

Introductory Comments

The Staff Commitments represent the Board of Trustees' common understanding of the basics of Christianity and how the truths of Scripture, which we hold to be the only authoritative rule of faith and practice, apply to matters of contemporary significance, particularly in the context of higher education. We employ the Staff Commitments in the oversight of the mission and program of Covenant College. While the Staff Commitments are not Holy Scripture, we do believe they are faithful to God's Word and reflect the Christian tradition. Since Covenant College aims to be biblically based as well as mindful of our rich Reformed heritage, the Staff Commitments are an attempt to keep our community faithful, promoting general harmony even among the diversity of opinions represented in our community. Therefore, we require assent to the Staff Commitments by all staff members. Practically, this means that all staff members must acknowledge that these commitments represent the College's views and must agree to abide by them in lifestyle and not promote contrary views. Additional commitments may be required of certain staff positions.

Staff Commitments

Basics of Christianity¹

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Matters of Contemporary Significance

The creation of human beings was a special creative act of God. Adam and Eve, both made in the image of God, belong to the created order that God himself declared to be very good. Men and women 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. God created human beings, male and female, in His own image and thus they are unique

¹ This is the Nicene Creed, which originated at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. An expanded form was adopted by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The text here is what appears in the *Trinity Hymnal*.

with respect to all other life in the created order. Although gender involves culturally and historically derived rules and roles, biological sex is neither a cultural construct nor a matter of self-identification, but a divine gift assigned by the Creator at conception. This physiological ordering of creation is to be honored and reflected in sexual intimacy. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union (Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:4-6). This creation ordinance establishes marriage between one man and one woman as the only proper context for all sexual relations. The New Testament makes clear that this relationship ultimately serves as a picture of the union between Christ and his Church. Although sin has distorted our affections, attractions, and impulses, we are still responsible as created beings and as those united with Christ by faith for our actions and thoughts. As such, we are to live in accordance with the birth sex gifted to us by our Creator. Actions taken toward adopting a different biological sex (Gen. 1:27), sexual immorality (I Cor. 6:18, 1 Tim 1:8-11), adultery (Exodus 20:14), homosexual practice (Romans 1:26-27), and all other sexual relations (1 Cor. 6:9-10) outside the bounds of marriage between a man and woman are inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. Everyone, regardless of their sexual desires, sexual attractions, or sexual identity, should be treated with dignity, grace, and holy love as image bearers even as they are encouraged towards a biblically faithful lifestyle.

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. Since God created the entire human race in all its diversity we must seek the welfare of human life among the variety of races and cultures, including those different from our own. All human life from all races and cultures should be valued and protected. 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 a child. Similarly, 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 background. Whether at the college, in the church, or generally in society, injustice and oppression should be opposed with the pursuit of justice and mercy instead, redeeming the sinful corruption of humans and human institutions for the greater glory of God.