge's commentary on St John's Gospel was presented to all bishops, and became the background text on the Bible for the whole Conference'. This view was likewise endorsed by the Archbishop of Canterbury (5.1.1) at the time of the conference, who emphasised Burridge's 'important involvement' in the Conference, maintaining that 'both before and during the conference', the commentary was of 'great importance in helping to provide a common vocabulary and field of reference for this extremely diverse and sometimes conflicted gathering'.

**Impact B: Living together with difference: The Bible in the Life of the Church**

In the wake of the 2008 conference, Burridge became an external consultant to the 'Bible in the Life of the Church' project (2009-2012, and ongoing), undertaking research on how Anglicanism has interpreted the Bible, analysing all its foundational and subsequent statements about scripture, and attempting to discover a methodology for the church to discuss the Bible and complex moral issues such as creation and the environment (through 2010/11), issues of justice and the millennium development goals (2011/12). The report (*Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery: the report of the Anglican Communion 'Bible in the Life of the Church' project*, see 5.3.1) was presented to the Anglican Consultative Council in Auckland, NZ (October 2012).

The 'Bible in the Life of the Church' project is now undertaking new research looking towards the Lambeth Conference of 2018. Burridge's key impact in this comes in terms of relationship building and creating an environment for recognising difference. The Coordinator of the project (5.2.3), has strongly affirmed the impact of Burridge's contribution, maintaining that it 'laid a foundation of trust among the small groups of 8 bishops'. This, in turn, he continued, 'enabled "hard questions" i.e. those that have had a divisive effect on the life of the Anglican Communion, to be explored creatively and with a mind to what Scripture, as a foundational resource, might be speaking into these conversations'. Dr Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury (5.1.1) was no less clear as to the impact of Burridge's research on this project, maintaining that his work 'played a crucial role' by providing 'a more nuanced and creative use of the Bible and a better understanding of the actual varieties of ways in which it is read'. He is confident that this impact can be measured globally in 'communities across the world'. Indeed, he believes that Burridge's role in connection with this project through drawing on the *John* commentary to provide 'grass-roots clergy training across the world has had a serious and continuing effect on a major international family of churches as well as on the church more locally, and it has offered a model of good context-sensitive biblical exposition'. This view is reiterated by Archbishop David Moxon (5.1.5), the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome (previously Archbishop and Primate of New Zealand), who has noted that Burridge's research has made 'a quality difference to the life of the world wide church'. Specific examples of this can be found in Burridge's provision of training for clergy on a local level globally from the UK to Hawaii and New Zealand to Hong Kong. In particular, the

Archbishop of Brisbane and Primate of Australia convened a weeklong residential conference led by Burridge and attended by all clergy in the diocese to discuss his research on 'being biblical' and living together with difference.

### **Impact C: Living together with difference: From Church to Church**

Burridge's work on living together with difference has impacted on relations between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. This has been acknowledged by Archbishop David Moxon (5.1.5), the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. It has also been recognised by the 2012 President of the International Society for New Testament Studies (SNTS), who hosted a major conference in Barcelona in celebration of Burridge's work – 'The Jesus Tradition and the Gospels' – at which Burridge gave the opening keynote address (May 2012). Burridge will also deliver the keynote speech at the Ratzinger Foundation conference on 'The Gospels: Historical and Christological Research' in Rome at which Pope Francis will present him with the Ratzinger Prize for Theology, announced 21 June 2013, (see 5.3.2). This honour makes him the first non-Catholic to receive this prestigious award and marks the impact his work has also had upon the Roman Catholic church, especially in the wake of the publication of the similarly biographically focused three-volume biography of Jesus by Ratzinger/Benedict XVI (2007, 2011, 2012). As the Academic Committee President of the Ratzinger Foundation commented, Burridge 'has made a great contribution in that decisive area of the historical and theological recognition of the Gospels' inseparable connection to Jesus of Nazareth'.

## **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

### **5.1 Main corroborating statements (uploaded)**

1. Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge (from 2013; previously Archbishop of Canterbury 2002-12)
2. The Bishop of Truro, The Church of England
3. Secretary General of the Anglican Communion
4. Canon to the Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church
5. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome (from 2013, previously Archbishop and Primate of New Zealand), The Anglican Church

### **5.2 Further corroborating statements held at King's**

1. Dean and President of Virginia Theological Seminary and Professor of Theology and Ethics
2. Archbishop of Brisbane and Primate of Australia, The Anglican Church
3. Coordinator of the Bible in the Life of the Church Project, The Anglican Church
4. Archbishop of Cape Town, The Anglican Church
5. Archbishop of Hong Kong, The Anglican Church

### **5.3 Web links and other internet sources**

1. For the *Deep Engagement* report see:  
<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/bible/>
2. For coverage for Ratzinger Prize see, for example:  
<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2013/06/21/anglican-dean-of-kings-college-wins-ratzinger-prize/>  
<http://www.romereports.com/palio/ratzinger-foundation-an-anglican-will-receive-the-theological-award-english-10349.html#.UI5UNdK-rBY>  
[http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2351/anglican\\_biblical\\_scholar\\_german\\_theologian\\_receive\\_2013\\_ratzinger\\_prize.aspx#.UnpBKYSvz8g](http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2351/anglican_biblical_scholar_german_theologian_receive_2013_ratzinger_prize.aspx#.UnpBKYSvz8g)
3. For reference to the use of Burridge's material at Lambeth 2008 see:  
<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2008/02/lambeth-conference-2008-johns-gospel-basis-for-bible-study.aspx>