



### **Educational Statement on Biblical Authority**

*Prepared by the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies*

Messiah University faculty confess that “God gives us the Bible as the inspired, trustworthy and authoritative Scripture to reveal God’s ways and purposes, to nourish our minds and souls, and to instruct us in how we ought to think and to live.” The department of Biblical and Religious Studies fully affirms this statement as we seek to nurture our students toward maturity of Christian faith.

Various groups within the Church have different ways of understanding the authority of the Bible. Because Messiah University students and educators come from diverse Christian traditions, we do not advocate one particular understanding of biblical authority over another. The University thus complements the work of the local church. Our faculty members strive to present balanced perspectives on biblical-theological issues such as the nature, authority, and inspiration of scripture, while encouraging our students to carefully reflect on their own understandings of these issues.

The common denominator among the various biblical authority positions is a strong commitment to taking the Bible seriously while interpreting the Bible responsibly. No matter how one understands the Bible’s authority, we can all agree that the church has given primary place to the Bible’s teachings, and that we should continue to do so today. This requires not only that we subject ourselves to what we believe the Bible expects of us, but that we also obey the Bible’s various calls for us to follow Christ faithfully. In the history of the church, this has led Christians to stand against the kingdoms of this world, whether the cost be social rejection, persecution, or even death.

As teachers, we seek simultaneously to open the minds of our students to new ideas, while helping them become more settled and grounded in their faith. Our department goal is “to model and encourage informed thinking about Christian faith and practice and the role of religion in the world. We foster spiritual and theological reflection that enables individuals to develop and deepen Christian commitment, interpret matters of faith intelligently, and minister to others with wisdom and compassion.” So both as individuals and as teachers, we try to honor God through our scholarship, to share the good news of Jesus with our students, and to build up the body of Christ on earth.