

GENDER, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY



Richard A.
Burridge

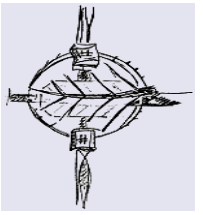
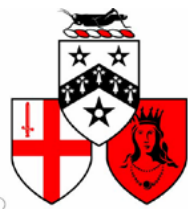
**IMITATING
JESUS**

*An Inclusive Approach
to New Testament Ethics*

**Bernard's Inn Hall
1-2pm
Gresham College
Feb 28th
2019**

Rev'd Canon Professor Richard Burridge, Dean of KCL

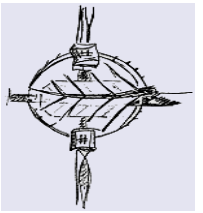
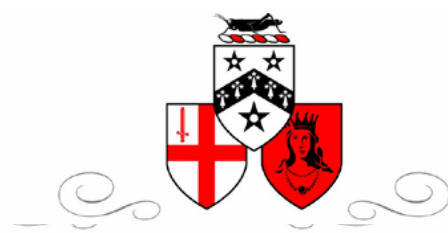




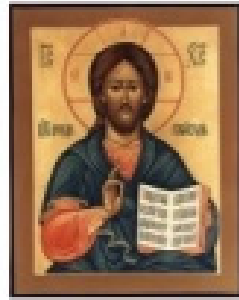
The Crisis in the wider church and especially the Anglican Communion

- Current arguments over human sexuality, marriage, divorce, (trans-) gender issues
- Debates between/among those who want or claim to be 'biblical' and to do 'what the Bible says'
- 'Conservatives' v 'Liberals'
- 'Traditional' v 'Inclusive'
- General Synod of C of E





The Crisis in the wider church and especially the Anglican Communion



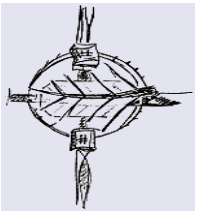
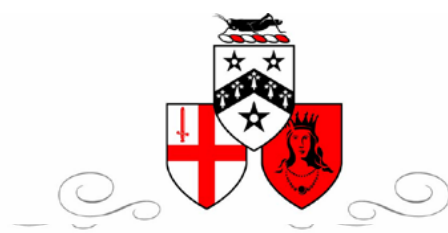
**Anglican
Mainstream**



Strengthening the Faith

Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Charismatic, **Mainstream**

“Anglican Mainstream is a community within the Anglican Communion committed to promote, teach and maintain the Scriptural truths on which the Anglican Church was founded. These also guarantee its fellowship with Christians down history and throughout the world. **Faithfulness to Scripture as God’s Word is essential for sharing the love and purpose of God in Jesus Christ.”**

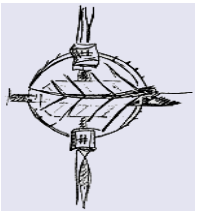
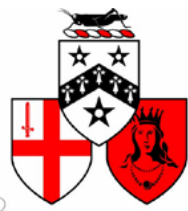


The Crisis in the wider church and especially the Anglican Communion

INCLUSIVE
CHURCH  .net

“We have a vision of a liberal, open church which is inclusive of all, regardless of race, gender or sexuality. We firmly believe that **this vision can and must, be rooted in the scriptures.**” (*Mission statement on line*)

BOTH sides are appealing to the same scriptures / Bible

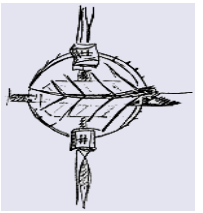
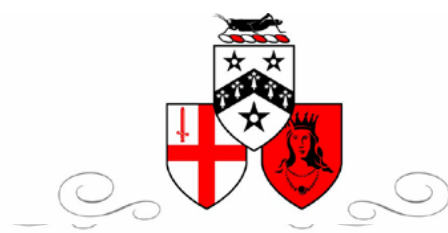


22 FEBRUARY 2019

The Crisis in the Anglican Communion

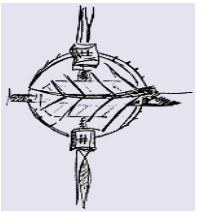
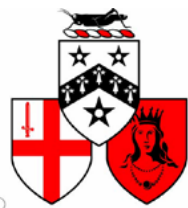
- “Married gay bishops will be present at the conference for the first time next year, but same-sex spouses will not invited to Lambeth Conference 2020 the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon confirmed last week.”
- Archbishop Welby has said that, if same-sex spouses were invited, “there would not be a Lambeth Conference.”





The Crisis in the wider church and especially the Anglican Communion

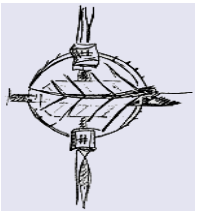
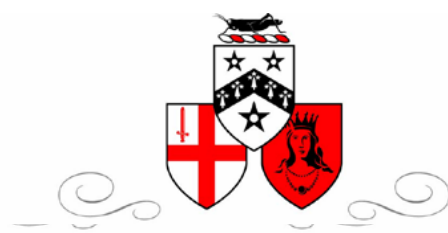
- Both society and the church are obsessed with sex and sexual ethics, and this threatens to split the church(es)
- Yet compare New Testament priorities; computer searches: two hundred verses for money (64x plus 76 for rich, 50 poor/poverty) and power (198) but only a quarter (50) for marriage/ sex / πορνεία *porneia* / fornication in New Testament, including 'spiritual infidelity' in Revelation.
- God's priorities are very different from those of the church!



The Crisis in the wider church and especially the Anglican Communion

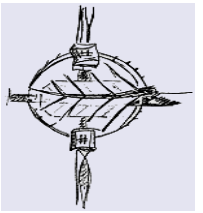
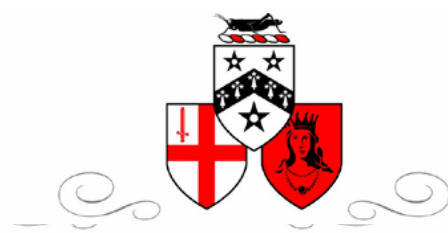
'Would that the passion presently being expended in the church over the question of homosexuality were devoted instead to urging the wealthy to share with the poor! Some of the most urgent champions of "biblical morality" on sexual matters become strangely equivocal when the discussion turns to the New Testament's teachings about possessions.'

Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* p. 381



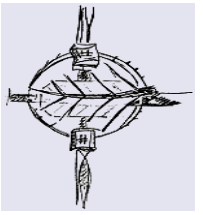
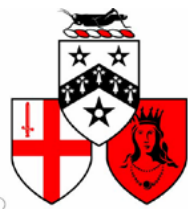
1 Methods in our Madness

- The issues of money, sex, power, violence and the meaning of life confront us all in our daily life.
- Many look towards Jesus and the Bible for help – yet the churches seem in just as much a quandary about it all.
- ‘The Bible says’ is not an answer and no quick easy answers: Bible is not a book of ethics – or even a book at all: *ta biblia* is plural, a library with plurality of genres, authors, cultures, if inspired by God.
- Twin problems of cultural relativism (bridging the gap)
- and contingency of issues (topics covered v ignored)



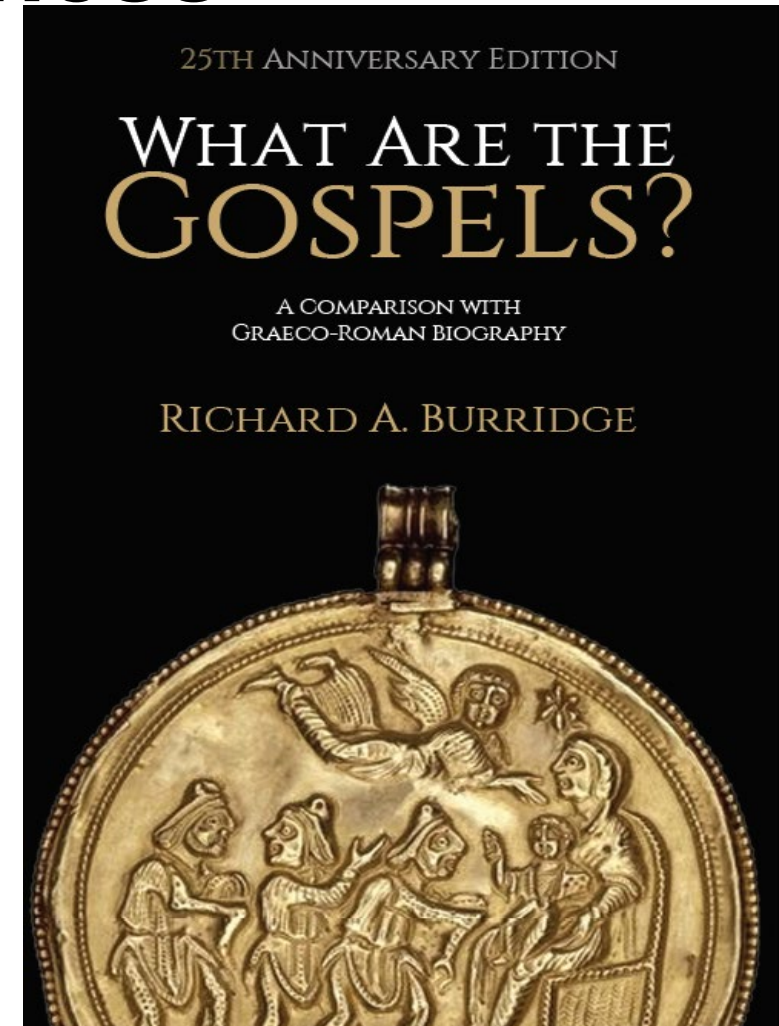
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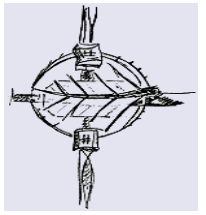
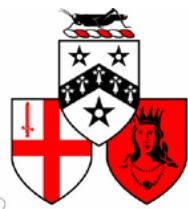
- Cannot ask modern ethical questions of ancient text – but gap between cultures is bridged by looking at basic human needs – Money (October), Sex (today), Meaning or Value of Human Life (April), Power & Violence (next year?)
- Jesus is not an ethical teacher – but Bible provides us with a starting point in his preaching of kingdom (words) and his acceptance of marginalised (deeds).
- NT is not a book of ethics – but genre of gospels means that we have to take both Jesus' words and deeds into account. Use of narrative & stories as well as teaching, his example as well as his instructions.
- If all the above are true, then how do we look for ethical material in New Testament? And how do we apply it to today?



1 Methods in our Madness

- Approach flows from my doctoral research:
- Gospels are composed in the same genre as other ancient lives – so must be interpreted in a similar fashion; narratives about a person.
- Graeco-Roman biography is very different from modern examples. Long, detailed, alive.
- Briefer ‘portrait’ through subject’s deeds and words, with extended account of death.
- *What are the Gospels?* (25th anniversary third extended edition, Baylor 2018) £35 offer today!

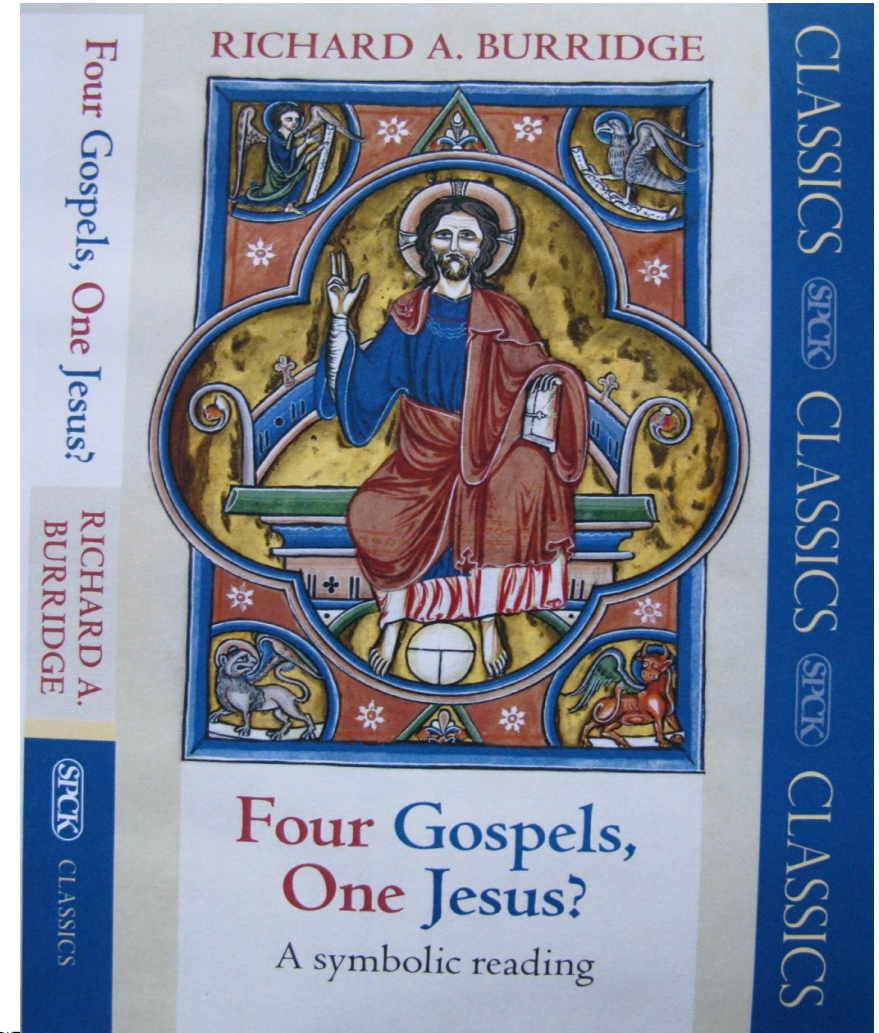


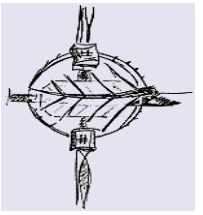
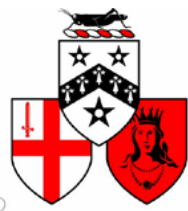


1 Methods in our Madness

- The 'so what?' question – what are implications / consequences of this idea
- Four gospel versions of story of Jesus kept by the early church.
- Four narratives seen through the four traditional symbols.
- Jesus' teaching within narrative of deeds
- *Four Gospels, One Jesus?* Eerdmans / SPCK 1994, 2005
- Classic edn., SPCK 2013 (€8 offer today)

Rev'd Prof Richard Burridge, Dean of KCL



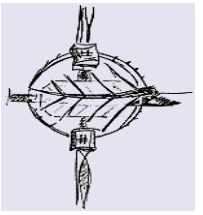
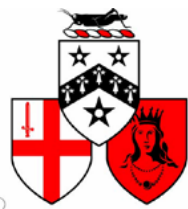


1 Methods in our Madness

- Awarded Ratzinger Prize 2013 in the Vatican by Pope Francis after major conference on this theme
- Presenting him with *Four Gospels, One Jesus?*
- Citation: for establishing
- “indissoluble connection of Jesus and the gospels”

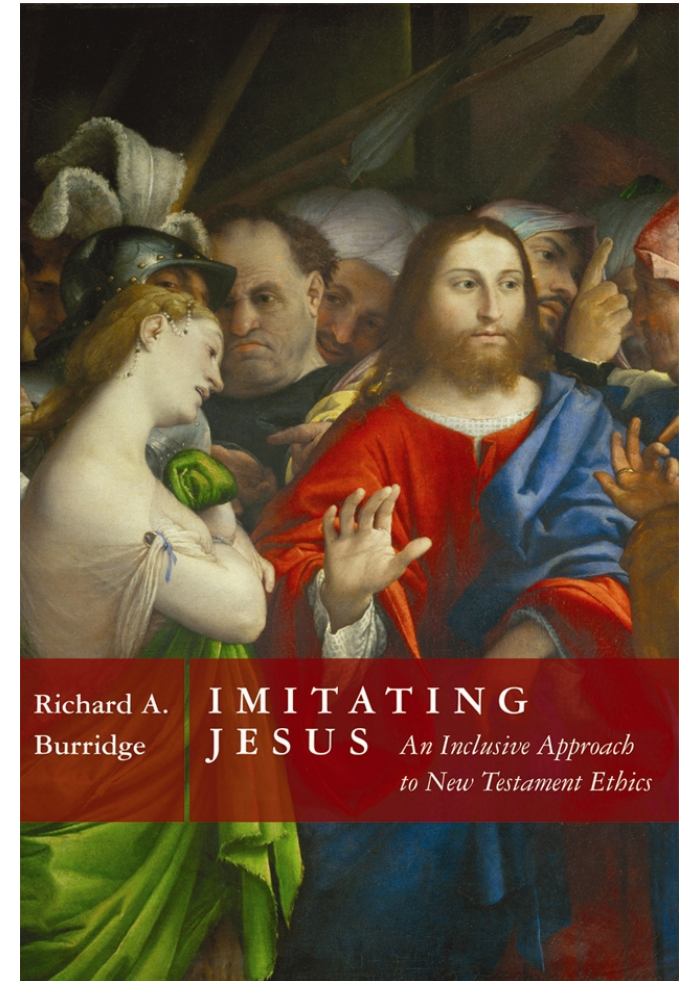
Rev'd Prof Richard

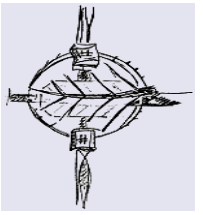
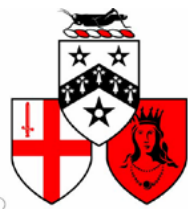




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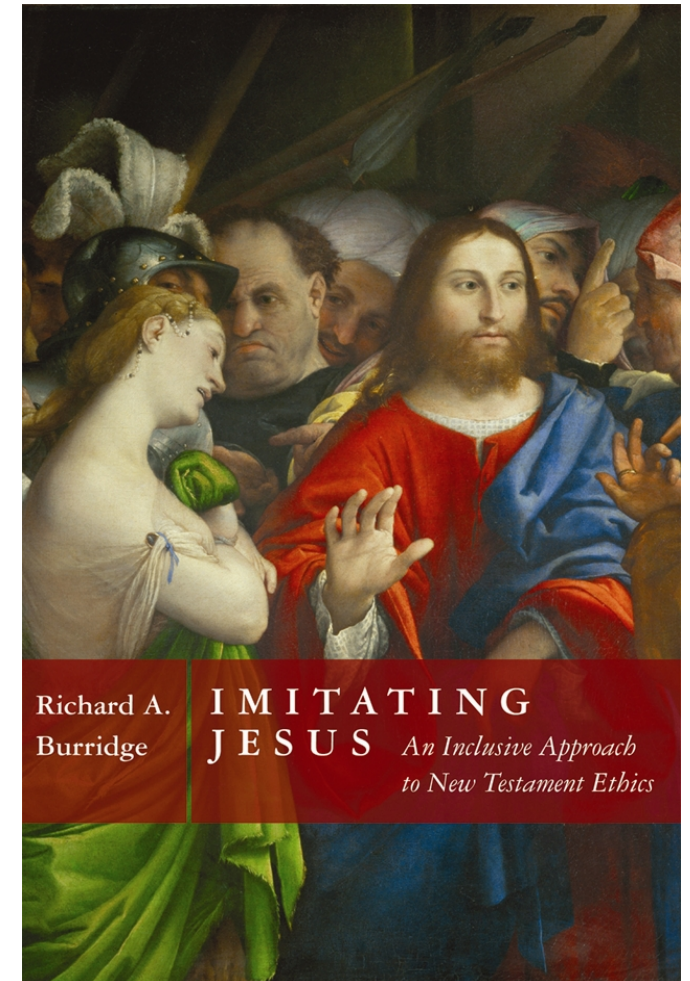
- Attempt to take implications of biographical gospel genre for NT ethics seriously.
- First volume about the ethical material found in the New Testament.
- Richard A. Burrige, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Eerdmans: 2007).
- Second part: how the New Testament can be used in ethical dilemmas today.
- *Money, Sex, Power, Violence and the Meaning of Life: Following Jesus Today* (forthcoming)

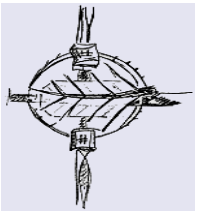
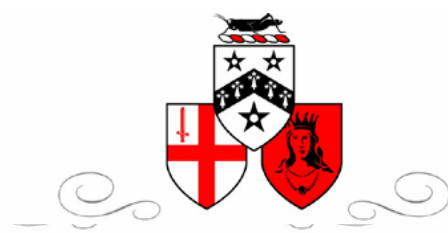




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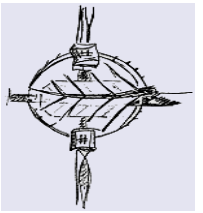
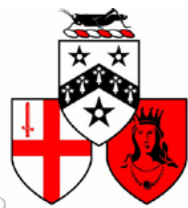
- (i) It takes Jesus seriously as a preacher or prophet of restoration eschatology, rather than a moral teacher, to be followed more than obeyed.
- (ii) It also takes the gospels seriously as ancient biography. Must consider Jesus' ethical teaching *and* his practice:
 - 'In the first book, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach' (Acts 1.1).
 - Must include both his words and his deeds; a narrative, inclusive approach.





2 Towards a Fourfold Method

- a) Begin with Jesus' words and deeds; use of drag net – include narrative as well as teaching, stories and examples.
- b) Hays *Moral Vision of NT* uses focal images; can also lead to distortion. Instead, look for best line fit on 'scattergram', and how rest of NT follow (or not) the direction set by Jesus' teaching & example
- c) Look at the four different genres of ethical material: rules, principles, paradigms/ examples, overall biblical world-view
- d) Apply it all to today within the context of an inclusive community of interpretation which ensures that the voices of those most affected are actually heard.

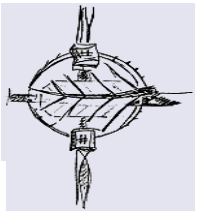
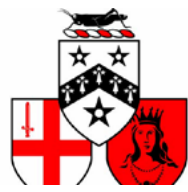


I Descriptive stage – Jesus' words and deeds

- Judaism was a patriarchal society; women separated in synagogue and temple, not to be taught the Law. Daily man's prayer thanking God for not being made a woman
- Graeco-Roman society similar, though (rich) women had more rights; only Greek men citizens, not women
- Homosexuality as a 'phase' in Greek society; Rome??

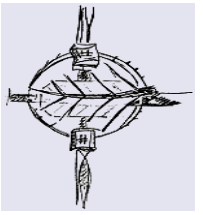
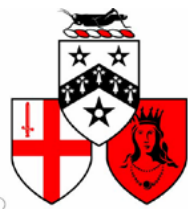


Orthodox men and women pray separately at the Western Wall; scuffles with reform/liberals



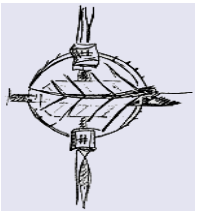
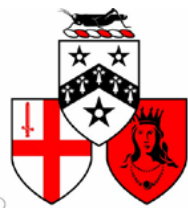
I Descriptive stage – Jesus' words and deeds

- *a) Jesus' words & teaching*
- The key passage on Divorce procedure, Deut 24.1 'bill of divorce' 'because he finds something objectionable about her'; Shammai (conservative - infidelity) v. Hillel (liberal – finding another more attractive!). Grounds?
- Jesus returns to original intention, 'one flesh', from Genesis 2.24: "From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Mark 10.2-12 /Matt 19.3-12)
- NB note shift from Moses' 'command' to 'allow' in both Matthew and Mark, except that it is the Pharisees who do it in Mark



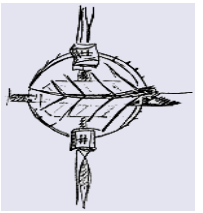
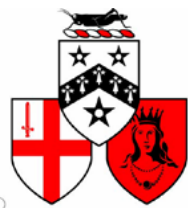
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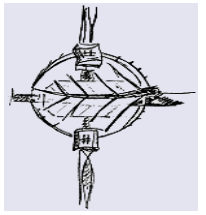
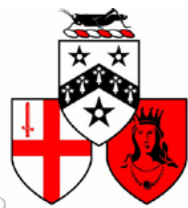
I Descriptive stage – Jesus' words and deeds

- a) *Jesus' words & teaching*
- Matthew inserts 'divorce for any cause' (19.3) and 'whoever divorces his wife, except for *porneia* (μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ), and marries another commits adultery (μοιχᾶται)'. (19.9)
- How to translate *porneia*? Fornication, unchastity, sexual immorality? Often thought to be 'adultery', but that is a different word (μοιχᾶται)
- Matt 5.31-32=Lk 16.18, again Matthew inserts "except for *porneia*"
- Defilement comes 'out of the heart', NOT body (Matt 15.19; Mk 7.21);
- Marriage is for this world only (see Jesus' reply to Sadducees' question Mk 12.25; Matt 22.30; Luke 20.35). Not so important??!



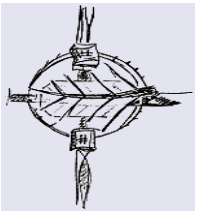
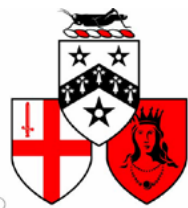
I Descriptive stage – Jesus' words and deeds

- *b) Jesus' example:*
- Rejection of 'family values' when his mother is looking for him (Mark 3.19b-35); Peter has left everything, family (10.28-31)
- Jesus viewed as the 'friend of sinners' (Luke 7.34; Matt 11.19)
- Anointing by woman – very complex story; head v feet, tears or ointment? (Matt 26.6-13; Mark 14.3-9; John 12.1-8; Luke 7.36-50)
- Syrophoenician woman challenges him: Mk. 7.24-30/Matt 15.21-28
- Woman with flow of blood (makes her impure) set within story of Jairus' daughter, yet Jesus stops to heal her (Mark 5.21-42)
- Women disciples named in Luke 8.2-3; accepts Mary 10.40ff



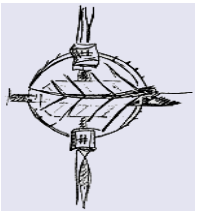
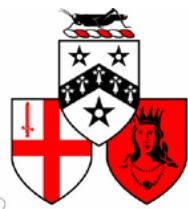
I Descriptive stage – Jesus' words and deeds

- *Summing up Jesus' teaching and activity:*
- Use of scattergram idea and “best line fit”; Guillemette: ‘Jesus does not give *directives*, but rather a *direction*.’ N. Guillemette SJ, ‘The Sermon on the Mount: Feasible Ethics?’, *Landas* 9 (1995), 209-236; quotation from p. 235.
- Use plotting data to get the general direction or overall trend established; like discerning the Milky Way in the night sky.
- **Words:** Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God sounds like a challenge to contemporary morality of his own day – and ours
- **Deeds:** Jesus lives out his teaching as a single person, ascetic?; yet is surrounded by women and accepts sexual sinners among his disciples and followers – “drunkard and friend of sinners”



II Canonical stage – fit rest of NT together?

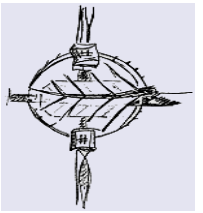
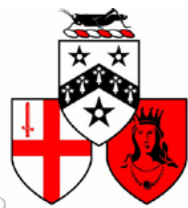
- *c) Matthew*
- Intensification of adultery (μοιχευω) to lustful looks (Matt 5.27-8);
- ‘Eunuchs for kingdom’ and the call to receive it (Matt 19.12)
- *d) Luke* tones down Mk 3.19-35; omits divorce pericope – why?
- Attitude to women generally, women disciples named (Lk 8.2-3); Mary allowed to sit at Jesus’ feet like a man (Luke 10.40ff);
- More healings & ministry to women in Luke (7.11-17, 8.2; 13.10-17)
- Luke’s concern for women (Mary 1.26-38, Magnificat, 1.46-55); Elizabeth with Zechariah (1.5-25), Anna with Simeon (2.25-38) – tendency to pairings; widow of Zarephath with Naaman (4.25-27)



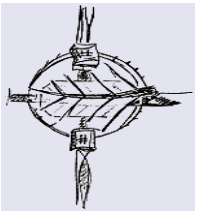
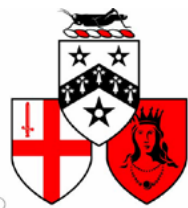
II Canonical stage – fit rest of NT together?

f) *John*

- Jesus speaks to Samaritan woman at the well who has had many men (gender, race, creed), and offers her living water (4.16-18)
- Woman taken in ‘very act of adultery’; where is the man? “Neither do I condemn you; you are free to go, but stop sinning” (Jn 8.1-12);
- *2 Acts of the Apostles*
- The Apostolic Decree removes circumcision/keeping law Acts 15.1-30
- “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication (*porneia*)”
- Women active in ministry throughout: 1.14; 9.36; 12.2; 16.14-15; 18.26

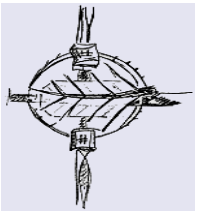
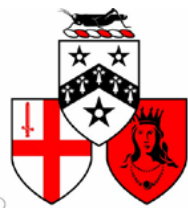


- 3 *Paul II* **Canonical stage – fit rest of NT together?**
- Main section is Paul's debate with Corinthians in 1 Cor 5-7 divorce
- 'No Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female' Galatians 3.28
- 1 Thess 4.1-8 abstain from immorality (*porneia*) and passion;
- House codes mutuality Col. 3.22-25, Eph. 5, 1 Tim 6.1-6, Titus 2.9
- "Vice-list" of 1 Cor 6.9 : οὔτε πόρνοι . . . οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενικοῖται— how to translate these terms? Debated.
- NB other vice lists without homosexuality: Rom. 13.13; 1 Cor. 5.10; 2 Cor. 12.20-21; Gal. 5.19-21; Eph. 4.25-32, 5.3-5; Col. 3.5; 1 Tim. 6.4-5; 2 Tim. 3.1-9; NB *porneia* occurs in most of them, 11 times
- Rom 1.19-32 – homosexuality within context of another vice-list (disobeying parents!)



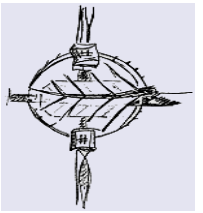
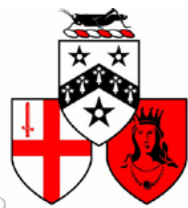
II Canonical stage – fit rest of NT together?

- *Jesus and Paul's Examples:*
- Paul was single: widower or celibate? Claimed right to wife 1 Cor 9.5;
- Yet Paul often seen as having a negative attitude to women
- 1 Cor 11.2-16 on headship; 14.33b-36 on being silent in church
- But Paul wrote key text of Gal. 3.28: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”
- Lots of women “co-workers” in Paul: Euodia and Syntyche Phil 4.2-3; Chloe 1 Cor.1.11; Phoebe as ‘deacon’ and other women Rom 16.1-2, 3-5, 6, 12.
- Rom 16.7 “Andronicus and **Junia**, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent **among the apostles**, and they were in Christ before I was” (NRSV). Is Junia, a woman apostle? Or Junias (AV/RSV) = same-sex couple!



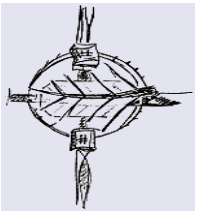
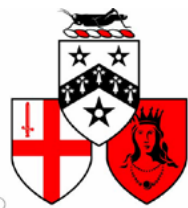
II Canonical stage – fit rest of NT together?

- 4 *Rest of the NT*
- Marriage /sexual relations are good (1 Tim 4.1-5)
- second marriage is allowed especially for widows (1 Tim 5.9, 14).
- 1 Tim 3.2, 12 bishop and deacons as husband of only one wife; 1 Tim 5.9, same for a older widow; 5.14 younger widows are to marry
- ἀρσενικοῖται feature in only one vice-list (1 Tim 1.10-11).
- faithfulness in marriage is stressed in Heb 13.4
- **Summary:**
- General ideal of one flesh: ‘one man one woman for keeps’; asserted by Jesus in Mark and Luke, picking up Gen. 2.24; also quoted in 1 Cor 6.16: **homosexuality not mentioned by Jesus**



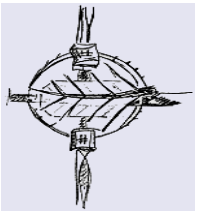
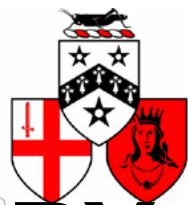
III Interpretative stage: How to interpret material?

- Genre-based interpretation throughout.
- Key to interpret all ethical material in its genre
- *1 Rule-commands*
- 1 Cor 6-7 instructions to Paul's church; Jesus rules against divorce: Mark 10 etc. Prohibition of *porneia* , Acts 15.28-9
- What about Jesus' commands to pluck out eyes, cut off hands, etc? Take them 'literally'? (Matt 5.29-30; 18.8-9; Mk. 9. 42-48)
- *2 Principles-values*
- NT, Jesus and Paul adopt the 'one flesh' principle from Gen 2.
- body as temple of the Holy Spirit; 'glorify God in body' 1 Cor 6.20



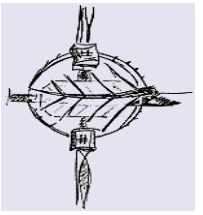
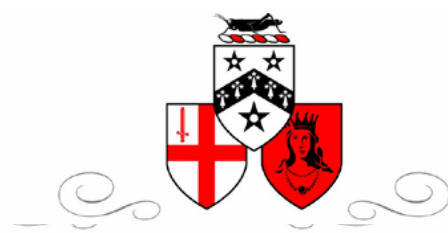
III Interpretative stage: How to interpret material?

- *3 Examples*
- Jesus' example of being single. Paul's example of being happy as celibate (1 Cor 7.7-8) – but also Peter has a wife 1 Cor 9.5
- *4 Overall view - symbolic world*
- Creation: Mark 10; Rom. 1 1 Tim 4.1-5
- Incarnation/atonement: Jesus and sexuality?
- Mark 12.25 - Sadducees and resurrection
- Rev 21-2 eschatological unity of God and his people as a bride prepared for bridegroom; Creation-sin-redemption-eschaton nexus: See R. A. Burrige, *Sex Therapy: Some Ethical Considerations*, Grove Ethics 57, 1985, pp. 10-11)



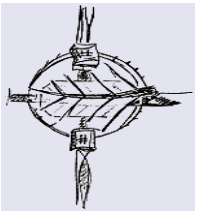
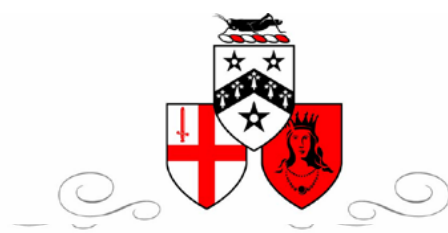
SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL MATERIAL

- Jesus reaffirms Genesis 'one flesh' permanent, lifelong, heterosexual, exclusive relationship for sex and marriage (against even the conservatives!); clear opposition to *porneia* (whatever it means); lived out in Jesus' own ascetic single lifestyle – yet accepted sexual sinners in his group along with others.
- Matthew and Paul try to apply Jesus' teaching to practical issues about sex and marriage in their readers/congregations; Luke particularly sympathetic to women; clear antagonism to *porneia* across all NT writers; homosexuality only a minor issue in vice-lists.
- Commands against *porneia*; one flesh principle, plus notions of faithfulness, love, loyalty etc; Jesus and Paul's examples, plus overall biblical world view from creation-fall-incarnation-redemption.
- Church's negativity to sex does not reflect biblical view; current inconsistency over treatment of divorce v. homosexuality, women, especially in ministry.



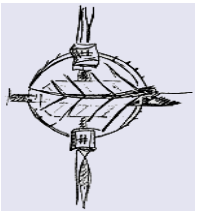
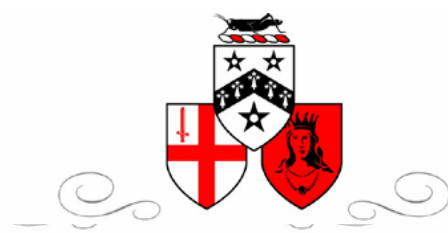
IV Practical stage: today's ethical dilemmas

- 1 *Following Jesus in radical discipleship*
- Jesus' words and deeds give us a direction, rather than directives (Guillemette) – back to tracing the Milky Way
- Jesus' call to take up cross, deny self and follow him costly;
- This provides us with some content, but not 'all the answers'; Jesus and the NT more concerned about issues of money, violence, power than about sex, marriage/divorce
- Does the Church follow God's priorities as in NT/Bible; what about the over-riding biblical ethic of love in Jesus' example?



IV Practical stage: today's ethical dilemmas

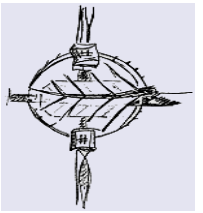
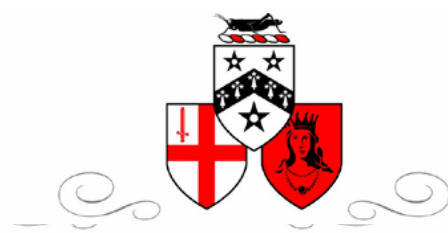
- *2 Interpreting the scriptures in an inclusive community*
- How to form a mixed and inclusive community to discuss these scriptures and issues together with disagreement?
- Voice of outsiders to be heard – women, LGBTI+?
- How to build a community which seeks to respond to the ethical challenge of Jesus, yet which also is open to the voices of outsiders? Are we friends of sinners - or judgmental excluders?



IV Practical stage: today's ethical dilemmas

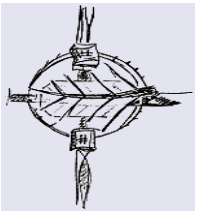
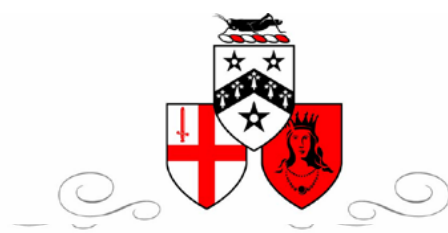
- *3 Sorts of questions/issues to consider:*
- How do we use NT in issues of human sexuality in society and church today?
- Are we consistent in applying Jesus' & NT teaching about the rest of sexual morality, particularly over how divorce is treated, as opposed to homosexuality?
- Divorce and second marriage in church now allowed; Henry VIII and C of E?!





IV Practical stage: today's ethical dilemmas

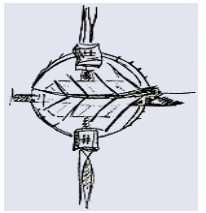
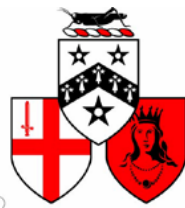
- *3 Sorts of questions/issues to consider:*
- Premarital sex/cohabitation; growth of christenings being combined with weddings – first big family celebration
- Ordination of divorcees now allowed by 'faculty'; debate over consecration as bishops, first few now allowed
- Gender issues – role of women; battles over ordination as priests, 1976-1992 & consecration as bishops, 1992-2015
- Homosexuality: 'blessings' of civil partnerships, same-sex marriage not allowed in church; ordination & consecration



IV Practical stage: today's ethical dilemmas

- 3 Sorts of questions/issues to consider:
- Why are some scriptures about homosexuality still considered binding today, while other similar passages in the same context are not? Lev. 18-20, tattoos!
- Are permanent, lifelong, monogamous, same-sex relationships equivalent to Christian marriage? Does the comparison to marriage after divorce help or hinder the discussion?
- Increasing debate about transgender people





GENDER, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY



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