



Why This Foundation?

Transcript of an interview with Dr. Paul Elliott, ASF president

Video available on our website

Why the Authentic Scripture Foundation? Why did we choose that name for the organization? What is *Authentic* Scripture? And does that mean that there's such a thing as *inauthentic* Scripture? Yes it does, and it's vital for Christians to be able to identify which is which.

Why did we adopt these words as our purpose statement: *Restoring Confidence in the Authentic Word of God*? Does that mean that confidence has been lost? Yes, it has today – in Christian colleges and seminaries and evangelical churches. And there are fewer and fewer exceptions to this. They are communicating growing doubt and uncertainty about the authenticity, and therefore about the reliability, of the Bible.

Growing numbers of evangelical seminary professors are saying that we cannot know with certainty what the writers of the New Testament actually wrote. We cannot know that the Bible we hold in our hands is in every respect the Word of God.

At least three generations of pastors have now been trained in this kind of thinking, and they're telling their congregations what their professors told them. They're telling their people that there are large passages and many other verses in our Bibles that simply don't belong there.

It's ironic that the same people who were saying that we can't know exactly what the apostles and prophets wrote are also taking it on themselves to tell us what they supposedly *didn't* write. And this kind of thinking is compromising and weakening Bible translation around the world. Bible translations are being produced that contain literally thousands of additions, deletions, and other adulterations of the authentic text.

This is also weakening the church's approach to evangelism. Pastors who have been trained in this way of thinking are telling their people that they can no longer base their



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evangelistic outreach on the words of the Bible. These men are saying to their people that to tell someone that “the Bible says” is the wrong answer. They're telling their people that we need to base our evangelism on the idea that in the four Gospel accounts, somewhere, they contain some elements of the truth about Jesus, although we can't be precisely sure what they are. And so our church needs to use an approach to evangelism that doesn't rely on a totally accurate Bible.

I wish I could say that I was making this up, but I'm not. On our website, our social media channels, print and electronic publications, and in a growing digital archive, we're presenting the evidence, and it's very disturbing.

Christian, academia and the evangelical church are in deep, deep trouble. Well, what do we need to do? Well, that's why The Authentic Scripture Foundation exists. Our mission is to be an instrument used by the grace of God to restore confidence in his authentic Word.

How can we do that? We need to recognize that there are two audiences for this effort. First, there are the men and women who teach in Christian colleges and seminaries and the pastors and teachers that they've trained. And we now have several generations of evangelical pastors and teachers who have been contaminated by these falsehoods. Even if you've had a solid doctrinal upbringing as a young person, you go to a college or a seminary where you begin to hear things that undermine confidence in the very existence of Authentic Scripture. Inevitably you become contaminated, and perhaps in ways you don't even realize.

And so where do you end up? You come out of that environment, and into church leadership, not as strong in the truth as you used to be. You're not as emphatic or determined or convinced about the reliability of the Bible as you used to be. All of this weakens and destroys confidence in the authentic Word of God in the next generation. It impacts evangelism, it impacts Bible translation, and so much more. And in this digitally connected world, the contamination spreads at the speed of light.

We're facing, in Christian academia and the evangelical church today, a world-class tragedy. Can the situation be changed? Is evangelical Christian academia salvageable? Is the church's wrong thinking on these issues correctable? Well, the answer is Yes. But the first thing we need to get right once again is our doctrine of Scripture. If we take a



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look at the great confessions of faith that were written during the Protestant Reformation, how do they begin?

Well, those great statements don't start out talking about Jesus, or the Gospel or, eternal life. That may surprise people. How *do* they begin? They begin by stating what is true about Holy Scripture. That was the Reformers' approach. They were trying to make a distinction from Roman Catholicism: Everything we're going to say about God, about creation, about man, about sin, about salvation through Jesus Christ – all of it is based on the authority of the Divinely preserved Authentic Word of God. Scripture first, and Scripture alone.

And the Reformers recognized that the Bible is the only supernatural book. Holy men of God wrote the breathed-out words of God as they were moved – or as Second Peter tells us, more literally, as they were *driven* – by the Holy Spirit. Until they get that right in their thinking, Christian seminary teachers and evangelical pastors cannot receive, and they cannot act on, the evidence that Authentic Scripture does exist and that every Christian can have absolute confidence in it.

As I say, it's a generational problem. One generation of professors and pastors has taught another, which has taught another, which has taught another. And in many places, wrong thinking about the Word of God has become the norm rather than the exception.

Here's a really tough part of the problem: You are a seminary professor, or you're a pastor, and you've believed and taught what are actually the wrong things for a long time. And you're passing on what you've been taught, and the next generation views you as the subject matter expert. Well, when you're confronted with the evidence, very often the hardest thing to do is to admit that you were wrong. Frankly, I think that many men and women in Christian education and in church leadership are going to have an awfully hard time admitting they were wrong. Our constant prayer is that the Lord will change that. And He can do it. And so we're presenting the evidence to Christian pastors and scholars.

But more than that, we need to present the evidence to a second audience. We need to present it to the grassroots – to the people who come to church, parents and their children. Especially their children. We need to present the evidence about Authentic



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Scripture, and present it in a way that people can understand it, and take it to heart, and act upon it.

The problem, as I say, is a generational problem. The solution is a generational solution. Our desire is to be used by the Lord to help educate and raise up a remnant of young people – young men and young women in the generation that's growing up right now – who will understand that Authentic Scripture does exist, that God has kept His promise to preserve His Word down to the last letter. And so we can receive God's Authentic Word confidently, and we can trust it absolutely. And we must obey it – resolutely.

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