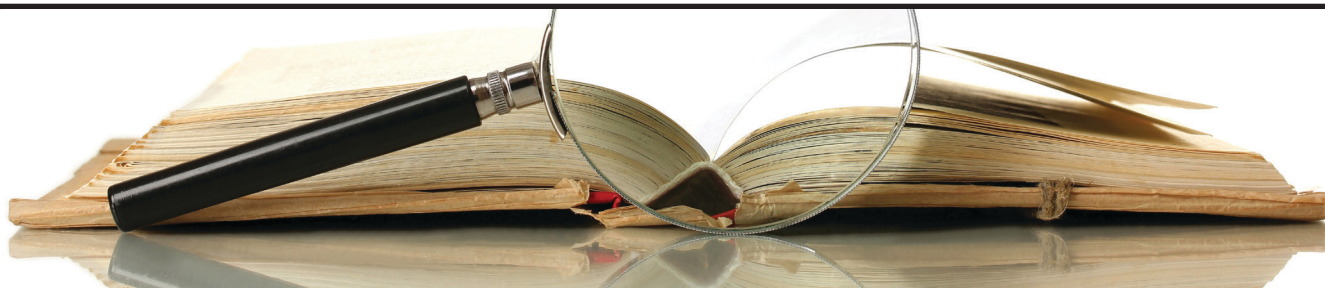


What we believe about the Bible

A Brethren in Christ approach to reading and interpreting Scripture



From our earliest days, Brethren in Christ believers have maintained a profound commitment to the Bible as the source for Christian belief and practice. In February 2013, 38 women and men from across the Brethren in Christ Church in the U.S. gathered for a Consultation on the Nature of Scripture to reaffirm our commitment to God's Word and work towards a common understanding of biblical interpretation.

The 10 principles that emerged from this Consultation are intended to summarize our core beliefs about the nature of the Bible, as well as provide some basic guidelines for reading and interpreting it. As self-described "people of the Book," we view this as a way to reemphasize the value that we place on the Bible as God's authoritative Word and to renew our pledge to study it together and build our lives on its truth.

10 guidelines for reading and interpreting Scripture

1. We believe the Bible, as composed of the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testaments (27 books), is the divinely inspired, authoritative Word of God.
→ *2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21*
2. We believe the Bible is God's message, written by people in their own language, literary style, and cultural setting as inspired by the Holy Spirit. We hold it to be a trustworthy account of God's interaction with humankind to make God's nature and purposes known to the world.
→ *Acts 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 1:1-3*
3. We believe the Bible invites all people to experience God's saving grace, ultimately offered through Jesus Christ, and to participate in God's redemptive purposes for humanity and creation.
→ *Ephesians 1:7-10, 2:4-7*
4. We believe the Bible, as God's Word, is our final authority for faith and practice. As Christ's followers, we commit ourselves to studying it together and building our lives on its truth.
→ *Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*
5. We believe that Jesus Christ is the fullest revelation of God and is central to our understanding and interpretation of Scripture.
→ *Matthew 5:17; John 1:1-5, 14-18; Hebrews 1:1-3*
6. We believe that the Old Testament should be interpreted through the lens of the New Testament while affirming the integrity of the whole Bible as God's written Word.
→ *Matthew 5:17-18, 21-48; 1 Peter 1:23-25*
7. We believe in the importance of determining the author's primary purpose, the cultural setting, and the literary genre when interpreting the Bible.
→ *John 20:30-31; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Hebrews 1:1-2*
8. We believe that the Christian community, as informed by Christian tradition, is the most reliable context for the study and understanding of Scripture.
→ *Acts 2:42, 17:11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:14-16*
9. We believe that diligent and prayerful study, illuminated by the Holy Spirit and accompanied by an attitude of humility and faith, are fundamental in determining the heart of God in Scripture.
→ *Psalms 19:7, 119:11; John 16:13; Hebrews 4:12-13, 11:6*
10. We believe that the proper interpretation of Scripture ultimately leads to a change of heart and a change in behavior, and makes God's redemption available to every person and to all of creation.
→ *Matthew 7:24; Luke 11:28; John 14:23-24; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 15:4; Ephesians 1:7-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:13*

