

Denominational Concerns Open Forum #1

The Meaning and Authority of Scripture in the life of the Church

Basics of the Scriptures

Inspiration, Authority, and Interpretation

- Theories of Inspiration
- Theories of Authority
- Methods of Interpretation

Basics of the Scriptures

Theories of Inspiration

- Inerrancy-the Bible is completely accurate and truthful in all that it affirms.
- Infallibility-the Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice but may err in history or science.
- Unique and authoritative-The Bible is the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ.
- word of God and word of man-Portions of the Bible, including some of its theological and ethical positions, may not be the inspired Word of God.
- word of man-The Bible is merely a record of the moral and religious experiences of Hebrews and Christians.

Basics of the Scriptures

The impact of one's theory of inspiration on Biblical authority

- Inerrancy-the Bible's authority is unquestionable wherever it speaks.
- Infallibility-the Bible's authority is unquestionable wherever it speaks to faith and life.
- Unique and authoritative-the Bible's authority is unquestionable wherever it speaks to Jesus Christ.
- word of God and word of man-the Bible's authority is unquestionable where the Spirit reveals it to be the Word of God.
- word of man-the Bible's authority is questionable and may need to be revised.

Basics of the Scriptures

The impact of one's theory of inspiration on Biblical interpretation

- Inerrancy-the Bible is to be interpreted in light of its cultural and literary context and assumed to be true.
- Infallibility-the Bible is to be interpreted in light of its cultural and literary context in light of its message on faith and life.
- Unique and authoritative-the Bible is to be interpreted in light of its cultural and literary context as it speaks to Jesus Christ.
- word of God and word of man-the Bible is to be interpreted in light of its cultural and literary context through a philosophical lens.
- word of man-the Bible can be interpreted liberally.

Scripture within the PC USA

A history of our thought on biblical inspiration, authority and interpretation

- The Adopting Act of 1729
- The refining of the Adopting Act in 1758
- BB Warfield and the Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910
- The Auburn Declaration and the Special Commission report to the General Assembly of 1927
- The result today
 - Biblical Authority and Interpretation
 - Presbyterians Today
 - The PUP Report
 - The Presbyterian Panel

Scripture at FPCW

Our clear documented stance on the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures

- From our *Confessional Church Statement*: That Holy Scripture is the triune God's revealed Word and life. While God's Word must be read and understood with diligence and due consideration for the place and context in which it was written, its message is eternal—the Church's only infallible rule of faith and practice and is not subject to the changing tide of culture or popular opinion.
- From our *Biblical Beliefs* document: that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God written, a divine, supernatural revelation. Pastors, elders, deacons & staff will believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the original writings of the Scriptures, and that, as thus given, they were wholly without error of any kind and are thereby the only totally trustworthy rule for faith and obedience for the Church.

Scripture in Central Washington Presbytery

Our clear documented stance on the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures

- The San Diego Essential Tenets Document
- The force and effect of the San Diego Essential Tenets Document
- The implications of the San Diego Essential Tenets Document

The Implications of the Scripture issue

What does all this mean?

- FPCW is committed to the inerrancy of the Scriptures and will not change her mind.
- The Presbytery has done its best to stand with us in this regard.
- The PC USA does not take a particular position on the inspiration or authority of Scripture and none of its governing bodies are allowed to do so either. This has been ruled upon, supported in Church courts, and is never likely to change.