



THEOLOGY PUB



WELCOME TO THEOLOGY PUB, SOME GROUND RULES:

- **Everyone's voice has the right to be heard**
- **If your voice is causing others NOT to be heard...take a break and *listen***
- **There won't be any "wrap up" in the end, no sense of "this is what you should believe."**
We gather here together as seekers, all on our own spiritual journeys.
- Stay updated on the next Theology Pub via First Presbyterian Church's Facebook page: fb.com/firstpresashland or sign up on our email list

Vampires & The Bible:

- In this season of the HBO show *True Blood*, we meet The Authority, who is dealing with issues of biblical authority and inerrancy. The vampire factions are based on how they interpret the scripture - whether literally or with a more contextual interpretation.
- <http://www.poptheology.com/2012/07/vampires-and-biblical-inerrancy/>

Some questions to think about:

- Is the Bible really the *word of God*?
- What do we think about the Bible? What problems do we have with it?
- Do we believe that it is inspired? Or do we think it's just a bunch of words written by a select group of men who were in power at a specific time?
- What authority does the Bible have for you? Does it affect how you view God or your view of ethics?
- Do you believe the Bible is the final arbiter of religious truth? If not - where else do we get religious truth?
- Do you accept everything the Bible says, in all its parts, as true and applicable to you? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- Has it become an unreliable place to find spiritual answers for you? If you have any problems with what the Bible says in places what do you think about solving them by removing the offensive parts?
- Are there parts of the Bible we should just throw out?
- How should we view the Bible? A nice little collection of stories? The final arbiter of all religious truth? A handbook/guidebook for life? An outdated collection of moral stories?

Brian McLaren and the Bible as a Library:

Brian McLaren says that in order to have a new kind of Christianity - we need a new approach to the Bible. He says we view the Bible as a *constitution* - we quote certain sections to prove certain points that we have. But it's not a constitution - it's a *library* - it's a collection of documents. And rather than being **UNDER** the Bible and submitting to it, and rather than being **ABOVE** the Bible and interpreting it...we should be **IN** the Bible, in the conversation...because this is a conversation and a journey that is still happening...

"Instead, I hope it will try to put us *in* the text – in the conversation, in the story, in the current and flow, in the predicament, in the Spirit, in the community of people who keep bumping into the living God in the midst of their experiences of loving God, betraying God, losing God and being found again by God. In this way, by placing us in the text, I hope this approach can help us enter and abide *in* the presence, love, and reverence of the living God..." (Brian McLaren in "A New Kind of Christianity" pg 96-97).

Some Quotes:

To preach the Bible as 'the handbook for life,' or as the answer to every question, rather than as the revelation of Christ, is to turn the Bible into an entirely different book. This is how the Pharisees approached Scripture, as we can see clearly from the questions they asked Jesus. For the Pharisees, the Scriptures were a source of trivia for life's dilemmas.

–Michael Horton

The foibles, inconsistencies and humanness (of the Bible) all the more show us that the letter of the Scripture is not to be enthroned as an idol to be worshipped of itself. The letter will always kill. It is the spirit which God has breathed into his holy instrument, the spirit of his high Logos, this Word, that transmits its life to all those who obey it.

–Michael Phillips

Presbyterian Understanding & Use of Holy Scripture:

Below are some quotes from a document from the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s publication entitled "Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture."

RULE OF LOVE

The fundamental expression of God's will is the **two-fold commandment to love God and neighbor**, and all interpretations are to be judged by the question whether they offer and support the love given and commanded by God. **When interpretations do not meet this criterion, it must be asked whether the text has been used correctly in the light of the whole Scripture and its subject. Any interpretation of Scripture is wrong that separates or sets in opposition love for God and love for fellow human being, including both love expressed in individual relations and in human community (social justice).** No interpretation of Scripture is correct that leads to or supports contempt for any individual or group of persons either within or outside of the church. Such results from the interpretation of Scripture plainly indicate that the rule of love has not been honored. This rule reminds us forcefully that as the rule of faith and life, Scripture is to be interpreted not just to discover what we are to think or what benefits we receive from God in Christ, but to discover how we are to live.

THE RELATION OF WORD AND SPIRIT

The work of interpretation leads to God's authoritative and convincing word for us only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. All interpretation should be undertaken in reverence and prayer for that illumination. This guideline for interpretation is not just a pious platitude. Neither careful rationale nor logical deduction, nor use of all the tools or critical-historical exegesis, can guarantee the right interpretation of Scripture. Such faith in and openness to the illumination of the Holy Spirit does not depend upon any particular theory or doctrine of the inspiration of the Spirit in the writing of Scripture. **Since the Holy Spirit is a living Spirit who continues to be active in the lives of individual Christians and in the church, there can be no faith in and openness to the Spirit's guiding presence if we are not ready to discover from Scripture new and different insights into what we have to say and do in our time and place.**