

Cedarville University Board of Trustees Resolution  
Truth and Certainty  
August 21, 2006

Resolved, that the following is Cedarville University's position on the current debate generally described as the "Truth and Certainty" issue. It is policy established by the Board of Trustees that no instruction be given in any form by Cedarville University that is inconsistent with this position. Further, it is Cedarville University's policy that all University facilities or communication outlets should not be used to communicate positions inconsistent with this position whenever anyone could assume the University is endorsing a position other than that contained herein:

The mission of Cedarville University is to educate students in the liberal arts and professional disciplines with a distinctly biblical and Christ-centered worldview. Education in all the disciplines is permeated with a commitment to the Scriptures as the guide in the pursuit of truth.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, both the truth of Scripture and objective truth in general are being questioned. Individuals in society are sometimes skeptical of the ability to know anything about the world or the Bible. These issues have risen to such a level that they cannot be ignored, and have prompted Cedarville University to affirm our position on truth and its knowability with a statement that places the institution firmly within the bounds of historic Christian orthodoxy. We affirm that:

1. God knows all things perfectly in one eternal act, both possible and actual (Ps. 139:1-6). As a result, all true knowledge of reality which we apprehend is a subset of that which God knows.
2. God created humanity in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). Therefore, we are able to think about and accurately understand truth (that which constitutes and corresponds to reality). Because humanity is finite, we are incapable of an exhaustive grasp of what can be known (Isa. 55:8-9). There are also mysteries to our faith that, while beyond our grasp, are not irrational. Moreover, our understanding of truth exists within the context of a given point in history and a given culture. Yet, as created in His image, God holds us morally responsible for believing the truth that we can know and promoting belief in that truth (Rom. 1:18-25).
3. The Fall affected the image of God in all humanity. Therefore, while not erased, our ability to think, perceive, understand, and communicate accurately has been marred (Eph. 4:17-18; Col. 3:10). Humans distort and shun truth in thought, word, and deed, especially that truth which relates to God and their relationship to Him (Rom. 1:18-23; Eph. 4:17-19). Thus, human learning will be mixed with error and should be properly scrutinized against God's Word.
4. Despite the debilitating effects of the Fall, God in His grace continues to communicate with humanity in a manner that it can accurately comprehend. God operates through

creation, providence, conscience, the community of the church, and the Scriptures to bring the truth to bear on humans for their benefit or, should they reject it, for their judgment. God reached beyond the barriers erected by sin through the incarnation of Christ, Who is the definitive revelation of God as God in flesh (the Word of God, John 1:1, 14). An accurate, foundational understanding and deeper appreciation of reality is possible through God's Word and the Spirit when one engages that Word and responds to it in faith.

- a. *The Bible is the uniquely inspired Word of God and possesses inherent power (2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 4:12).* Scripture is able to accomplish the purpose for which God spoke it (Isa. 55:11). God can and does wish to communicate with humanity through His Scriptures in a way that, by His Spirit, can be understood and obeyed.
- b. *The truths of the Scriptures are the necessary and ultimate foundation for all human knowledge of reality because they reveal the nature and purpose of His creative and redemptive acts.* Within a variety of literary forms and historical contexts, Scripture commends to its readers a basic framework of worldview truths (2 Th. 2:15; Jude 3). This means that the truth conveyed in Scripture can be expressed in doctrine. Furthermore, Scripture when rightly understood stands as the primary validating criterion of truth claims to the degree that the claims of Scripture intersect with truth claims arising from any other source. Thus, we acknowledge that truth is conveyed in many forms, including scientific discovery, the creative arts, and in many language forms. These forms not only convey truth, but truth can be derived from them and known with varying degrees of certainty. Yet, the Bible provides the ultimate reference point for all knowledge of truth. It shapes the presuppositions, interpretations, and conclusions of all knowledge of the world.
- c. *The Holy Spirit ministers in relation to the Word (1 Th. 1:5).* God's grace, through His Holy Spirit, guides us into a knowledge of objective realities about which Scripture speaks (even if we doubt them) that are adequate for life. The fruit of faith includes being convinced of the truths found in Scripture (Heb. 11:1).
- d. *The truth of Scripture can be known through applying appropriate principles and practices of interpretation (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 2 Peter 3:15-18).* The meaning of the truth of Scripture is attainable through the appropriate study of the words, sentences, and paragraphs of the text in their literary and historical contexts (1 Tim. 4:6). Valid interpretation will reflect the assumptions and practices commended in the Scriptures (Eph. 3:4; 1 Tim. 1:7-9). The meaning of Scripture is that which the divine/human author intended to convey. The essential consensus of the church in interpretation through the ages bears witness to the Spirit's guidance of God's people over time (2 Tim. 1:13; e.g., such core teachings as the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the sinfulness of humanity). Furthermore, those interpretations of the Scriptures which fall outside this essential consensus should be carefully scrutinized.

- e. *Believers do possess an inner conviction and assurance concerning the truths taught in the Scripture that is the result of the effectual working of the Word of God by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in response to faith (2 Tim. 1:13-14).* For the Christian, this conviction and assurance is more than merely an option. The Christian has the privilege of living with confidence made possible by God's grace. Christians can be assured that their beliefs are warranted, even if their understanding is not comprehensive or perfect in every instance. This certainty is to be held with humility and love. There is no necessary dichotomy between love and humility on the one hand and this firm confidence on the other.
5. Biblical truth addresses the whole person across the whole of life, individually and in community. It is designed to shape the way in which one lives (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Its precepts should be consistently reflected in our behavior, attitude, and thinking. This stewardship of our lives requires that all the academic disciplines be thoroughly integrated with a biblical worldview. Inner conviction is designed to promote a living and growing relationship with God Himself, and a winsome testimony of Christ to others characterized by gentleness and reverence (1 Pet. 3:15-16).
6. Biblical truth requires aggressive evangelism until the completion of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

By the Board of Trustees acting through its Executive Committee  
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