

Institution: Newman University
Unit of Assessment: 33 – Theology and Religious Studies
Title of case study: The Impact of the Bible on European Culture and Society
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dr Susan Docherty has engaged with church communities in the UK through public seminars and training events to bring the latest scholarship in the academic field of biblical studies to bear on the faith and practice of church leaders and church-goers. Her research has also impacted on wider society through her contribution to the education of the public about the reception of the bible in British culture, particularly in terms of the interpretation of biblical themes in classical paintings.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Dr Susan Docherty has been employed full time at Newman University Birmingham since September 2000, as Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies (01/09/2000–31/07/05) then Head of Theology (01/08/2005–present). She was promoted to Reader in Biblical Studies on 01/01/2013. Her main area of research throughout this period has been the reception of the bible, or the ways in which biblical passages and themes are interpreted and later re-used in new contexts. She has published a monograph (2009) and several articles (2002-2014) on the reception of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament and early Christianity. These employ a new descriptive-analytical methodology, first developed for application to the rabbinic literature, in order to identify and describe more precisely and fully than in existing studies the specific techniques used to interpret the bible. The edited volume on Genesis to which she contributed (2012) forms the first complete study of the way in which this Old Testament book is used in the New Testament. The significance of her work in this field was recognised by her election as Chair (from March 2013) of the Annual International Seminar on the Use of the Old Testament in the New. Her particular contribution to the development of knowledge lies in her linking of the disciplines of Jewish Studies and New Testament Studies, taking serious account of both the early Jewish context of the New Testament and of methodological developments in research into post-biblical and rabbinic Jewish literature.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Relevant Publications</p> <p>Docherty, Susan E., “Joseph the Patriarch: Representations of Joseph” in O’Kane, M. (ed.), <i>Borders, Boundaries and the Bible</i> (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements Series 313) 2002, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 194–216.</p> <p>Docherty, Susan E., “Genesis in Hebrews” in Moyise, S. and Menken, M.J.J. (eds.), <i>Genesis in the New Testament</i> (Library of New Testament Studies Series 466) 2012, London: T&T Clark, pp. 124–148</p> <p>Docherty, Susan E., “The Reception of Tobit in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature With Special Reference to Luke-Acts” in Verheyden, J., Koet, B. and Moyise, S. (eds.), <i>The Scriptures of Israel in Jewish and Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Maarten J.J. Menken</i> (Novum Testamentum Supplements Series 148) 2013, Leiden: Brill, pp. 81-94</p> <p>Grants Awarded to Susan Docherty</p> <p>HEA Grant £5,000 awarded 31/08/2012 for a one-year project to produce a series of podcasts and on-line materials on how current critical research in Biblical Studies impacts on our understanding of the New Testament, particularly the Gospels. These were used first in undergraduate teaching (piloted in 2012/13) and are now available on an open access website (http://biblicalstudies.podbean.com/) to enable Christian laypeople, those in training for ordained ministry, parish groups and others outside the academy to access and learn from the latest Biblical scholarship.</p>

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

The Newman Research Centre for the Bible and its Reception was established by Docherty in 2009. Its aims are to forge connections between the academic study of the Jewish and Christian Bible and debates about contemporary issues facing society, and to educate the wider public on the ways in which the Bible has influenced European art, music and literature throughout the centuries. Docherty collaborated with scholars working in related fields at other UK Universities to run two public seminar series in 2009/10 and 2010/11, to which she contributed sessions on the reception and reworking in later Jewish and Christian tradition of biblical texts and characters which drew directly on her published research.

The first series included two guided tours of selected paintings held in the Barber Institute of Fine Art Birmingham which were led by experts in the field of the Bible and Art. These tours were open to the public and free of charge, and they were supported and promoted by the Gallery's then director, and the by the organisation of the Friends of the Barber Institute. They each attracted approximately forty-five participants. The Barber Institute houses one of the finest small collections of European art in the UK, and its mission dovetails neatly with the aims of the Newman Research Centre for the Bible and its Reception as it was founded: "to promote the study and encouragement of art and music for the benefit of the University of Birmingham and the wider public." This relationship with the Barber Institute is on-going, and, for instance, undergraduate students in Theology and History from Newman University are now required to make presentations every year at both the Barber Institute and a number of cathedrals throughout the UK on the meaning and social and cultural significance of paintings, statues and key features of church architecture. Other events organised by the Newman Research Centre included a free public seminar on the use of biblical imagery in contemporary advertising in December 2010.

In 2012 Docherty made a successful bid to the HEA for a grant to develop a series of podcasts and accompanying on-line materials which would make accessible to the non-specialist some of the key insights of contemporary biblical scholarship. These have been produced, trialled with groups, and disseminated in a number of fora, including via an open-access website (<http://biblicalstudies.podbean.com/>) from 08/07/2013. Prior to this, the podcasts were housed on a Newman University site, and a record kept of access to them:

Podcast	Accessed (online)	Accessed (downloadable)	Notes accessed (where applicable)
1	72	6	174
2	115	10	85
3	52	0	7
4	75	3	N/A
5	24	2	N/A

Those attending sessions based around the podcasts were invited to complete anonymously evaluation questionnaires assessing their usefulness; comments on these forms include the following: " (it)...has made me look at the Bible in a whole new way...". An e-mail from a participant received after the session reads: "I've just listened to Podcast 2 [Source Criticism] in conjunction with the text and can't believe how different the 2 authors styles are - why didn't I notice it before ??? It's amazing that with a bit of knowledge a whole new Bible opens up!" Church leaders in the West Midlands, from both the Church of England and the independent tradition, were also invited to trial the podcasts and to comment on their usefulness for engaging lay Christians with bible study in a new way. A representative response is provided by the minister of Living Waters Church, Ludlow (by e-mail on 09/07/2013): "Accessing the biblical studies content in the form of podcasts has provided me with new avenues into biblical content for my church congregation. Firstly the content has provided simple and transmittable background information as people approach bible study with a view understanding the original context in which it was written. This is true even for

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members of the community who know their bible well from a devotional perspective, as the academic approach is one that few have considered previously. Secondly the effectiveness of the podcasts as short, accessible perspectives on biblical material has made us think about how we can replicate something of that format for us in our corporate biblical study. This is particularly important where work or other commitments make it difficult to gather people together regularly.”

Docherty has provided two contributions for the magazine *The Bible in Transmission*, published by the Bible Society of the UK, which aims to engage lay Christians with biblical and theological themes relevant to key ethical and societal issues. It is distributed free to 19,000 subscribers, mostly Christian church leaders, and is also widely accessed online. She is a consultant on the Syneidon Project, whose Director, Dr Richard Goode, is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Theology Department at Newman (appointed 2011). This project aims to make the results of current critical biblical studies accessible to those outside the academy, particularly those active in Christian churches, through both a website (<http://syneidon.org.uk/>) and through offering talks to parish groups.

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

1. The Bible Society: <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/>
2. The Bible in Transmission: <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/bible-in-transmission/>
3. Syneidon Project: <http://syneidon.org.uk>
4. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham: <http://barber.org.uk/>
5. Newman Research Centre for the Bible and its Reception: <http://www.newman.ac.uk/biblical-studies-research/2027>)
6. Open Access Website for Biblical Studies Podcasts: <http://biblicalstudies.podbean.com/>
7. Evaluation questionnaires completed by participants in the Biblical Studies Podcasts trial 2012-13 (hard copies held at Newman University Birmingham)
8. Evaluation report on Biblical Studies Podcasts Project submitted to Higher Education Academy (summer 2013)
9. Minister, Living Waters Church, Ludlow, Shropshire
10. Former Lay Training and Discipleship Officer, Anglican Diocese of Worcester: <http://www.stephenwinter.net/index.htm>