

Aims, Beliefs and Working Principles of Scripture Union

Adopted by the International Council 1992

Aims of Scripture Union

Working with the churches, Scripture Union aims:

- a) to make God's Good News known to children, young people and families and
 - b) to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer
- so that they may

- ~ come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- ~ grow in Christian maturity and
- ~ become both committed church members and servants of a world in need

Scripture Union pursues these aims through a variety of specialist ministries around the world in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and in reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Statement of Belief

As the Scripture Union family throughout the world, we accept and proclaim the historic truths of the Christian faith, including the following:

a. God and the human race

We hold that that the Lord our God is one:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
and that he fulfils his sovereign purposes
- in creation, revelation, redemption, judgement, and the coming of his kingdom -
by calling out from the world a people
united to himself and to each other in love.

We acknowledge that though God made us
in his own likeness and image,
conferring on us dignity and worth
and enabling us to respond to himself,
we now are members of a fallen race;
we have sinned and come short of his glory.

We believe that the Father
has shown us his holy love
in giving Jesus Christ, his only Son, for us,
while through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to his wrath and condemnation;
and has shown his grace
by putting sinners right with himself
when they place their trust in his Son.

We confess Jesus Christ
as Lord and God;
as truly human, born of the virgin Mary;
as Servant, sinless, full of grace and truth;

as only Mediator and Saviour, dying on the cross in our place, representing us to God, redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin;
as Victor over Satan and all his forces, rising from death with a glorious body, being taken up to be with his Father, one day returning personally in glory and judgement to establish his kingdom.

We believe in the Holy Spirit
who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement;
who makes the death of Christ effective to sinners, declaring that they must now turn to Christ in repentance, and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ;
who through the new birth makes us partake in the life of the risen Christ, and
who is present within all believers, illuminating their minds to grasp the truth of Scripture, producing in them his fruit,
granting to them his gifts, and
empowering them for service in the world.

b. The Scriptures

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures
are God-breathed, since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit;
hence are fully trustworthy in all that they affirm; and
are our highest authority for faith and life.

c. The Church and its Mission

We recognise the Church
as the body of Christ held together and growing up in him; both
as a total fellowship throughout the world, and
as the local congregation in which believers gather.

We acknowledge the commission of Christ
to proclaim the Good News to all people,
making them disciples, and
teaching them to obey him;

and

We acknowledge the command of Christ
to love our neighbours,
resulting in service to the church and society,
in seeking reconciliation for all with God and their fellows,
in proclaiming liberty from every kind of oppression; and
in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world

...until he comes again.

Working Principles

We seek to exercise the ministries God has given us in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and in reliance on the Holy Spirit. We therefore aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do and to emphasize the vital importance of prayer.

We approach our work in the following ways:

1. EVANGELISM AND TEACHING

- a. We are committed to teaching basic Christian truths as an essential part of evangelism.
- b. We aim to express God's Good News to children, young people and families, not only in words, but also by building caring relationships with them.
- c. We make every effort to communicate the Gospel in contemporary language and in ways appropriate to the context.
- d. We emphasize that faith should always lead to action and to growth in Christian character and service.
- e. We acknowledge that the Gospel has inescapable social dimensions and therefore it involves us in service to others and a concern for social justice. In view of our specific aims, we have a special responsibility for children and young people who are poor, deprived or exploited.
- f. We encourage children to follow Christ in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and background, taking special account of their home and family situation and level of maturity.
- g. We believe that the new birth is a profound supernatural experience, brought about by the Holy Spirit. So we invite people to respond to what He is doing in their lives and guard against calling for superficial responses.
- h. We are committed to working in ways that reflect our beliefs, in appropriate cooperation with organizations and institutions, such as schools, that welcome us.

2. BIBLE MINISTRIES

In encouraging people to meet God through the Bible, we emphasize the significance of the Bible as a whole.

- a. We encourage people to read it so that they come to repentance, faith, obedience to God and worship.
- b. We prepare systematic programmes and materials for children, young people and adults, appropriate to their age and situation.
- c. We are committed to Bible reading which is thoughtful, prayerful and regular and which enables the reader to respond to the message of the whole Bible rather than to isolated passages.
- d. We are concerned to interpret the text in a way which enables people, in their contemporary situations, to hear for themselves the message of the Bible from its original context.

3. CHURCHES

- a. We recognise our part in God's worldwide family and seek ways of working positively with a variety of churches.
- b. We encourage people who come to faith through our ministries to take part in the life of a local church fellowship

4. EQUALITY AND UNITY

- a. We believe that all human beings are of equal worth in the sight of God and that all those who put their faith in Christ are one in Him.
- b. We are therefore committed to exercising our ministries without discrimination as to race, colour, gender, language or social position.
- c. We recognise that Scripture Union worldwide is a family of national movements in which resources can be shared in a responsible way on a basis of trust.
- d. We express our Christian commitment in varied and creative ways since we are drawn from diverse backgrounds.

5. VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

- a. We work with a relatively small number of staff who recruit, motivate, train, equip and support a larger number of volunteers with whom they work in partnership.
- b. We believe that the Holy Spirit confers gifts of leadership on Christians of all nations without discrimination. So we encourage national leadership of Scripture Union movements, while recognizing the contribution of those from other countries.
- c. We, as staff and volunteers, from a variety of backgrounds, are united in our commitment to the aims, beliefs and working principles of Scripture Union.
- d. We agree that, while we are involved in Scripture Union activities, we will handle controversial issues, such as baptism, spiritual gifts and church order, in ways that promote harmony.

6. BIBLICAL STANDARDS

- a. We aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do. This includes, for example, our administration, our publicity and the way we care for our staff and volunteers.
- b. We seek to honour God in carrying out our ministries, by combining prayerful reliance on him with the use of the best available means, maintaining the highest standards possible.
- c. We believe in praying for financial support, in dependence on God, and telling the Christian public of our needs, without distorting the truth or using undue pressure.

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