

## EDITORIAL

In 1976, Dr. Harold Lindsell grabbed the attention of the evangelical world with his book, *The Battle for the Bible*.<sup>1</sup> In the foreword to that book, Dr. Harold J. Ockenga acknowledged the crucial nature of the inerrancy of Scripture. He wrote: “Acceptance of inerrancy is the watershed of modern theological controversy. The attitude we have toward the trustworthiness of Scripture determines our later position, not only on faith, but also on practice. The evidence that those who surrender the doctrine of inerrancy inevitably move away from orthodoxy is indisputable.”<sup>2</sup>

Two years later, heeding Lindsell’s call “to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints [and] to take whatever action is needed to secure a redress of this situation,”<sup>3</sup> more than two hundred evangelical leaders from all over the world gathered in Chicago to convene the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). They met to define the doctrine of inerrancy and articulate its nature. It was their intention to defend the position of biblical inerrancy against those who would seek to undermine the trustworthiness of God’s Word. The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, born out of that conclave, set the standard definition of inerrancy for the decades that followed.

That, however, was almost forty years ago. Today, a new generation of theologians is again assaulting the doctrine of biblical inerrancy and sowing seeds of skepticism. Fueled by historical criticism and overt ecumenism, they are writing books and journal articles resurrecting old arguments against the clear teaching of Scripture regarding its perfect veracity. While some of these attacks are subtle, others are more blatant. But in each case, their attacks take aim at the very foundations of Christian truth.

To take a stand against that insurgency and to challenge dissonant voices, Grace Community Church and The Master’s Seminary hosted the Summit on Biblical Inerrancy this past March at the annual Shepherds’ Conference. The four-day gathering was designed exclusively to address the inerrancy issue in order to reinforce the importance of this crucial doctrine. Nearly five thousand pastors and church leaders traveled from every state and over fifty countries. A dozen theologians and church leaders from around the world were invited to speak at the conference—plumbing

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Harold J. Ockenga, “Foreword,” in *The Battle for the Bible*, by Harold Lindsell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Lindsell, 210.

key texts of Scripture to underscore the biblical mandate to hold fast the perfect Word of God.

A few weeks prior to the Summit on Biblical Inerrancy, and in concert with it, The Master's Seminary faculty addressed the topic of inerrancy in its annual Richard L. Mayhue Lectures series. Augmenting the plenary sessions and seminars at the conference, various TMS faculty members focused on a selection of "Great Texts on Scripture" to address the issue. The articles in this edition of *The Master's Seminary Journal* are primarily drawn from that faculty lecture series.

Prior to the summit, Dr. John MacArthur noted the inevitable relationship between inerrancy and expository preaching with these words: "In every generation, pastors and teachers are accountable to God for defending the authority and inspiration of Scripture. Trusting His Word is also the necessary conviction of every Bible expositor. Preaching biblical exposition and believing in inerrancy are inseparable."

The purpose of both the Summit on Biblical Inerrancy and the earlier faculty lecture series was to strengthen the foundations, to encourage the faithful, and to convince the doubters. It was designed to call for a new generation of theologians and pastors who will continue to guard the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It is our hope that this issue will encourage you to do the same.

*Sola Scriptura et soli Deo gloria.*

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