

Statement of Community Beliefs
Covenant College Board of Trustees / Academic Affairs Committee
Initially approved 3.14.08, updated 3.20.09

Rationale and Use

The following Community Statement of Beliefs represents the Board of Trustees' common understanding of how the truth of Scripture applies to several points of contemporary significance. We employ this Statement in the oversight of the mission and program of Covenant College.

While this Statement is not Holy Scripture, we do believe it is faithful to God's Word and reflects the Reformed tradition as found in the Westminster Standards. Since Covenant College aims to be biblically based as well as mindful of our rich Reformed heritage, this Statement is an attempt to keep our community faithful, promoting general harmony even among the diversity of opinions represented in our community. Therefore, good faith assent to this Statement will be a factor in the hiring, evaluation, and promotion of faculty. If a faculty candidate or faculty member finds himself or herself in disagreement with the Statement in some particular, he or she will be asked to explain the nature of the disagreement. The Board of Trustees retains ultimate and final authority to judge the limits of tolerable exception.

Community Beliefs

Revelation¹

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that the very words of Holy Scripture have been given by God in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative in all that it affirms, without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people

¹ Most of the language in the paragraphs "Revelation" and "Creation and Humanity" comes directly from the Confessional Statement of the Gospel Coalition. To read the entire statement, go to: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/confessionalstatement.php>.

hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

Creation and Humanity

We believe that God freely and joyfully created all things from nothing by the power of His word. We believe that the rich diversity of the living world is rooted in historical supernatural creative acts recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. All things are subject to his will and all his creatures are the beneficiaries of his continual care according to his eternal purposes. We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image and this makes them unique with respect to all other life in the created order. We affirm that the creation of human beings was a special creative act of God. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, cultivate, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive Church office of elder is given to qualified men as outlined in Scripture.

Dignity of Human Life

We believe that the God who created all things is the Giver and Sustainer of life. Therefore, we must value, honor, and protect life, especially human life, which was made in God's image. This means that the Church should do all it can to cultivate life. For example, we strongly oppose abortion since it devalues and destroys human life. At the same time Christians should actively seek to provide for, protect, and nurture those who face the temptation to abort their baby. Similarly, since God created the entire human race in all its diversity we must seek the welfare of human life among the variety of races, cultures, and lands foreign to our own. All human life from all nationalities should be valued and protected. Finally, as an outworking of the dignity of human life, and since God does not show favoritism, we must seek justice with mercy for all; one life cannot be deemed more worthy than another simply because of one's race or financial means. Wherever injustice and oppression are found – whether in the state, church, school, or general society – they should be opposed with justice and mercy instituted in their stead, redeeming the sinful corruption of human institutions for the greater glory of God.