

The Integrity of the Biblical Canon

WHEREAS we have witnessed recent assaults upon the canon of the sixty-six books of Scripture, including those who wish to elevate noncanonical literature (even heretical texts) to the same Level as the canonical Scriptures; and

Some have claimed that a reconstructed "Q" document is more important and historically accurate than the canonical Gospels; and

Some have used the gospels of Mary, Philip, and Judas to provide an alternative history in contradiction with the Scriptures; and

Some have placed the gospel of Thomas (which portrays Jesus merely as a teacher of wise aphorisms) on par with the four canonical Gospels, with an intent to dispense with the true Gospel centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus; and

Some have pictured the process of canonization as a political ploy of the emperor Constantine or as an oppressive maneuver of one powerful group against less influential parties or as a mere historical accident; and

Some have approached the issue of canonicity through the lens of a skeptical revisionism based upon a hermeneutic of suspicion, and others have used their conspiracy theories to question Christianity in the public square and in the media; and

Some have described the process of canonization as a fourth-century event alone;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting for our 74th Annual Conference in Lansing, Michigan, June 27–30, 2006, commit ourselves to the historic teachings of Christianity, that the Scriptures received their authority from God Himself at the original point of inspiration, and that the Church later bore faithful witness to this inherently divine authority (2 Timothy 3:16);

THAT the promised ministry of the Holy Spirit guaranteed a genuine correspondence between the life and teachings of Jesus and the apostolic proclamation as found in the New Testament (John 14:26); that various New Testament texts were already recognized as authoritative Scripture by other early believers (2 Peter 3:15, 16); and that the process of canonization was

a result of God's sovereign oversight and divine providence as He guided the Church's recognition of those previously inspired texts;

WE FURTHER RESOLVE to commit ourselves to the important study of the early Church; to educate those within our pastoral care concerning the historical process of canonization; and to defend the contents and authority of Scripture against all contemporary detractors.

*Lansing, Michigan
June 27-30, 2006*