Doctrine of Scripture

- The Holy Spirit and Scripture
- Scripture and the community
- The authentication of Scripture
- The inspiration of Scripture
- The inerrancy/infallibility of Scripture

The Holy Spirit and Scripture

- The Bible isn’t identical with revelation.
  – Revelation is God’s self-disclosure.
  – Takes place in paradigmatic events, interpreted by words; climaxing in Christ.
  – The Bible records and testifies to this revelation.

The Holy Spirit and Scripture

- Grenz’s pneumatological bibliography.
  
  Holy Spirit  
  
  Doctrine of Scripture

- The Spirit inspired the Bible.
- The Spirit interprets the Bible to us (illumination).
- The authority of the Bible is that of “the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.”
The Holy Spirit and Scripture

• The Spirit and the principle of authority.
• External principles of authority.
  – Sacred book (Bible)
  – Authoritative person (perhaps founder; Jesus)
  – Community (church, tradition)
• Internal principles of authority
  – Reason
  – Experience (including private word from Spirit)
• Spirit speaking in Scriptures = balance.

The Holy Spirit and Scripture

• Inspiration - Spirit’s guidance of authors.
  – Produce writings that convey God’s intention.
  – Writers and compilers of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:21).
  – Also applies to finished product (2 Tim 3:16).
• Illumination - Spirit’s guidance of audience.
  – Understand it and apply it to their lives.
  – Needed because sin has darkened our minds (Rom. 1:18-23).
  – Spirit guides into truth (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:14).

Scripture and the Community

• How does Grenz see the relationship between inspiration and illumination?
Scripture and the Community

- What role does the community play in inspiration and illumination?

- Has a constitutional role for the church.
  - Foundation for community life.
  - Sets community boundaries.
  - Establishes community practices.
- Provides an interpretive framework for church.
  - Forms the identity of community and individuals.
  - Gives concepts and story for self-understanding.

Authentication of Scripture

- Question: What guarantees the truthfulness and reliability of Scripture?
- Roman Catholics: the church (magisterium)
- Orthodox: Holy Tradition, lives in church
- Reformers: self-authenticating
  - Sola scriptura (final authority)
  - Includes inner witness of the Holy Spirit
Authentication of Scripture

• Anabaptists: obedience

Inner Word
(Holy Spirit)  \rightarrow  Living Word
(Jesus Christ)

Outer Word
(Scripture)

Authentication of Scripture

• Protestant Scholastic Orthodoxy: inerrancy
  – 17th century response to rationalism.
  – Authority in the Bible alone; downplay Spirit.
  – Demonstrate authority of Scripture by rational proofs.
  – Very influential on evangelicalism.
  – Catholic writer: evangelicals have created a sacramental Bible that has intrinsic efficacy; works *ex opere operato* (by the work done).

Authentication of Scripture

• Natural theology: reason alone could prove the authority of the Bible (evidences).
• Pietism: reformation of life.
• Neoorthodoxy (Barth): experience (personal encounter).
• Grenz: both Word and Spirit.
• Both study and prayer are necessary to understand God’s revelation in Scripture.
Authentication of Scripture

• Biblical authority is based on that of Christ.
  – He is the living Word of God (John 1:1-14).
  – A high view of Scripture isn’t enough (John 5:39-40).
  – Biblical authority is personal.
  – It’s that of a relationship (with Christ).
  – It’s lived out in community (body of Christ).
  – It demands a response of obedience (to Christ).

Inspiration of Scripture

• Plenary inspiration = whole of Scripture.
  – No genre is more inspired than another.
  – Doesn’t mean all parts are equally edifying.
• Verbal inspiration = extends to the words.
  – Words are the “primary carriers of meaning.”
  – Not simple dictation.

Inspiration of Scripture

• Theories of inspiration
  – Intuition: high degree of religious insight.
  – Illumination: Spirit heightened normal powers to discern truth.
  – Dynamic: human and divine come together.
    • Spirit directs authors to thoughts/concepts.
    • Writers express them in characteristic ways.
  – Verbal: Spirit directs writers to the very words.
  – Dictation: God dictated Bible to the writers.
Inspiration of Scripture

• How does Grenz think inspiration worked?

Inspiration of Scripture

• Affirm Scripture as a divine/human book.
  – Need not be dogmatic about the mechanics of inspiration.
  – G. E. Ladd: the Bible is the word of God in the words of human beings in history.
  – See 2 Peter 3:15-16.
  – Inspiration is relational: part of the human author’s relationship with God.

Inerrancy/Infallibility

• Full or strict inerrancy
  – No errors on any subject, even incidental details: faith, history, geography, science, etc.
  – Deductive approach that starts with doctrine of verbal inspiration:
    • God gave the words of the Bible.
    • God cannot err.
    • Therefore the Bible contains no errors.
  – Applies to original manuscripts.
Inerrancy/Infallibility

- Full or strict inerrancy
- Moderate, partial, or limited inerrancy
  - Inerrancy applies to issues of faith and practice.
  - In scientific and historical matters, writers subject to limitations of their times.
  - Inductive approach; build doctrine of Scripture from observing features of biblical documents.
  - Not necessary to limit inerrancy to original documents.

- Non-inerrancy or infallibility
  - Similar to second view but doesn’t use term “inerrancy.”
  - Inerrancy isn’t a biblical term and imposes unbiblical standards of truth and precision.
  - Biblical authority must be accepted by faith.
  - Inerrancy term carries too much baggage.

Grenz takes a fourth position.
- Use both inductive and deductive reasoning.
- Begin with the features of the Bible itself.
- Writers used phenomenal language.
- “Adequacy for the purpose of the author.”
- Inerrant in the context of what Scripture itself considers error (theological or moral).
Inerrancy/Infallibility

• What is at stake in this discussion?

M. Erickson: “The Bible, when correctly interpreted in light of the level to which culture and the means of communication had developed at the time it was written, and in view of the purposes for which it was given, is fully truthful in all that it affirms.”

Lausanne Covenant: Scripture is “without error in all that it affirms.”

Case Study

You are on staff at a large Protestant church. Growing tension over small group ministry, overseen by Pastor of Discipleship. They meet in homes, choose own study materials. They are the church’s discipleship ministry. A small group leader is focusing her group on new teachings she received directly from God in her personal devotions. Some members like this; others complained to staff because they want teaching only from the Bible. Pastor of Discipleship has ordered that all small group lessons must be submitted to him for review prior to teaching them. He’ll ensure that they reflect church doctrine. Now complaints are coming to you about the Pastor of Discipleship. What do you do?