

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

(A&P 2017, p. 240, 25; see document in A&P 2016, p. 265–78)

The 2016 General Assembly adopted the following recommendations: “That the document ‘Understanding and Interpreting the Bible’ be commended to congregations, presbyteries and other groups in The Presbyterian Church in Canada for use” and “That sessions, presbyteries and other interested groups using the document ‘Understanding and Interpreting the Bible’ report comments to the Committee on Church Doctrine through the Assembly Office by January 31, 2017, and that the results of these comments be reported to a future General Assembly.” (A&P 2016, p. 278, 39)

In summary, 13 sessions and five presbyteries responded. Overall, it was thought to be a helpful document, especially given the current climate in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, although some felt it was still too difficult to understand. Given the theological diversity in our denomination, it is not surprising that some felt it was too liberal and relativistic, and some felt it was too conservative and out-of-date. Despite these criticisms, there was general support for the resource and a number of comments have led to minor revisions.

In response to the comments that the document was too difficult to understand, the Committee on Church Doctrine will produce a short study guide that will be made available to the church in the near future.

Recommendation No. 1 (adopted, p. 25)

That “Understanding and Interpreting the Bible” be received as a resource for equipping the church to faithfully read the Bible.

Recommendation No. 2 (adopted, p. 25)

That the prayer of Overture No. 11, 2016 re to develop a Reformed confessional hermeneutic be answered by “Understanding and Interpreting the Bible”.