

Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy, Normative

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Inspiration has been a primary topic in church life since the apostolic age when both Peter and Paul, ca. CE 55-66, observed that *Scripture* was a result of *the Holy Spirit inspiring writers and apostolic teachers to communicate God's word to their people*, and when John, ca. CE 90, produced his Gospel with the pivotal promise of Jesus to his disciple apostles that he was leaving them to go to his Father, John 14-17, but that he would not leave them alone. Jesus would ask his Father to send the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, to be a παράκλητος, *paráklētos*, *comforter*, who would be *their guide into all truth and bring to their memory every that he and the Father had taught them*.

However, the *source and practice of inspiration* has been *defended, defined, and refined* through the church's struggles against *doctrines challenging the primary doctrines of the Church and Christian faith*. The challenges, however, have not only been from heretical movements such as Marcion and the Gnostic Gospels, but from serious scholars in the modern secular world seeking to explain to a new modern secular audience what actually is meant today by *inspiration*.

Jesus' Disciples, the Early Apostles, and Inspiration

As mentioned above, in the closing hours of Jesus' ministry he devoted time to assuring his disciples that although he would not be present physically with them he would through the Holy Spirit be present, comfort, encourage and teach them.

In his Gospel, John 14-17, John recorded Jesus' encouraging his disciples in considerable detail. He had just explained to them that he was to die, be buried, resurrected again, and ascending to his Father, where for the present time they could not follow. He had already explained the theological theme of resurrection, but in their kingdom ministry he would not be present. John 14:1 sets the scene for his great Holy Spirit discourse, John 14-17.

John 14:1. *"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going."* ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

In the following discussions Jesus explained this to his disciples what the Holy Spirit would do. He would help them remember everything Jesus had taught them, and guide them into all the divine truth they would need. In this astonishing pericope we have the doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy encapsulated.

John 14:18-31. *"I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."* ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. ²⁶ **But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have**

said to you. ²⁷ *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* ²⁸ *You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.* ²⁹ *And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.* ³⁰ *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me;* ³¹ *but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go hence."*

John 16:12-15. *"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.* ¹³ ***When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*** ¹⁴ ***He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*** ¹⁵ *All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

However, Scripture also explains that the Holy Spirit would endorse the apostolic disciples preaching and teaching with powerful miracle which can be seen in Luke's writings, Luke/Acts.

Mark 16:14-20, *"Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.* ¹⁵ *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.* ¹⁶ *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.* ¹⁷ ***And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;*** ¹⁸ ***they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.***"

¹⁹ *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.* ²⁰ ***And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it. Amen."***

The historical verification of this can be seen in Paul's life and ministry as recorded in Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*.

Acts 28:3-6. *"Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, when a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand.* ⁴ *When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."* ⁵ *He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.* ⁶ ***They waited, expecting him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead; but when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god."***

Acts 11:8-12. *"But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith.* ⁹ ***But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him*** ¹⁰ ***and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"*** ¹¹ ***And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.*** *"Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.* ¹² ***Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord."***

The Apostolic Fathers and Inspiration

While defending their view of the Christian faith it soon became necessary or those following the Apostles, the Apostolic Fathers, ¹ 1st and 2nd centuries CE, to emphasize their authority for their Christian teaching by emphasizing *their closeness to the*

¹ The Apostolic Fathers, also known as the Ante-Nicene Fathers, were core Christian theologians among the Church Fathers who lived in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD who are believed to have personally known some of the Twelve Apostles or to have been significantly influenced by them.[1] Their writings, though widely circulated in early Christianity, were not included in the canon of the New

Apostles and their faithfulness to the inspired teaching of the Apostles, especially in the challenges of the Jews who claimed only the *Torah* as *Scripture*. The following Fathers are most often encountered in the list of the Apostolic Fathers and their writings; *Clement of Rome*, *Ignatius of Antioch*, *Polycarp of Smyrna*, the *Didache* (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

The Marcionite Canon

The Marcionite Canon was the heretic canon developed by Marcion of Sinope, in Rome, in an early Christian dualistic system originating with Marcion's teachings around 144 – 150 CE.

Marcion was a native of the Roman province of Pontus who went to Rome about AD 138 and became the founder of a *sect* called the *Marcionites*. He seems to have been a member of the Roman church for a time before he went off into heresy. *The basic tenet of this later heretical position was that there existed a radical difference between the Old Testament and the New, between the law of the Old and the love and grace of the New, and between the creator God of the Old and the Christian God of the New.* For him the God of the Old Testament was the author of evil [a later Gnostic heretical diminution of the Old Testament God and Law]. Marcion associated Law with matter and the physical corrupt world in general, while the God of the New Testament was our Father and the giver of grace and everything good.

This being his belief, *Marcion set out to establish for himself a canon of Scripture to support it.* This canon included his gospel, which was the Gospel according to Luke, *purified of anything connected with the Old Testament, the Jews, the creation of this sinful material world, and anything that related to a true humanity for our Lord.* As Irenaeus writes in *Against Heresies* (1.17.2), “Besides this, he [Marcion] mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father.” Irenaeus goes on to say, “In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord.” In summary, Marcion's canon consisted of his gospel, which was a mutilated copy of Luke, and 10 of the Pauline epistles (excluding the Pastoral Epistles).²

How Should Christians relate to Inspired Scripture

The expression *Inspiration of Scripture* is a modern concept and although the early 2nd century church had an extremely high view of Scripture, especially regarding the New Testament, they did not speak of the *Inspiration* of Scripture, they favored the concept of the *Apostolicity of Scripture*.

If the Scriptures had been cited by the Apostles as authoritative, or if they could be traced to the Apostolic teaching, *they were then considered by the church to be authoritative.*

The early 2nd and 3rd century church that led out in the development of the New Testament *canon* had a *high view of the inspiration of Scripture*, but this had little to do with the selection of certain documents and the development of *canon*. The concept of *canon* (a list of received and accepted Scripture) had primarily to do with *which Scriptures were universally and widely accepted by the apostolic churches as authoritative.*

The question in the 2nd century was **not** “*is the document inspired, or written by an inspired person?*” **The primary question was “is the document apostolic?”**

Testament. Many of the writings derive from the same time period and geographical location as other works of early Christian literature which came to be part of the New Testament. *Wikipedia*.

² Elwell, W. A., *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, p. 855.

The Term Revelation

Technically, when we speak of *Revelation* and *Inspiration* we are speaking of *two different yet related concepts*.

The term *revelation* does not refer to the *Book of Revelation* in our New Testament canon! It simply stresses that its *message or gifts that came personally by personal inspiration from God and Jesus to the Apostles John or Paul*.

The general term *revelation* has to do with *information or concepts revealed to man by God through his Holy Spirit, or other means such as dreams, Heb 1:1,2, or visions, Rev 1:9, 10*. The information revealed to the person receiving the revelation *could not, or would not, be available by any other means*. For instance the gospel or mystery of how God was going to reconcile both Jew and Gentile in one body was **revealed to Paul by God miraculously**. Cf. **Gal 1:11-12**: “For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man’s gospel. ¹² For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but **it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ**.”

Paul clearly stated that he did not receive this gospel from man but received it directly from God. Cf. **Eph 3:1-3**: “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³ **how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly**.”

Inspiration is the empowerment of individuals by God’s Holy Spirit to pass on a revelation or message in a manner which remained true to God’s purpose. Scripture can be spoken of as inspired in the sense that it conveys God’s intended message truthfully and accurately.

Neither *revelation* nor *inspiration* negates man’s human intellect or linguistic style or vocabulary. *Inspiration* serves to “guide” man’s choice of expression or safeguard man’s choice of expression ensuring that however that message is conveyed it is true to God’s purpose, and accurate.

Who or What is Inspired in the Biblical sense

First, we should note that *the inspiration of Scripture or persons* is a *faith issue* based on the *preponderance of witness*, as in Scripture or the history of the church, and not “scientifically” by *empirical evidence*. This should not be surprising for much of what we believe is based on testimony and not on empirical evidence. I believe that Caesar Augustus was a real person, but I have no empirical evidence to back that up other than literary evidence, engravings, etc. I have never seen him but believe he existed. What I believe may not be good, but that view is based on testimony of others.

Second, we mean that the *author* was inspired, or that the *document* was inspired? *Scripture speaks of itself, Scripture, as being inspired* – 2 Tim 3:15, 16. *Scripture speaks of the prophet being inspired* (empowered) – 2 Pet 1:20.

The concept of inspiration derives from the New Testament Greek word θεόπνευστος – *theópneustos* – which literally means “*God breathed*”.

We mean by this expression that Scripture is *breathed out by God, it gets its lifegiving power from God, it is empowered by God, or it is given power by God*.

Lorin L. Cranford, “*Inspiration*,” *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, 1997. “The understanding that persons and writings were given their message under the influence of God’s Spirit. No extended discussion of any ‘theory of inspiration’ took place in the early church.”

Note also Carl F. H. Henry, “*Inspiration*,” *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, 1983. “The Christian belief in inspiration...rests...on explicit biblical assertions and on the pervading mood of the scriptural record.” In other words, *the doctrine of inspiration rests on Scriptural claims* and this is a *faith assumption*, however strong that assumption may be.

Christians *believe* in inspiration because it is a *biblical claim or assertion*.

However, as an assumption *it must be based on solid evidence and reason for making such assumptions*.

Stating this briefly, based on both *internal evidence of consistency and coherence* and *external evidence based on history and archaeological discoveries* Christians believe that such a faith assumption is based on solid evidence.

This faith in the inspiration of Scripture is based on a vast archive of archaeological, Biblical, and extra-biblical manuscripts, versions, and other materials. Furthermore it is based on the principles of the *coherence of testimony*, and fact that the testimony to Scripture, *properly interpreted is uniform and does not contradict itself*.

Cf. the excellent books by F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable*, Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, and Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*. These books are listed in the bibliography to the study on Theology.

From Scripture we learn that *God inspired, empowered, people with a variety of different gifts*.

1Cor 12:1-11, “*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed.* ² *You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved.* ³ *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.*

⁴ *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;* ⁵ *and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;* ⁶ *and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.* ⁷ *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.* ⁸ *To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,* ⁹ *to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,* ¹⁰ *to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.* ¹¹ *All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”*

He empowered them to have wisdom.

He empowered them to perform certain works or deeds.

He empowered them to speak his word accurately.

He empowered them to predict the future.

He empowered them to discern the truth of statements or people.

He empowered them to speak in tongues – unknown dialects or languages.

He empowered them to perform miracles.

He empowered them to lead.

He empowered them to have knowledge.

He empowered them to reveal certain things that they could not learn by themselves or from human experience.

God, through his Holy Spirit empowered them to understand and *interpret* God’s message *faithfully* to God’s purpose.

He gave them theological skill to revere and respect the divine!

Scripture explains that *this empowerment was the work of God’s Holy Spirit, John 14-17, 2 Tim 3:15, 16, 2 Pet 1:20.*

In regard to the production (writing) of Scripture we believe that God through His Holy Spirit *empowered the authors to record His Word or message accurately and effectively.*

Sometimes this empowerment involved *revelation*, but when Christians speak of *inspiration* they do not mean *revelation* but they speak of *the empowerment of the communication of that revelation.*

Revelation gave them knowledge of certain matters or information they could not otherwise know.

Inspiration empowered them to pass that knowledge on, or to record it faithfully and accurately.

Inspiration did not overpower the individual’s literary or oratory **style**, or the individual’s **vocabulary**.

Inspiration does not involve a dictation theory. The style and vocabulary of the writing was that of the writer. What was inspired was the truth of the message.

The 2nd Century Church and the Expression “Inspiration”

The 2nd century church had a keen awareness of inspiration. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, and the discussion on canon which comes later in another lesson.

However, many early Christians claimed that they wrote by inspiration yet their writings were not included in the canon.

A claim to inspiration was no proof of inspiration!

Again, the definitive concern of the 2nd century church was apostolicity, not inspiration.

The process of canonization was the process of the early churches recognizing which claims were valid and which Scriptures met the standard of validity as God’s inspired word.

The Inerrancy of Scripture

The concept of **inerrancy** arose out of the fundamentalist battles of the 1950’s and the emergence of an *ultraconservative movement* that finally developed into the theology of the American Evangelical Theological Society.

The ancient roots of this mindset was the 1643 rejection of Roman Catholic/Church of England synodal control of church faith and practice.

‘The Westminster Confession of Faith, or simply the Westminster Confession, is a Reformed confession of faith. Drawn up by the 1646 Westminster Assembly as part of the Westminster Standards to be a confession of the Church of England, it became and remains the "subordinate standard" of doctrine in the Church of Scotland and has been influential within Presbyterian and Evangelical Churches worldwide.’ *Wikipedia*.

Much of recent concern over inerrancy was stimulated by books by Harold Lindell, *The Battle for the Bible*, 1976, and Norman Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 1979.

In 1978 Evangelicals at a meeting in Chicago drew up *The Chicago Statement of Inerrancy*. This amounted to nothing more than *a synod which decided what is truth and what is not!*

Primarily, the doctrine of inerrancy arose as a reaction to an extreme application of Biblical Criticism. Biblical Criticism was not the problem. *The problem was a radical application of the discipline of criticism that reduced the Scriptures to the level of ordinary literature, and treated it by the same standards.*

Initially, before the Fundamentalist’s involvement, inerrancy was held by most Christian faiths upholding the inspiration of Scripture.

Inerrancy was understood to mean that the Bible, when correctly interpreted, was truthful in its teachings, and thus reliable as a witness to the will and Word of God.

However, as the battle for the Bible developed, *inerrancy* was interpreted to mean that *the Bible was without any error, including all that related to any **historical, chronological, scientific statements in Scripture**, and other similar claims and teachings.*

We should note that the Bible nowhere uses the word inerrancy in regard to Scripture.

Regarding the problem of translations, Evangelical Fundamentalists claim that it is not in the *translations* that *inerrancy is located*, but in the *original autographs*.

*The problem is that we do not have any of the original **autographs**. We only have scholarly produced **manuscripts!***

Thus the only documents or texts we have are manuscripts, translations, and other ancient copies of the Scriptures.

What *texts*, or *manuscripts* we have are encrusted with a host of textual and scribal variants. *Scholarship has done a tremendous job in providing excellent texts*, but Christians must recognize the problems of manuscripts and translations.

When *inerrancy* is interpreted in *the narrow sense that Evangelical Fundamentalists seek*, we encounter difficulties that result in *a harmonization of several texts*. Harmonization merely covers up the individual style of the texts.

When *inerrancy* is used to describe *the historically accurate* information of manuscripts, we have to determine whether the original author or authors of the text *were writing, recording, or explaining the history* of the events. Biblical research provides the scholar with the *philosophical theological meaning or implications of the original writer, and people who preserved the manuscripts*.

For example, careful scholars now recognize that our *four Gospels were not intended to be historical narratives*, if so, *only one would have been necessary*. Scholars now recognize that our four Gospels are *theological narratives set in historical and cultural contexts* to explain *what Jesus means to all people*.

When *inerrancy* is interpreted *to mean without error*, we must ask *what is meant by error!* How is one to interpret the term error! By what criteria does anyone define error?

When ***inerrancy*** is interpreted ***to mean reliable and trustworthy***, as it was originally intended to mean, *we have no problems with the term*.

However, when Scriptures are forced to harmonize with one another, or to align with modern views of history, or in a deductive proof-text study, often ignoring their literary and sociological context, we have issues with this.

The Normative Character of Scripture

When speaking of the *normative* nature of Scripture we could be speaking of the *authority* of Scripture, but we are also speaking of more than authority.

We mean by this that Scripture provides the *norms*, the *authority* for our *faith* and *practice*.

The expression *sola scriptura* of Protestant theology implies that it is Scripture and *only Scripture* that provides these norms.

The plea for *sola scriptura* arises out of *Roman Catholic claims that the church has the sole right to define doctrine and practice*.

In certain Protestant groups, in spite of the *sola scriptura* plea, Synods and Congresses determine doctrinal positions.

In Churches of Christ, unfortunately, too often the same practice is found! In spite of the concept of *sola scriptura* too often churches, *congregations*, or *church tradition* determines the authority or interpretation of Scripture or doctrine!

Churches of Christ maintain that *individuals*, not synods or church councils, hold the right to interpret Scripture, but this freedom and right is not always respected, neither is the concept of congregational autonomy something well defined and practiced!

Thus when speaking of the authority of Scripture we believe that *it is Scripture* that provides the *norms* for *faith* and *practice*, *not the church or some synod!*

The Canon of Scripture

Canon is a technical term that in the context of biblical studies which refers to *a list of sacred books that are considered authoritative and normative for a religious community*.

The concept of *canon* arises out of *concern for an authoritative or normative standard for faith and doctrine* in religious communities.

Canon can refer to *a catalogue of writings*, or any other catalogue such as *religious icons* approved religious teachers. It can refer to a *catalogue of religious rules* relating to a religious groups *doctrine and faith*.

In the context in which we are working in this discussion, canon refers to *a catalogue of religious writings that relate to an authority or normative teaching and belief.*

We refer to an *Old Testament Canon* and a *New Testament Canon*.

We sometimes refer to *a canon within a canon*, implying that there are some Scriptures or portions of Scripture that are more normative or definitive than other Scriptures. For example, Martin Luther did not consider James as *having the same value* as Romans. Many Christians do not refer to or spend time in the Book of Revelation, accepting its religious history, but finding no use of it, or finding divisive practices, hence ignoring it *as a canon withing the canon*.

A *canon within a canon* can also refer to a group of writings that were early received as normative and later incorporated into a larger canon. This could refer to the Fourfold Gospel, and the Pauline Epistles. We have within *Paul's canon of epistles* certain epistles that are "valued," *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, *1 and 2 Timothy*, which are not considered as Pauline in the canons of certain Christians.

We also refer to different forms or expressions of the canon such as *Protestant Canon*, a *Roman Catholic Canon*, or sometimes to specific Canons such as those of the *Latter Day Saints* (Mormon Church).

In the standard Christian Protestant Canon there are normally 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament.

The Roman Catholic Canon includes the same 66 books. *However, the Catholic Bible includes the Apocryphal books, but these are not placed on the same level of canonicity as the 66 books.*

The Latter Day Saints Canon includes the standard 66 books of the Bible but adds the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of great Price on an equal footing of canon as the 66 books of the Bible.

As we noted previously, in the 2nd century AD, a heretical group following a heretical bishop was excommunicated by the Catholic Church. Marcion, a Christian in Rome *drew up his own canonical list of books of the Bible*. He rejected the 39 books of the Old Testament, and those books of the New Testament that were significantly Jewish. He favored Luke and the Pauline Epistles.

Inspiration, Inerrancy, Normative, and Canon

By **Scripture** we refer to the *sacred writings* or written traditions of the Judeo/Christian faith. We refer to the *theological truth* which has been *revealed by God through Jesus, the Apostles, and the written instruction contained in the Hebrew and Christian Canons of Scripture*. The truth of those Scriptures is understood to be *God's truth* or message revealed in different ages to different people I different cultures and languages. We have confidence in the *faithful transmission* of *that truth* in our Canonical Christian writings.

We believe that **Scripture**, appropriately interpreted, is capable of preparing man *for mature service* in God's kingdom. **2 Tim 3:14-17**, "¹⁴*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it* ¹⁵*and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶**All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,** ¹⁷*that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*"

We believe that the *theological truth content of Scripture* was revealed to man in various ways **until finally through Jesus Christ.** **Heb 1:1, 2.** "*In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*"

We recognize that this *confidence, faith, and trust* is supported by 2000 years of disciplined research. Refer to the processes of Canon referred to above in this study. We believe that the evidence for that faith is *consistent, coherent*, contextual, and a universal testimony to the truth of God's Word.

Fundamentally, we have no problem with the term **inerrant** provided that an Evangelical Fundamentalist interpretation is *not read into the term*.

By *inerrant* we mean that the *Scriptures were inspired by God's Holy Spirit, and consequently recorded by Holy Spirit inspired disciples*, and therefore reveal *reliable and trustworthy truth*. Scripture, therefore, presents us with *the necessary spiritual, theological, and religious truth and knowledge* God and Jesus intended we should have. We have no problem with the term *inerrancy*.

If by *inerrant* we believe that *Scripture will achieve the purpose God intended for Scripture*, we have no problem with the term.

We prefer to use the term *inspired*, to express *our belief that the truth contained in Scriptures is a message coming from God to Jesus, the Apostles, recorded in Scripture. Being a divine message, revealed by various means by God, we hold that Scripture is the sole basis for a normative faith and practice*. We believe that due to the disciplined process of *canonization*, *we have all we need in the Scriptural canon for a normative, consistent faith and practice*.

We believe that *inspiration* must *respect the individual style, vocabulary, and theological purpose of the writer*, and that it must account for the reality of translation from the original Biblical language. *Inspiration* must also account for the fact that *we do not have the original autographs*, and that our Hebrew, Greek, English, Spanish, German, etc. translations are based on Biblical manuscripts that acknowledge the many and various textual variants and scribal issues that have accrued during 2000 years, or more, of manuscript transmission.