

WE PRAYERFULLY VALUE

Scripture

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

IPHC

Place of Hope. People of Promise.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. IPHC General Superintendent	
WE PRAYERFULLY VALUE SCRIPTURE	7
Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. IPHC General Superintendent	
WE VALUE SCRIPTURE	13
Dr. Adrian Hinkle Southwestern Christian University	
PREACH THE WORD	17
A. H. Butler President of the Holiness Church of North Carolina (1908)	
MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SERMON PREPARATION	20
J. Dwight Burchett Oklahoma Conference	
A PLEA FOR MORE SCRIPTURE	22
Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. IPHC General Superintendent	
THE BIBLE AS THE INERRABLE WORD OF GOD	24
L. W. Sisk Georgia Conference	
SPEAK LORD AND WE WILL LISTEN	26
Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. IPHC General Superintendent	
A CATECHISM	28
G. F. Taylor Former IPHC General Superintendent	
CATECHESIS	31
Keith Marriner IPHC Discipleship Ministries	
THE IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE	35
Dr. Terry Tramel IPHC World Missions Ministries	
WHY WE PRAYERFULLY VALUE SCRIPTURE	38
Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. IPHC General Superintendent	

Introduction

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. | IPHC General Superintendent

Our Jewish fathers and mothers of the faith held the word of God in high regard. The psalmist declared, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). Isaiah announced, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

Our Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan’s temptations “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). The parable of the sower was one of Jesus’ emphatic teachings on the Word (Matthew 13:1-23; Luke 8:11). The disciples came to understand that Jesus’ spoken words and the Scriptures were the same (John 2:22).

The first century apostolic witness bore the same witness. The Bible is the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). The apostles affirmed the inspiration of Scripture, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Apostle Peter testified that it is “through the word of God which lives and abides forever” that we are “born again” and that it is this “word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:23, 25).

In 1547 the Church of England, the mother church of John Wesley, published a series of sermons to be read regularly by ministers to their flocks. Titled “Certain Sermons or Homilies to be read in Churches,” the series began with this affirmation of the word of God, “Unto a Christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable, than the knowledge of Holy Scripture, forasmuch as in it is contained God’s true word, setting forth His glory, and also man’s duty.”

The IPHC’s fifth Article of Faith is very clear regarding the Bible: “We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, known as the Bible, composed of sixty-six books and divided into two departments, Old and New Testaments. We believe the Bible is the word of God, the full and complete revelation of the plan and history of redemption.”

We make this confession without apology. Such a confession is not anti-intellectual or anti-science. Rather, the Bible as the word of God opens our minds and spirits to the fullness of divine truth manifested in all the works of God.

It is for this reason that the IPHC’s first core value is “We prayerfully value Scripture.” We engage the word of God prayerfully because God Himself speaks to us through His Word. We engage the word of God prayerfully because the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers of the Bible, speaks to our lives personally and collectively as we read and hear the Word. We engage the word of God prayerfully because faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). We engage the word of God prayerfully because the incarnate word of God,

Jesus the Son of God, is revealed in the Bible.

The following collection of articles and essays was written over the course of the history of our movement. There are articles by some of our founding fathers. We have chosen to keep their expressions and writing styles. The more contemporary writers reflect the scholarship and spiritual vitality of men and women across the IPHC family.

Our vision as a “Place of Hope and a People of Promise” is based on the word of God in Isaiah 54:2, 3. May the Bible continue to be the source of our beliefs, our walk in faith, and our engagement with this lost world, as we await the promised return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We Prayerfully Value Scripture

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. | IPHC General Superintendent

“The life and walk of the Spirit occurs as the gifts in your life begin to impact my life.”

INTRODUCTION

We’ve all heard the funny stories of how children remember Bible stories. I recall the little boy who heard the story of Adam and Eve in Sunday School. After church he told his mother, “I have a pain in my side; I think I’m having a wife.”

On February 6, 2014, the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) reported that 30 percent of British teens were unaware that the story of the birth of Jesus came from the Bible. “A similar number of children had never read or heard about . . . the crucifixion or Adam and Eve.”¹ More than a third of the children could not identify the Good Samaritan or David and Goliath as biblical stories. Nearly half did not recognize Noah’s Ark as coming from the Bible, and “many confused biblical stories with plot lines from well-known films such as Harry Potter.”

The report contained this sad sentence, “The study revealed a generation of children with little knowledge of the most important stories forming the basis of Christianity, and parents who often knew little more.”

The 2013 report of the Barna Group for the American Bible Society, “The State of the Bible, 2013,” asked the following Bible knowledge questions:

- Did Noah marry Joan of Arc? Fortunately, 78 percent of Americans knew that he did not.
- 37 percent of Americans think that Sodom and Gomorrah are husband and wife. Nearly half of Mosaics (aged 18-28) think they are married.
- About 60 percent of that same age group think John the Baptist was one of the Twelve Apostles; about 50 percent of adults over 28 think he was.

The study also contained the following insights about knowledge and understanding of the Bible in the USA:

- When asked to name a holy book, 80 percent of adults named the Bible; 8 percent named the Koran; 4 percent the Torah, and 3 percent the Book of Mormon.
- People aged 48 to 67+ are more likely to consider the Bible as sacred; age groups 18-47 are less likely.
- More than half of adults (56%) believe the Bible has too little influence

in U.S. society today – more than four times the proportion of those who think it has too much influence (13%).

- 38 percent of Americans said it was more offensive to be called “immoral” while only 8 percent believed that being called “intolerant” was more offensive.
- 88 percent of adults say their household owns a Bible. But Bible ownership has decreased from 92 percent in 1993 to 88 percent in 2013. The King James Version remains the Bible most commonly read (38%).
- 65 percent of Americans said they gave a lot of thought to what the Bible said about how to live.
- About 49 percent of adults believe the Bible is the inspired word of God.
- 42 percent of adults could correctly name the first five books of the Bible.²

Yet oddly, people 48 years old and older were less interested in specific guidance from the Bible in their lives while younger people were slightly more interested.

Thus, the statistical information is mixed in the USA. While millions own Bibles, the fact remains that our nation’s moral and cultural condition is anything but faithful to the teachings of the Bible. There is a clear disconnect between what millions of Americans say they believe and what is transpiring in our culture. All of us are aware that political and judicial activism in the United States has led to a huge gap related to the public influence of the Bible. At the same time, this lukewarm attitude toward the Bible does little to mitigate against the rising public tide.

The movement to which we belong is over 115 years old. It came into existence in the midst of the modern rejection of divine truth. Still, the IPHC has rooted its theology and practice in God’s Word, the Holy Bible. We continue to derive our vision, mission, and goals from this holy revelation. Isaiah 54:2, 3, written over 2,500 years ago, now speaks to us with authority as the words of the Spirit are never out of date or irrelevant. Through the Spirit speaking to the global IPHC in Isaiah 54, we have committed to serve our generation as a “Place of Hope and a People of Promise!”

Our first core value sets the stage for all the others. Without the Bible:

- We have no record of Pentecost
- We do not understand holiness
- We miss the mission of Christ’s kingdom
- We neglect generations
- We fail in the pursuit of justice
- We do not experience the joy of generosity.

We begin with the Bible because God’s “Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). As the Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible points us to the Word that became flesh and is the “Light of the world” (John 1:4, 7-9; 8:12).

But our generation is no different than any other generation. The darkness makes every effort to extinguish the light of the Word. There are two distinct ways that the darkness seeks to diminish the light of Scripture.

First, there is ignorance of the Word itself. That ignorance comes by our own neglect, by the failure of preachers and teachers to declare the whole counsel of God faithfully, and by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches that choke the Word (Matthew 13:22).

Second, Satan does all he can to discredit the authority and power of the Word. Satan sows distrust of the Word through confusion, false analogies, and human reasoning uninformed by the life-giving Spirit. Scoffers mock the Bible and those who believe its witness.

As a church we continue to affirm our historic position regarding the truth of God’s Word. In our Articles of Faith, Article 5 reads: “We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, known as the Bible, composed of sixty-six books and divided into two departments, Old and New Testaments. We believe the Bible is the word of God, the full and complete revelation of the plan and history of redemption.”

J.H. King, the most significant bishop in our first fifty years, wrote of the Bible, “The testimony of the Lord is a plain declaration of truth. It may be in the form of precept, command, promise, prediction, parable, history, teaching, or vision. These include all the scope of revealed truth; that is, all the word of God. The Bible is one great testimony, yet we have in it thousands of varied testimonies.”³

I believe every generation has a tipping point whereby its values, beliefs, and actions either descend into deeper darkness or arise to the light of revelation in spiritual revival and renewal. I believe we are at such a tipping point in the season in which we are living. This is not only true for the United States, the primary Western nation. Whether in Europe or North America, deeply committed, Bible-believing Christians still have a strong and vocal voice. This is also true for the global South, which is exploding in revival. In the global South, I often hear the expression: Christianity is a mile wide but an inch deep. Spiritual revival must be confirmed and established with Bible-based relational discipleship.

As we consciously renew our commitment to the truths of God’s Word, the church must maintain four key factors. Our response to these will enable us to do our part in bearing witness to the true Light that has come into the world.

WE MUST PREACH THE BIBLE.

The first Christian martyr, Stephen, preached from the Old Testament Scriptures in his powerful final message. He spoke of Moses having “received

the living oracles to give us” (Acts 7:38). The sermons in Acts and the references in the Epistles are rooted in the revealed Word in the Old Testament. They did not preach to be relevant; they preached to bring repentance!

This is what Jesus did. He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14, 15). The kingdom message was rooted in the Law and Prophets. Jesus actualized that message in His very being and established the church as a public witness to that kingdom.

Our preaching is not our opinions. Our preaching is the proclamation of what has already been announced and revealed. The ways we communicate and preach vary according to our temperament, knowledge and experience, cultural background, and even our generational experience. But at the end of the day, preaching is rooted in the word of God and anointed by the power of the Spirit as servants humble themselves in study and prayer.

We, who stand in this pulpit and speak to you, must speak from the authority of this Book. Every time I stand to speak, I am keenly aware that God is speaking to me as well as to you. I am deeply aware, at times frightfully so, that someone’s life and destiny hinges upon how and what I say.

WE MUST TEACH THE BIBLE.

Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” For centuries, the Bible stories were told and taught by visual means: the artwork in cathedrals and churches depicting scenes from the Bible. The Stations of the Cross taught the Passion narrative of Jesus’ last days.

For many of us, the Bible was taught in our homes and Sunday School. It was the days of flannelgraph characters. Today, we must use every means to introduce people to the narratives found in this Book. That’s why programs like *The Bible* and the movie, *Son of God*, are so important.

Whether on a Sunday morning or another time, there must be an introduction to the life-influencing narratives of the Bible. Without knowledge of creation and the fall, people do not have a frame of reference for understanding the failures in their lives. In fact, they do not even know what to call it: sin. Without this knowledge there is no knowledge of redemption and a Redeemer.

WE MUST MAKE AND BE DISCIPLES.

Making disciples occurs in a dual relationship. First, without fail another person or group of people impact our lives. We discover trust and acceptance, the order by which life is lived and enriched. John Wesley understood this and crafted the small group that formed the heart of Methodism. Roman Catholic priestly orders understand this. The local drug dealer on a street corner understands this as he recruits young, desperate people to join him in his death-dealing craft.

What makes the small group effective is that the Bible is the core of the conversation. The Bible’s narrative of life – real life with real people – becomes

our own storyline as we discover ourselves in it. We need one another; we need community, we need the presence of people who, like ourselves, sense that we have been “called out” to “come together.” That’s the meaning of the church and the good news is that Jesus said He would build this gathering of people being changed together.

I recently heard Dr. Harold Dean Truelear, a minister from Washington, DC, share his testimony. Earlier in life he served time in prison. Since then, he has dedicated his life to ministering to men and women in prison and in their life after incarceration. He said the greatest need of a person coming back into society is not a job, as important as that is. Rather, the greatest need is to be in a place where new beliefs and attitudes can be developed. He then remarked that a released convict can only be freed from impulsive behavior by discipleship, and only the church can provide that.

This is where the Holy Spirit’s life-changing power occurs – in the church, in the relationships where we are disciplined. The life and walk of the Spirit occurs as the gifts in your life begin to impact my life. Through your gifts I discover and release those that God has given to me.

WE MUST PROCLAIM JESUS, THE LIVING WORD OF GOD.

A powerful scene unfolds in John 6:68 as some of Jesus’ followers have begun to forsake Him. Jesus turned to the disciples and asked, “Will you go too?” Simon Peter answered, “Lord, where will we go, You have the words of life.”

Hebrews 4:12 brings together the written word of God and the person of whom that written Word testifies, “The word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Jesus Himself lived by the word of God in the Law, Writings, and Prophets. Those prophecies shaped His inner being and directed His outward steps. In the narratives of those books, He found His life-purpose, why He was sent from heaven to us. These words were the link from His present back to when He was prepared in eternity as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The world impresses upon us its own narrative: its own measure of purpose, success, life. Recently someone commented that advertisers know better than the church how to touch our soul. Here are some from the most recent top 10:

- Reach out and touch someone - AT&T
- You’re in good hands with Allstate - Allstate
- Think Different - Apple Macintosh
- Because I’m worth it - L’Oreal
- Impossible is nothing - Adidas
- Life happens over coffee - Starbucks

But those only satisfy for a season; they cannot satisfy for eternity. Things can only bring relief from life’s difficulties for a short while; they cannot redeem

us from our guilt and sin.

But Jesus can. It is His story that must be heard as our story. We are the poor in spirit, we are the brokenhearted, we are the captives, we are the condemned. And He is our healer, deliverer, and Savior.

Perhaps we have to start prayerfully valuing the Scripture in our lives, churches, and society by returning to the heart and song of children, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me....”

*This sermon was used as the IPHC presiding sermon for 2014.

¹ “Children and Parents ‘Unaware of Bible Stories:’” *BBC*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 7 February 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26078614>.

² “American Bible Society: The State of the Bible, 2013.” *American Bible*, American Bible Society, 2013, <http://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State%20of%20the%20Bible%20Report%202013.pdf>.

³ King, Joseph Hillery, *Christ's Love Gift*. Ed. B.E. Underwood. Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1969.

We Value Scripture

Dr. Adrian Hinkle | Southwestern Christian University

“Learners gain insight on the character of God through the effects of His actions.”

Perspective plays a significant role when considering most matters. Details omitted from an account may greatly alter one’s decision or approach for a solution. Perspective enhances one’s ability to perceive the depth or shallowness of a given problem or victory. Perspective is knowledge.

THE AUTHORITY AND INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

From its inception, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church has valued the authority and inerrancy of the Christian scriptures as the inspired words of God. At its core, the Scriptures are written with didactic intent for retraining future generations on the hope of redemption they have in God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. The beauty of the collected scriptures is the story they tell. In every episode, readers partake of the journey alongside each of the characters. However, as the stories interweave into the larger metanarrative (the overarching story of Scripture), readers see not only the redemption of the individual, but the redemption of Israel, and ultimately the redemption of humankind.

The narratives of the world emphatically deny and distort the existence of God. He is depicted as distant, nonchalant, or even insensitive and inconsistent. According to the modern worldview of many, the world is self-contained and thus the solution to every problem is found within humanity and choices made. The modern worldview also allows for the unfolding of life events as mere fate and evil is not a real force but a product of ignorance that is easily solved through education. However, this is not the worldview portrayed and taught through Scripture.

THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

The nature of Scripture is that it offers God’s self-disclosure so that the faith community gains perspective from whom they worship. Christians are called to know God. The Scriptures teach that this knowledge is not based merely on the acquisition of facts but rather the accumulation of experiences. Learners gain insight on the character of God through the effects of His actions. While God cannot be fully known, humanity is allowed to gain insight from what they are able to observe. God is vastly active and present throughout history. The Scriptures overwhelmingly document the presence of Yahweh (the Lord) through many of the narratives to demonstrate His continued interest and

activity in the lives of humanity. This activity of God produces an observable effect on humanity and thus the invisible becomes visible. God becomes observable, not through His own image, but the character traits exemplified by His actions and impact on a world in need of grace, redemption, and justice.

Additionally, Scripture points readers to other means of learning about their Creator. One such account is found in Proverbs 8. The use of this description in Proverbs 8 is a means for allowing the readers to “rediscover” their God as Creator through the observation of His work in creation itself. In humanity’s quest for wisdom and relevance, Yahweh Himself is personified as Wisdom and consequently the very source of that which they seek to acquire. Yahweh is thus able to transcend to the tangibility of the created world. Present reality of the world is governed by the God who permeates the concrete world. The writers of wisdom literature are endlessly occupied with connecting humanity’s sense of God through their familiarity of the world. In other words, experiencing creation is a means of knowing God.

THE VALUE OF SCRIPTURE

Finally, the value of Scripture within the IPHC is the extension of the promises described. Within Genesis, readers are introduced to Abram, who receives an unconditional promise of land and descendants. In essence, he has received the hope of the fulfillment of a promise for his condition of barrenness. This covenant initiates the ongoing relationship with what will eventually be the nation of Israel and their covenant God.

While Abram experiences the fulfillment of this promise through his arrival to the land promised to him and the birth of his son, Isaac, the fullness of this covenant is not yet realized. As the stories compile and merge into a greater metanarrative, the readers begin to realize that this covenant has not yet come to fruition. Through the rest of the Hebrew Bible, readers follow the journeys of characters. Like the readers, these characters seek to understand their role in the plans of their God. Soon, the covenant family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob grows to the nation of Israel after Jacob’s wrestling with the unknown in Genesis 32. Regrettably, soon after, readers learn that the sons of Jacob become far removed from the land of promise as they seek refuge from famine in Egypt. The remaining Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) describes the drastic measures it takes to restore the nation back to its intended place of promise. Along the way, they forget the identity of their God and thus it is recast for them in Exodus. They struggle for survival and to learn how to serve their God until finally, they are brought to the plains of Moab where they are able to see the land once promised to their forefather, Abraham. It is a land and a promise they hope for, but are not currently experiencing.

After the conquest of this land, Judges explains to the readers that there arose another generation who did not know God. Readers watch as the tremendous events unfold that further plunge the nation into religious apathy and ultimately back to self-reliance with request of a human king at the expense of rejecting

God as their King. Israel frequently gains and loses its perspective of their identity in covenant with God. Repeatedly, prophets are sent to remind and/or correct their perspective. Through stories, such as Hosea and Gomer, readers see the absolute love of God for His people and the painful pursuit He willingly acquires.

Despite this pursuit, Israel continually turns away from the relationship offered until another turn occurs, the Babylonian captivity. Prior to the fall of Jerusalem, God communicates the ultimate reason for their demise is their failure to know their God. However, within this passage, the means of “knowing” is justice, righteousness, and pleading the cause of the afflicted and needy (Jeremiah 22:15-17). In addition to losing their perspective of Yahweh, Israel had failed to acknowledge their responsibility as the people of promise and thus had failed to know God. He also communicates His intention of a new covenant, a renewal of promise, through Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31). Despite this, Israel continues its downward spiral of theological confusion in the identity of their God. Therefore, stories such as those in Daniel help to reaffirm the character of God and reestablish the correct perspective for the people of covenant. Israel regains its perspective of God and the identity bestowed to them as the people of promise. However, they must also come to terms with their current status as an exiled people. While God’s promise to them remains, they are not currently occupying the land given to them. As in Deuteronomy, they await the land promised and hoped for, but not experienced. Israel is eventually released from this captivity. Though they do re-identify with their God and return home to Jerusalem, they still fall short of the expectations set for them.

As the story continues, the people of promise continue to fall short. God’s active participation becomes even more apparent as the New Testament begins to unfold the fulfillment of the covenant promised in Jeremiah. The possibility of redemption to God becomes readily accessible to anyone who seeks it. It is no longer veiled and available only to those with the appropriate credentials but all people, even non-Israelites, are given access to salvation through faith. Once again, the story reveals that the recipients of this grace and atonement do not fully understand the bequest afforded to them.

Thus, the apostles continue to record descriptions of this promise. The covenant of land and descendants, given to Abraham, merges with the covenant of law and blessings given at Sinai (Exodus 19–20). Jeremiah informs the readers that this covenant will be replaced with a new covenant that will no longer be written on tablets of stone but will be chiseled on the hearts of people (Jeremiah 31:33). The author of Hebrews also affirms the new covenant with Christ making the first covenant (Sinai) obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). Even so, the recipients cannot fully account for this measure of grace and they, like Israel, question their identity. Hebrews goes on to describe faith and how to abide within this new covenant. Yet, the recipients of the new covenant continue to have difficulty with this new perspective. Epistles, such as Ephesians 1–2 seek to convey the beauty of the promise of a new identity. While Christian believers already possess an essence

of this identity because of their salvation in Christ, its fullest capacity still awaits. Like Israel in the Plains of Moab, and the exile of Babylon, it is a land hoped for, but not yet experienced.

THE BEAUTY OF SCRIPTURE

The beauty of Scripture is the hope it offers. Its readers become the children of promise and are allowed to buy into the identity described from them. Like Israel, they become the recipients of a covenant not asked for, expected, or deserved. Soon, they realize they are the adopted sons and daughters who are grafted into the vine. While this world may continue to exist in peril, the good news is that something better awaits those who choose to follow after God.

The IPHC prayerfully values Scripture because of its insistence of hope. God is a redeeming God who is actively involved in the lives of His people and actively pursues them for the purpose of redemption. Using this model, the IPHC takes the responsibility of advocating the divine inspiration, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture because of its depiction of God's narrative and revelation of character. Scripture is the benchmark of truth. It holds readers accountable to the pursuit of truth, knowledge, and wisdom. It also holds readers accountable to the seeking of others through a shared love of Jesus Christ. It specifies the expectation of a community of faith that is actively involved in the passing of experiences with God from one generation to the next. It is the collective testimony of believers that continues to instruct and edify the community of faith. Scripture is itself a collection of testimonies that instructs its readers on the validity of God, His character, and the redemptive purpose He has with humanity. Like Israel, Christian believers must still learn to identify with the responsibility to protect and speak on behalf of those who cannot do so for themselves. The call to love others, advocate justice, and pursue the revelation of God's character remains. The IPHC upholds this expectation as it diligently considers the words of Scripture as God's continued story of hope to the people of promise.

Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972, p. 62.

Hinkle, Adrian. "We Value Scripture." *7 Core Values*. Franklin Springs: Life Springs Resources, 2014: 7-11.

Preach The Word

A. H. Butler | President of the Holiness Church of North Carolina (1908)

“Without the Word means that we are without inspiration.”

You will find my text today in 2 Tim. 2:4, “Preach the Word.” The inspired apostle in His last days here, in advising Timothy, exhorts him to “preach the Word.”

Why would he give such advice? He seems to leave the impression that even though Timothy was his son in the faith and a man of God, and one who knew the Holy Scriptures, and whose sincerity and gifts could not be questioned. Yet Paul saw the temptation all ministers would have to encounter, and how it was possible for them to preach something that is contradictory to the Word. It is a high and most holy calling to be honored with the call from God to preach the gospel, but woe be unto the man who is called to preach if he fails to preach at all; and to my mind, the person who responds to the call and fails to preach the Word but preaches some kind of doctrine or creed contrary to the Word and calls it gospel is worse off than the person who does not respond to the call at all. He will not only be lost himself but will cause others to be lost who are led by him or his teaching.

John 1:1: “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.” Verse 4: “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

John 5:26: “For as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.”

John 1:14: “And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

Romans 10:13-15: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?... How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!”

There is more preaching being done these days doubtless than ever before, but the world goes on in sin and wickedness. The majority of the preachers, I am sorry to say, are to some extent partaking of the evils and sinning every day, and then they attempt to prove by the word of God that they are justifiable in so doing.

2 Tim. 3:17: “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished

unto all good works.”

Gen. 17:1: “Walk before me and be thou perfect.”

Deut. 18:13: “Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord.”

Psa. 37:37: “Mark the perfect man.”

Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 13:11: “Be ye perfect.”

Phil. 3:16: “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

What this lost world needs is the pure gospel of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Education, worldly wisdom, and knowledge, science and money, law, etc. all have their place, but no one, nor all of them, aside from the pure gospel will save the world, I mean sinners.

Heb. 4:12: “For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Paul knew that it had just that effect on him and therefore he was frank to advise all preachers what to preach in order to save sinners and present them faultless before God at last.

No one can preach the scriptural doctrine of regeneration, or the new, or spiritual birth, who has never been regenerated themselves. Neither can a preacher successfully preach scriptural sanctification who has not been sanctified. They may talk about it and read what others say, but they themselves cannot say from an experimental knowledge of the experience that sanctification is sure enough a real Bible experience. Therefore, they are not all qualified to preach that part of the gospel.

Again, we know that the Bible teaches a great deal about the Holy Ghost, and all Christians are taught in the Scriptures to receive the Holy Ghost, but since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, they do not receive the Holy Ghost until that part of the gospel is properly preached. Then they get the faith that enables them to embrace the promised Baptism of the Holy Ghost and receive Him. He is the Comforter, the Leader, the Teacher, yes, the Spiritual Power, the real, not blessing, but Blessor Himself. Glory to God.

I hold that if the full gospel is preached in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and people hear and heed it, faith will be begotten in the people of God that will enable them to appreciate everything promised to us, in the Word. Of course, we have to be wholly yielded and fully passive in His hand.

So at least much of the cause of the power and effects of the gospel being so greatly retarded lies right among the ecclesiastical body (commonly called preachers). To my mind the devil is playing his biggest and most successful hand in the game right there. Right there you will find his loaded dice.

On the other hand, the various cults commonly known as the church militant in

this world is so cold, worldly, and formal, if the minister attempts to declare the whole truth he is criticized, censured, and sometimes discharged. But to be true to God and to the call, and to the souls of men he must preach the Word, suffer for the gospel's sake, and endure the hardships in order to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and finish his work as a true minister of the gospel and at last receive his crown of reward.

The Word is bread and meat and drink, and in order for Christians to thrive and prosper, they must have the bread and water of life, and when they partake freely of all this they are ready, willing, and able every one to perform his or her task with pleasure.

Without the Word means that we are without inspiration. Where there is no inspiration there is no joy, no peace, no victory, no happiness.

“The entrance of thy word giveth light,” light on divine healing, the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection, the glorified body, eternal happiness, heaven, hell, and all the rest of it. “Preach the Word.”

Butler, A. H. “Preach the Word.” *The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*: 18 December 1924: 4.

My Personal Philosophy of Sermon Preparation

J. Dwight Burchett | Oklahoma Conference

“It is better to seek God in the closet of prayer and then allow Him to reward you openly.”

THE PRINCIPLES

Preach on God-given subject matter. Out of one’s own devotions and personal time with God come some of the more poignant thoughts. Sharing this fresh manna with the people has invigorating power and a renewing force that is often lacking when one is just sharing information. At various places in the Bible, it is noted the people recognized that a leader had been in God’s presence.

It is better to seek God in the closet of prayer and then allow Him to reward you openly. When this occurs, people may conclude that a speaker has been with God. It is better not to use the verbiage, “God told me,” ad nauseam (or until the people reach the conclusion that you are using the phrase as a whipping stick for the purpose of persuading them to do what He wants or to appear more saintly than one might be). The people will know when a preacher has received from God and will trust his message and respond accordingly.

Preach with passion for the Scriptures and love for the people. Dr. W. R. Corvin, former president of Southwestern Bible College and homiletics teacher, taught this: Never preach to the people about hell when you are angry and want them to go there, but rather, preach on heaven! It’s better to preach on hell when you feel love towards the people and want them to escape hell and gain heaven. Truths from sermons are more caught than taught.

Preach with conviction. The people in Jesus’ day observed that He spoke as One with authority. As a result of this characteristic, Jesus had many followers. I believe people are interested and willing to follow a minister who communicates clear convictions and direction predicated on the Scripture.

Preach Scripture, the foundation of truth. Scripturally based messages are required in a day of skepticism and doubt. The foundation of all that preaching accomplishes is based on truth. Man’s theory is just that, a theory, but the Bible has stood the test of time. It has been tested, scrutinized, and judged; yet it has been proven to be valid and trustworthy by all of Christ’s followers.

Preach concise and definitive messages. Preaching isn’t to be longer than the audience’s attention span or more than the seat can endure. Make the defining points clear and validated with enough evidence to make your case, but do not overload to the point of boredom. One must keep it fast moving and

challenging.

Preach practically, not theatrically. God's Word must be made applicable to the lives of everyday believers. A good way to get the "how-tos" to the people is with excellent illustrations. It is the preacher's or teacher's responsibility to show practical ways the Scriptures can be applied to one's life.

Preach to the need - analyze the audience. In homiletics, we learn the importance of analyzing one's audience. If the lesson doesn't apply to that group of people, then everyone thinks the speaker is ignorant or foolish. For instance, I went to a funeral of a renowned person, and the speaker was brilliant and educated, but in that situation, he looked foolish because he got caught up in telling a story of historical facts that were irrelevant to the occasion. He missed the point of why people were there.

Preach with love for the people - hate the sin, not the sinner. It's very important for a preacher to keep these two phases of philosophy separated. One must love the people to whom the message is delivered, but one must not tolerate sin. Love the sinner but hate the sin. The cohabitation of the sexes outside of marriage is a pointed illustration of this principle. The Bible is clear on this subject; therefore, the message also must be clear.

Give content to the message. Sermon support is very important. Standing and spouting hot air will not do the job. Quotes from recognized and qualified persons, verses from the Bible, illustrations of a personal nature, scriptural stories, or stories from well-documented sources add tremendously to the credibility of what is being said. It's helpful to exegete (break down the text by sharing the meaning of each word) for greater clarification and interpretation.

CONCLUSION

The Scripture says, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace. Who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:14, 15, NKJV).

Burchett, Dwight J., "My Personal Philosophy of Sermon Preparation." *Preaching to Connect*. Ed. James D. Leggett. Franklin Springs: LifeSprings Resources, 2005. 51-53.

A Plea For More Scripture

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. | IPHC General Superintendent

“Let our message declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the accompanying sounds of the full symphony of God’s Word!”

The IPHC focus this year (2014) is on the first of our core values: We prayerfully value Scripture. I’ve been giving this much thought. You will be seeing numerous articles, short videos, and the like on our website through this year as we place focus on the Bible.

Many of you use annual Bible reading guides. For years, my wife Susan has read through the Bible using some of these guides. I’m grateful that our friends at YouVersion are working with the IPHC in promotion of their extremely popular and readily available Bible app.

At various times and places, I have attended church services in congregations with a stronger liturgical bent than the average IPHC congregation. I have always been impacted by one clear aspect in those services: the amount of Scripture that is read aloud. It often begins with a reading from one of the Old Testament books of the Pentateuch, the Histories, or the Prophets. Then there is a reading from the Psalms. A selection from the Gospels (which are always honored in some special way by standing or some response) follows, and finally a reading from one of the New Testament letters is presented. Those texts are not randomly chosen but are joined together as Scripture enlightens Scripture.

This stands in sharp contrast to what normally occurs in our church settings. Usually, the only text that is read aloud is that portion of Scripture from which the pastor will be preaching. Sometimes it is only a verse or two. As I write, I’m looking at myself in the spiritual mirror and trying to pull the log out of my own eye.

It has always bothered me that we Pentecostals, who put so much emphasis on the Holy Spirit, read aloud so little of the Scriptures in our services. I fear we have contributed to the rather sad state of biblical illiteracy in many of our churches and certainly in the larger Christian community.

Sunday School, which has long since been out of vogue in many congregations, followed a seven-year cycle in which almost the entire Bible was covered for adults, young adults, and teens at least every seven years. That was too boring for most of us, and we either dropped Sunday School or simply dropped out. The good news is that LifeSprings Resources still produces excellent curriculum covering the entire Bible.

At some point in the 1990s, I was teaching in London at the IPHC Centre for

International Christian Ministries. That year my teenage son flew over, and we spent some personal time together, which included attending Sunday service at St. Paul's Cathedral. I will never forget the sounds of the huge pipe organ, the tourists milling around, the diverse congregation singing, and Douglas and I listening to the Scriptures from both Testaments.

Then the minister stood in the historic pulpit and began to preach a sermon that would have made Billy Graham proud. It was an unapologetic plea, based on the testimony of so much Scripture, that "ye must be born again." At the close, the minister asked us to stand, and as the great pipe organ filled Christopher Wren's majestic hall, we sang the old hymn, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus."

That service moved me so much that I purchased a copy of *The Book of Common Prayer* and still use it to read the Psalms and prayers that are part of our heritage. We are Pentecostal "Holiness." The "Holiness" aspect, birthed in Scripture, is connected to the John Wesley dimension of the Methodist/Anglican tradition.

I'm all in for personal, devotional, and consistent reading of the Bible. I am also convinced that when we replaced Sunday morning Bible study with "relevant" topics or with expanded music, we unintentionally contributed to our collective loss of biblical knowledge. I think small groups are great; but if they don't focus on the Word, then the group is at the mercy of the strongest influencer in the setting.

This week, and this year, I appeal to the ministers of the IPHC: let our sermon preparation be filled with the whole counsel of God. Let the Bible be the basis of our sermons. Let the Holy Spirit lead us to the texts in the Psalms, other parts of the Old Testament, the Gospels and the Epistles, that will enable our flocks to hear more of this life-giving Word. We don't have to read them all: invite others in the congregation to share those portions of Scripture. Let our message declare the gospel of Jesus Christ with the accompanying sounds of the full symphony of God's Word! Let the message itself be filled with biblical phrases that carry truth and hope on their wings.

After all, God has promised that it is His "word that will not return void," not our words (Isaiah 55:11). As the Apostle Paul wrote, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17, NKJV).

Beacham, A.D., Jr. "A Plea for More Scripture." *IPHC*, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 6 February 2014, <https://iphc.org/gso/2014/02/06/a-plea-for-more-scripture/>.

The Bible as the Inerrable Word of God

L. W. Sisk | Georgia Conference

“There is but one consistent way to believe the Bible, and that is to believe it from Genesis to Revelation.”

“All Scripture is given by inspiration for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV)

In this day of infidelity and higher criticism, it is very necessary that we be a strict adherer to the word of God; unless we are, we will find ourselves sinking beneath the mad waves.

It has been the aim of the great opponent of Christianity to disregard and count as sill notions everything that does not appeal to the human reason. There the conflict between the believer in the Holy Scripture and those who do not has for many centuries been very severe. Since this is true, it is very necessary for us to be equipped for the holy war.

That which we must first believe with all our hearts is that the Bible was written by men divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit; and being divinely inspired it is inerrable. We do not mean to infer that the translators made no mistakes, but we do contend that the few errors made by the translators are of minor importance and do not in the least degree change the meaning of the original manuscript. Neither are these errors such as would imperil the destiny of those who strictly believe the Bible as it is translated from the original.

There are many infallible proofs that the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God; but perhaps one of the most convincing facts is that wherever the Bible is taught, believed, and obeyed you will find a happy people. Not only are they happy, but they are progressive. One of the natives of Japan has described the Bible and its effects upon Japan as the sun rising from the midst gradually scattering its light over the landscape. He says that the Bible has done more to bring peace and prosperity to the sunrise isles in the last thirty years than the sword ever has done or can do. Thus, you see the Japanese believe the Bible to be the greatest power for good that has ever reached land. An ordinary book written by man’s skill could not supply the needs of a people so as to make them happy and progressive. Therefore, to be logical in our reasoning, we must conclude that the Bible is divinely inspired. It is very significant that the Bible has been preserved from the enemies of God for ages. There have been many books written since the Bible was, with as great literary merits as the Bible; but they have not been preserved by that unseen hand. Thus, they have long since

been forgotten; but regardless of the storms and skillful warfare that have come against the Holy Scriptures, they are still with us and have made no changes. This too must be considered by the critics as an evidence of its inspiration.

Since the beginning of the Christian era, men have formulated various creeds which seem for the time being to meet the needs and answer the call of the people; but time has proven these creeds and thus destroy our faith in the traditional position of the Christian church. They scorn at the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ and the miracles He performed while on earth, His vicarious death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and many other sacred truths advocated by the Christian church for nineteen centuries; but thank God I am persuaded that the maker of the great ocean of time and the ship upon which Christianity has been sailing through the mighty tempest for nineteen hundred years is able to guide and preserve us until we have reached the harbor of eternal rest.

Therefore, my beloved brethren and sisters, may I exhort you in the name of the adorable trinity to read the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. Read them constantly, prayerfully, and carefully, that you may not be overtaken by the coming craftiness of Satan, and his agents who have transformed themselves into angels of light in order to destroy your faith in the Bible.

There is but one consistent way to believe the Bible, and that is to believe it from Genesis to Revelation. Those who extract certain portions of it disturb the harmony and break the golden chain which binds every word from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21. Those who believe it all are not bothered with the doctrine of evolution or any other scientific discovery in conflict with divine revelation.

Thus, if with an honest heart we believe the text above, we will find with the Apostle Paul that we will be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. We will also find if we are a constant reader and strict adherer of the Scriptures through discovering new truths daily our creed which is the blessed Bible will need no revision; but will meet every human need for time and eternity.

Sisk, L. W., "The Bible as the Inerrable Word of God; A Creed that Needs no Revision". *The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*: March 20, 1924; p. 2.

Speak Lord and We Will Listen

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. | IPHC General Superintendent

“...history is not merely the past; history is being made now and unfolds before us.”

We believe the Bible is the word of God. That means we recognize that the Holy Spirit moved upon men of God to declare His will through the Scriptures (see 2 Peter 1:20, 21). It is important to observe that the 2 Peter reference makes it clear that the interpretation of Scripture is not our private interpretation (1:20), and that “prophecy never came by the will of man” (1:21).

The broader passage of 2 Peter 1:16–21 specifically recounts a prophecy from God about His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, which Peter, James, and John heard on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–7). The Apostle Peter then declares that Scripture is the word of God given through men moved by the Holy Spirit.

In Hebrews 4:12, this Word is described as “living and powerful.” Timothy affirms the totality of Scripture as “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV). As most members of the IPHC know, this year we have focused on our first core value: We prayerfully value Scripture. It is the confidence we have in the truth of God’s Word as it reveals God’s glorious will and purposes for humanity.

Biblical faith is rooted in historical acts and revelation. God is at work in human history to redeem this sin-enslaved world through His Son Jesus Christ. Thus, history is not merely the past; history is being made now and unfolds before us. History is not simply a recounting of the acts of men and women; it is also a place of divine interaction and revelation.

This is why history and prophecy are interrelated. The more I read the biblical prophets, the more I am convinced that they were excellent historians of the past, understanding the present, and anticipating the future based on the revelation from our covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.

This brings us back to 2 Peter 1:20, 21 and the dual insight that interpretation of Scripture is neither a private matter nor is it discerned solely by the will of man. This is pertinent today as the authority of Scripture is increasingly dismissed in Western thought.

Today, those of us who say we are Bible-believing Christians are dismissed as anti-intellectual and ignorant of the liberating truths of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. We are marginalized as being on the wrong side of history,

intolerant and narrow-minded.

We are considered anti-everything that is progressive. At its worst, we are perceived as mean-spirited, hateful, bigoted, and a threat that must be removed from influence in the public, and, increasingly, the private sphere.

This is nowhere more evident in Western society than in the resurgence of pagan sexuality in its numerous forms. Such sexual license, promoted by the media and sanctioned by legislative and court decisions, is more than an aberration. It is the ultimate result of an intentional rejection of the Judeo-Christian source of authority and replacing it with humanity's idolatry of self-and-culture.

This has become the defining marker of our era. Sadly, it also has become the defining marker in global Christianity, especially in the United States. Many have abandoned the biblical legacy of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. Even within some evangelical circles, the interpretation of Scripture has drifted toward one that abandons the priority of Scripture in speaking to our present age.

The nature of the conflict between biblical authority versus human reasoning is well revealed in Robert A.J. Gagnon with Dan O. Via, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004). Via provides the liberal interpretation of sexuality with a prevailing preference for human reasoning and the growth of human understanding. Gagnon provides the grounds for the historic biblical interpretation of sexuality, the view held by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church.

I address this issue because it is ground zero in the battle for the souls of people. It is the place where “private interpretation” and “the will of man” (2 Peter 1:20, 21) is most evident in our day. But the issues over biblical authority speak to a wider range of concerns that should cause us to take stock of the full teaching of the word of God in regards to the poor, issues of justice from a biblical standpoint, and clarity of doctrine. And it speaks to how the Holy Spirit empowers us and transforms us into “epistles of Christ...written... by the Spirit of the living God...on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

“Living epistles” understand the historic interpretations of the Christian community from around the globe, and they understand that Christian love is rooted in divine truth and not in the shifting tides of private interpretation and the will of man. This is why our first core value enables us to truly be a, “Place of Hope and a People of Promise.”

Beacham, A.D., Jr., “Speak Lord and We Will Listen.” *IPHC*, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 9 September 2018, <http://iphc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/September-Encourage-2014.pdf>.

A Catechism

G. F. Taylor | Former IPHC General Superintendent

THE BIBLE

Q. What is the Bible?

A. The word of God to man.

Q. How was it written?

A. Holy men of God wrote it as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Q. How many writers contributed to the Bible?

A. About forty.

Q. What are the two parts of the Bible called?

A. The Old Testament and the New Testament.

Q. How many books in each Testament?

A. Thirty-nine in Old, twenty-seven in New, sixty-six in all.

Q. How many chapters in each Testament?

A. There are 929 in the Old, and 260 in the New.

Q. How many verses in each Testament?

A. There are 23,214 in the Old, and 7,959 in the New.

Q. How many words are in each Testament?

A. There are 592,439 in the Old, and 181,253 in the New.

Q. How many letters in each Testament?

A. There are 2,728,100 in the Old, and 838,380 in the New.

Q. What are the first five books of the Old Testament Called?

A. The Pentateuch.

Q. What may the next twelve books be called?

A. Historical.

Q. What the next five?

A. Poetical.

- Q. The next five?
A. Major prophets.
- Q. The last twelve?
A. Minor prophets.
- Q. What are the first four books of the New Testament called?
A. The Gospels.
- Q. The next one?
A. The Acts of the Apostles.
- Q. The next fourteen?
A. The Pauline Epistles.
- Q. The next seven?
A. The General Epistles.
- Q. The last one in the Bible?
A. The Revelation.
- Q. How does the Bible begin?
A. With "God."
- Q. How does it end?
A. With man - "you all."
- Q. What is the middle verse of the Bible?
A. Ps. 118:8; "It is better to trust in the Lord, that to put confidence in man."
- Q. In what spirit is the Old Testament written?
A. In the spirit of the law.
- Q. In what spirit is the New Testament written?
A. In the spirit of grace.
- Q. How does each Testament begin?
A. The Old begins with "God," the New with Christ.
- Q. How does the Old Testament end?
A. With a curse.

- Q. How does the New Testament end?
A. With a benediction.
- Q. Which is the longest verse in the Bible?
A. Esther 8:9
- Q. The shortest?
A. John 11:35
- Q. The longest chapter?
A. Psalm 119
- Q. The shortest chapter?
A. Psalm 117
- Q. What verse contains all the letters of the alphabet except “J”?
A. Ezra 7:21
- Q. What two chapters are alike?
A. 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37.
- Q. Give proof in one word that the Bible is inspired.
A. “Jew.”
- Q. Give a plan of reading by which the entire Bible may be read in a year.
A. Read three chapters each day and five each Sunday.

Catechesis

Keith Marriner | IPHC Discipleship Ministries

“From the onset, catechesis was intended to integrate persons into the life and ministry of the church.”

INTRODUCTION

As a Christian educator, I am interested in methods and tools designed to help students learn the truths of Scripture, whether the students happen to be my own children or even college students. One method for training persons in the Christian faith is the use of a catechism. After doing a bit more reading on the subject, I thought I would share some of what I discovered from a series of blog posts. In this article, I simply want to look at some of the terminology used with respect to catechesis and the derivation of this terminology.

First, the term catechesis originates from the Greek New Testament term *katēcheō*, which was used in the sense of reporting something to another or to instruct someone. The verb *katēcheō* occurs only a handful of times in the New Testament. Luke, the author of the Gospel according to Luke and the book of Acts uses the term four times, using both tenses of the verb (Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21, 24). The Apostle Paul uses *katēcheō* the remaining four times in the New Testament exclusively to refer to instructing someone in the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 14:19; Galatians 6:6 [2x]; Romans 2:18) (Verbrugge, *katēcheō*, NIDNTT, 297). By the second century, the verb began to be used as a technical term for the process of preparing someone for Christian baptism, which included intense instruction in the basics of the faith.

Additional terms used with respect to catechesis include the following (adapted from Packer & Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, 27–28):

- Catechize: A verb referring to the process of teaching with a catechism
- Catechism: The content of instruction, particularly used in a question-and-answer format
- Catechist: The person responsible for instructing others in the catechism
- Catechumen: The person being catechized, the student
- Catechumenate: This term usually pertains to a formal method of instructing new believers as they prepare for Christian baptism and full integration into the life of the local church (i.e., church membership).
- Catechetical: An adjective sometimes used for schools of Christian higher education that developed during the second and third century

AD

- Catechetics: The study and art of catechesis, similar to how homiletics is the study and art of sermon preparation and delivery

HISTORY OF CATECHESIS

Today, I want to look briefly at the history of catechesis and pay attention to the ages in which it thrived in church history. Those periods in which catechesis was primarily used and encouraged to be used were in the second through fifth centuries and the sixteenth century (Packer & Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, 52). We will cover the second through fifth centuries.

From the onset, catechesis was intended to integrate persons into the life and ministry of the church. While the apparent pattern in the book of Acts is for those who profess faith in Christ to enter immediately into the waters of baptism, this practice began to be suspended by the second century in favor of a longer initiation process. The reason for the delay may have had to do with the candidates for baptism, particularly the background out of which many of them had come. Initially, most Christians were Jews, steeped in the Old Testament. By the second century, those desiring to belong to the church were mostly Gentiles with little to no understanding of the Christian worldview, which was grounded in part in the Hebrew Scriptures. It took considerable time to transition these Gentiles from a pagan understanding of the world to a Christian perspective (Sittser, “The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity,” 181; Anthony & Benson provide additional reasons for the delay of baptism [*Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education*, 108–109]). This lengthy process was referred to as the catechumenate.

Formal catechesis followed three stages: (1) enrollment, (2) instruction, and (3) rites of initiation (Sittser, “The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity,” 196). The process took roughly two to three years to complete (Anthony & Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education*, 108). During the initial stage (enrollment), a sponsor would serve as a mentor to a catechumen. This sponsor vouched for the genuineness of the individual’s conversion and presented him to church leaders to be interviewed. If the individual was accepted, he would proceed to the next stage (instruction). During this stage the catechumen could participate in hearing the preaching and teaching of Scripture, as well as in prayer and the singing of hymns. He would also undergo additional instruction in Bible, doctrine (explanation of creeds), ethics (Ten Commandments and Sermon on the Mount), and such practices as prayer (Lord’s prayer) and baptism (Sittser, “The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity,” 198). However, the catechumen was barred from the Lord’s Table during this time, since he was not yet a full member of the church (Packer & Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, 54). After having progressed through the first two stages, the catechumen would enter the final stage—rites of initiation—which concluded with Christian water baptism, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, and participating in the holy kiss. The final stage usually coincided with the

week of Easter (Sittser, “The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity,” 199). After this, the catechumen would be a full member of the local church.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Between the fifth and sixteenth centuries, the practice of catechism began to wane in the church. With the Reformers came the rebirth of catechetical instruction in the life of the church. The practice was modified since most of the Reformers practiced paedobaptism (the baptism of infants into the covenant community and as a sign of salvation). Therefore, catechism was used primarily to rear children in the Christian faith and instruct uninformed adults.

Two Reformers who utilized catechetical instruction with great success in their ministries were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther initiated the catechism because pastors and church members lacked a basic understanding of Christian doctrine (Luther, “Small Catechism,” 61). Calvin published his catechism because the church desired it (Calvin, “The Catechism of the Church in Geneva,” 90) and for the purpose “that we are all directed to the one Christ, by whose truth, if we be united in it, we may grow together into one body and one Spirit, and with one mouth also proclaim whatever belongs to the sum of faith” (Calvin, “The Catechism of the Church of Geneva,” 89). In publishing a catechism, Calvin believed he was recovering something that had been misused for nearly a millennia by the Roman Catholic Church (Calvin, “The Catechism of the Church of Geneva,” 90–91).

Both Luther and Calvin intended for the catechism to be used in family worship, for fathers in particular to provide basic Christian education to their children. Luther’s catechism included instruction on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. Luther strategically placed the Ten Commandments before the Apostles’ Creed. This reflected his conviction that the purpose of the Law was to expose one’s sin and show one’s need for Christ who was described in the Apostles’ Creed. Calvin, on the other hand, placed the Creed before the Ten Commandments in keeping with his understanding of the continued use of God’s Law (the moral law) for the Christian.

Luther’s concern for proper Christian education led him to preface his “Smaller Catechism” with several instructions concerning how the catechism could be used to promote basic Christian instruction. First, the catechist was to be consistent with regard to the wording of the entire catechism. This method particularly pertains to teaching the “Smaller Catechism” to youth. Consistency would help with memorization and internalization of the truths contained in the catechism.

Second, after the catechumen became familiar with the “Smaller Catechism,” the catechist was to begin explaining the meaning of the catechism’s content. Luther instructed the catechists to take their time with this step. He also suggested the catechists move from one part of the catechism to the next according to the pace of the learner.

Third, after this step, one could add additional teaching, such as “The Larger Catechism” to increase the learner’s breadth and depth of biblical understanding.

Finally, throughout the entire process the catechist should be looking for godly fruit in the catechumen. One should be looking for evidence of genuine faith in Christ. This is alluded to but not explicit. Luther actually encouraged pastors to wait for people to come to them about celebrating the Lord’s Supper (Luther, “Smaller Catechism,” 62–65).

For more on the history and practice of catechesis, I encourage you to check out some of the following resources:

Anthony, Michael J. and Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History and Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003.

Calvin, John. “The Catechism of the Church of Geneva.” in Calvin Theological Treatises. LCC. Vol. 22. Trans. by J. K. S. Reid. 88–139. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1954.

Eby, Frederick. *Early Protestant Educators: The Educational Writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Other Leaders of Protestant Thought*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1931.

Krych, Margaret A. “The Catechism in Christian Education.” *Word & World* (1990): 43–47.

Noll, Mark A. Ed. *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991.

Packer, J. I. and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010.

Sittser, Gerald L. “The Catechumenate and the Rise of Christianity.” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* (2013): 170–203.

Marriner, Keith. “Catechesis I.” *IPHC*, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 23 November 2015, <https://iphc.org/discipleship/2015/11/23/catechesis-pt-1-introduction/>.

Marriner, Keith. “Catechesis II.” *IPHC*, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 8 December 2015, <https://iphc.org/discipleship/2015/12/08/catechesis-ii/>.

Marriner, Keith. “Catechesis III.” *IPHC*, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 13 December 2015, <https://iphc.org/discipleship/2015/12/13/catechesis-iii/>.

The Importance of Scripture

Dr. Terry Tramel | IPHC World Missions Ministries

“...the authority of Scripture must measure the validity of every experience, not the other way around.”

What is the ultimate authority for humanity when it comes to belief and behavior? Since the eternal destiny of our immortal souls is at stake, there can be no greater question posed that demands our fervent consideration. Outside of the body of Christ, a revival of rationalism has given rise to millions of people believing their own reasons are the highest authority in the universe. This new-age garment is nothing more than an age-old, hand-me-down of pride and arrogance that causes people to live as if there were no God (see Judges 17:6; 21:25).

Within Christendom, the Roman Catholic Church stands the tallest and shouts the loudest that the Church is the highest authority that must be followed. While not rejecting the Bible, Catholicism gives the Scriptures a subordinate role. This rationale is based on the contention that the Scriptures are the product of the Church and therefore are subjugated to ecclesiastical leadership. It is a common misunderstanding that the Church councils selected the books for inclusion in what became the New Testament Canon and then designated them as authoritative centuries after their composition. In truth, the canonical books were authoritative from the time of their writings and circulation, and the Church councils merely certified centuries later what earlier believers had recognized. This remains a critical issue, for if the Church has authority over the Bible, then the Canon is not closed, and the papacy and other voices may issue extra-biblical revelation.

Within Pentecostalism and its younger sibling, the Charismatic movement, another view sometimes emerges that the Holy Spirit is the highest authority for believers. While this perspective sounds compelling, it leads to the possibility of individual dreams, visions, impressions, and experiences being elevated above biblical texts. These subjective voices often issue directives that are contrary to the Bible. In these circles, the pathway to error is always only one utterance away. We must contrast these occurrences with the biblical assertion that no writer of Scripture wrote simply from his own imagination (2 Peter 1:20). There is a vast difference between inspired Scripture and any rival claim.

How could the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures not agree? Some extreme “super-spiritual” persons exude the sentiment, “I don’t care what the Bible says, I am going to follow the Holy Spirit.” This is error. The Lord has provided a wondrous safeguard for us all. He will never speak or lead contrary to His

own revealed written Word. Thus, the God-breathed Bible remains a treasured grace gift for every follower of Christ.

To answer the opening question, the only safe ground on which to stand is the place that attests the Bible is the highest authority for human lives. Between the twin peaks of our Lord's first and second comings, in this valley of the church age, the books that constitute Scripture remain the standard and guide for "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

To be certain, God is greater than His revelation. He intentionally withheld much information from humanity that, evidently, was irrelevant to believers' ultimate needs (Deuteronomy 29:29; Job 26:26; Psalm 139:6; Romans 11:33). Christians do not worship the printed page, but rather a living Lord. None of the autographs (the original documents of the biblical texts) have been discovered. This surely was the Lord's intention, eliminating the possibility that any of these could have been enshrined or worshipped. However, in one real sense, the Lord of the Word and the Word of the Lord remain indivisible. To claim to know Christ apart from His Word is the height of folly (Mark 8:38).

A second question of supreme importance moves from the issue of authority to the area of sufficiency. From the beginning of the outpouring of the Spirit over a hundred years ago, Pentecostals (to their credit) have maintained an unwavering belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. Article 5 of the doctrinal statement of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church asserts that the 66 books that make up the Bible are "the full and complete revelation of the plan and history of redemption." Yet, this tenet sometimes leads some Evangelicals to ask how Pentecostals can maintain this position while at the same time contending that God still speaks through spiritual gifts such as prophetic words and "messages" in tongues.

It must be noted that Pentecostalism is historically an experiential movement. However, the authority of Scripture must measure the validity of every experience, not the other way around. A Christian does not have to be a cessationist concerning the gifts of the Spirit in order to embrace the sufficiency of the Scripture. However, on the issue of continued revelation, Pentecostals must be cessationists. There is no such thing as "new truth" because truth is never new. God's work of revelation (giving His Word to selected human authors) and inspiration (superintending the process of their placing that Word on the printed page) is complete. All that remains is the Spirit's on-going work of illumination (taking the inspired Word from the printed page and applying it to the hearts and minds of readers and listeners so they may comprehend the truth that was in the mind of the original author).

Some modern-day voices speak of the Bible as the "preceding" word of God, and they call prophetic utterances the "proceeding" word of God. This is error. The Canon is closed. The message of God that constitutes the Christian faith "was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). "Progressive revelation," as exhibited gradually from the Old Testament to the New Testament, is a viable

truth. “Continued revelation” that minimizes the Scriptures is a fallacy that must be rejected.

Every believer, congregation, denomination, and movement possess its own potential areas where it is susceptible to drift away from its original purpose. For Pentecostals, there is no apparent danger of taking away from the Bible. As stated above, the participants in Pentecostalism have historically taken great pride in proclaiming the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). The trap Pentecostals must avoid is the opposite extreme of adding to the word of the Bible through the exaltation of charismatic utterances above the Scripture itself (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Revelation 22:18, 19).

Again, the closed Canon remains a great gift in keeping every Christ follower spiritually balanced. It confirms that God does not require anyone to believe anything about Himself or His acts beyond the scriptural record. This affirmation includes the claims of the Quran, the Book of Mormon, and all other writings of false religions and cults. It also extends to voices within Pentecostalism that would claim an equal or superior authority to Scripture. Christ’s sheep know the voice of the Good Shepherd, for they have heard it resonate in every chapter, verse, and line of biblical truth (John 10:4, 27).

How important is Scripture? Belief in the sufficiency of God’s written revelation simply affirms that His Word is enough.

For further study:

Tramel, Terry. *The Beauty of the Balance: Toward an Evangelical-Pentecostal Theology*. Franklin Springs: LifeSprings Resources, 2009.

Why We Prayerfully Value Scripture

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr. | IPHC General Superintendent

“...it is imperative that we remain focused on our understanding and knowledge of the Bible.”

A few years ago, on an overnight flight, I was having trouble sleeping when I noticed an inflight movie titled, “The Book of Eli.” Intrigued by the description, I watched the movie about the horrible conditions of a post-apocalyptic world where lawlessness and death abound.

The main character, Eli, played by Denzel Washington, was given a divine assignment to preserve the only known surviving copy of the Bible. Eli’s difficult journey led him to a place where a group of survivors were attempting to collect the important books and music of the pre-apocalyptic world.

Lombardi, the leader of the library, explained to Eli that they wanted to be able to tell people about the world they had lost. They had collected many items but are missing a Bible.

This conversation occurs as they walk through the collections:

Lombardi: “What condition is the Bible in?”

Eli: “It’s beat up, but it will do the job.”

If you’ve not seen this film, I’ll not spoil the context and tell you how it ends. But to me, those lines are powerful. In the first three chapters of Genesis, the Bible not only tells us about the world we lost, it gives us the good news about the kingdom we gain in Jesus Christ.

“What condition is the Bible in?” is a relevant question. Many think the Bible is just one more book, not dependable, too legalistic, used to hurt people, or too difficult to understand. The irony is that though the Bible is ridiculed, marginalized, and dismissed, it remains true that it does the job of diagnosing our real problem and providing the more than sufficient solution.

Perhaps the better question is: “What is humanity’s condition?” The Bible gives that answer. We are more than beat up by sin; we are “dead in transgressions and sins” (Ephesians 2:1, NIV). The good news is found a few verses later: “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4, 5).

As a movement, we are into our second year of learning from the Bible that the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) is to be “A Place of Hope and A People of Promise.” Throughout 2014, we will continue to emphasize our first core value: We prayerfully value Scripture. Many of you have heard this emphasis as members of the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops

have spoken at your conferences. In these moments of human history, it is imperative that we remain focused on our understanding and knowledge of the Bible.

Everything we are as part of the body of Christ, corporately and individually, is rooted in the Bible. Our faith arises from hearing the message revealed in the Bible (Romans 10:17). The Living Word, Jesus Christ, speaks to every generation in ways that are measured by the Bible, the canon of Scripture.

As Pentecostals, our emphasis on revelations from the Holy Spirit, our dreams, visions, and interpretations must line up with Holy Scripture. The confessional creeds of the historic Christian church, to which the IPHC holds, through the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon, are also judged by their faithfulness to the Bible.

The Bible gives us the message of God's love, God's kingdom, and how we are to live as its citizens. God's Word provides the understanding of how our Christian community should demonstrate Christ's love, grace, truth, and wholeness. We are in the second half of 2014. I encourage you to find your courage, hope, confidence, and peace in the message revealed and given in the Bible.

Beacham, A.D., Jr.. "Why We Prayerfully Value Scripture." IPHC, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 8 August 2014, <http://iphc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/August2014.pdf>.

