

Resolution for Affirming the Holy Bible As Our Primary Rule and Guide for Faith and Practice

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WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states that “While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve tradition, experience, and reason. Like Scripture, these may become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the Church. They quicken our faith, open our eyes to the wonder of God’s love, and clarify our understanding.”

WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states that “We properly read Scripture within in the believing community, informed by the tradition of the community.”

WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states “We are aided by scholarly inquiry and personal insight, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we work with each text, we take into account what we have been able to learn about the original context and intention of that text. In this understanding, we draw upon the careful historical, literary, and textual studies of recent years, which have enriched our understanding of the Bible.”

WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states that “Through this faithful reading of Scripture, we may come to know the truth of the biblical message in its bearing on our own lives and the life of the world. Thus, the bible serves both as a source of faith and as the basic criterion by which the truth and fidelity of any interpretation of faith is measured.”

WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states that “The Wesleyan heritage, reflecting its origins in the catholic and reformed ethos of English Christianity, directs us to a self-conscious use of these three sources in interpreting Scripture and in formulating faith statements based on the biblical witness. These sources are, along with Scripture, indispensable to our theological task.”

WHEREAS, ¶ 105 of our Book of Discipline states that “The close relationship of tradition, experience, and reason appears in the Bible itself. Scripture witnesses to a variety of diverse traditions, some of which reflect tensions in interpretation within the early Judeo-Christian heritage. However, these traditions are woven together in the Bible in a manner that expresses the fundamental unity of God’s revelation as received and experienced by people in the diversity of their own lives.”

WHEREAS, it is the testimony and experience of the Church across the ages that the Living God “steps out of” the scriptures to speak to the gathered Church, to small groups, and to individuals, pouring grace upon God’s people and guiding us in our ministries of love, justice, and reconciliation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all who offer Christian instruction in and through our churches are urged to remember our denomination’s long-standing conviction that Holy Scripture is our primary authority in matters of faith and practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Scriptures should be studied carefully within a diverse community, employing scholarly tools, as well as the indispensable sources of tradition, reason, and experience; so that, under the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit, the divinely inspired Scriptures might be used

faithfully to help each person of God “be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, NRSV). And on occasions when interpretive tensions exist between faithful Christians, those offering Christian instruction will commit to upholding the General Rules of the people called Methodist to do no harm, do good, and attend to all the ordinances of God, which are in accordance with the two greatest commandments to love God with one’s whole heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love one’s neighbor as one’s self, as identified by Jesus the Christ, who is God’s Word revealed in Holy Scripture.