

Community Covenant Agreement - Our Pledge to One Another

You affirm the following:

- ◆ You accept the invitation to be a member of the Northwest community with all the mutual benefits and responsibilities that are involved.
- ◆ You understand that by becoming a member of the Northwest community you have also become an ambassador of this community and the ideals it represents.
- ◆ You will carefully read the Northwest Community Covenant Agreement and join in fulfilling its responsibilities while a member of the Northwest community.
- ◆ You pledge the following:

1. THE NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COVENANT

Northwest's mission, core values, curriculum and community life are formed by a firm commitment to the person and work of Jesus Christ as declared in the Bible. This identity and allegiance shapes an educational community in which members pursue truth and excellence with grace and diligence, treat people and ideas with charity and respect, think critically and constructively about complex issues, and willingly respond to the world's most profound needs and greatest opportunities.

Northwest is an academic community rooted in the evangelical Baptist tradition; it is made up of Christian administrators, Faculty and Staff who, along with students choosing to study at Northwest, covenant together to form a community that strives to live according to biblical precepts, believing that this will optimize Northwest's capacity to fulfil its mission and achieve its aspirations.

The community covenant is a solemn pledge in which members place themselves under obligations on the part of the institution to its members, the members to the institution, and the members to one another. In making this pledge, members enter into a contractual agreement and a relational bond. By doing so, members accept reciprocal benefits and mutual responsibilities, and strive to achieve respectful and purposeful unity that aims for the advancement of all, recognizing the diversity of viewpoints, life journeys, stages of maturity, and roles within the Northwest community. It is vital that each person who accepts the invitation to become a member of the Northwest community carefully considers and sincerely embraces this community covenant.

2. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Northwest's acceptance of the Bible as the divinely inspired, authoritative guide for personal and community life¹ is foundational to its affirmation that people flourish and most fully reach their potential when they delight in seeking God's purposes, and when they renounce and resist the things that stand in the way of those purposes being fulfilled². This ongoing God-enabled pursuit of a holy life is

The Biblical passages cited in this document serve as points of reference for discussion or reflection on particular topics. Northwest recognizes the necessity of giving careful consideration to the complexities involved in interpreting and applying biblical passages to contemporary issues and situations.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16

² Matthew 6:31-33; Romans 8:1-17; 12:1-2; 13:11-14; 16:19; Jude 20-23; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

an inner transformation that actualizes a life of purpose and eternal significance.³ Such a distinctly Christian way of living finds its fullest expression in Christian love, which was exemplified fully by Jesus Christ, and is characterized by humility, self-sacrifice, mercy and justice, and mutual submission for the good of others.⁴

This biblical foundation inspires Northwest to be a distinctly evangelical seminary in which members and others observe and experience truth, compassion, reconciliation, and hope.⁵ Northwest envisions itself to be a community where members demonstrate concern for the well-being of others, where rigorous intellectual learning occurs in the context of whole person development, where members give priority to spiritual formation, and where service-oriented citizenship is modeled.

3. COMMUNITY LIFE AT NORTHWEST

The Northwest community covenant involves a commitment on the part of all members to embody attitudes and to practice actions identified in the Bible as virtues, and to avoid those portrayed as destructive. Members of the Northwest community, therefore, commit themselves to:

- ◆ cultivate Christian virtues, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, compassion, humility, forgiveness, peacemaking, mercy and justice⁶
- ◆ live exemplary lives characterized by honesty, civility, truthfulness, generosity and integrity⁷
- ◆ communicate in ways that build others up, according to their needs, for the benefit of all⁸
- ◆ treat all persons with respect and dignity, and uphold their God-given worth from conception to death⁹
- ◆ be responsible citizens both locally and globally who respect authorities, submit to the laws of this country, and contribute to the welfare of creation and society¹⁰
- ◆ observe modesty, purity and appropriate intimacy in all relationships, reserve sexual expressions of intimacy for marriage, and within marriage take every reasonable step to resolve conflict and avoid divorce¹¹
- ◆ exercise careful judgment in all lifestyle choices, and take responsibility for personal choices and their impact on others¹²
- ◆ encourage and support other members of the community in their pursuit of these values and ideals, while extending forgiveness, accountability, restoration, and healing to one another.¹³

³ 2 Peter 1:3-8; 1 Peter 2:9-12; Matthew 5:16; Luke 1:74-75; Romans 6:11-14, 22-23; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 4:3, 5:23-24; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:22-24, 5:8.

⁴ Matthew 22:37-40; 1 Peter 5:5; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 4:7-10; Philippians 2:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:8a; Romans 12:1-3, 9-10; John 15:12-13, 17; 1 John 3:10-11, 14-16; Ephesians 5:1-2, 21.

⁵ From TWU's "Envision the Century" Strategic Directions Document, p 5 ("Ends").

⁶ Galatians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:12-17; Isaiah 58:6-8; Micah 6:8.

⁷ Proverbs 12:19; Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:25; Leviticus 19:11; Exodus 20:16; Matthew 5:33-37.

⁸ Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 25:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

⁹ Genesis 1:27-28; Psalm 139:13-16; Matthew 19:14; Proverbs 23:22.

¹⁰ Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:5-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9.

¹¹ Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14, 17; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 5:15-19; Matthew 19:4-6; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:32.

¹² Proverbs 4:20-27; Romans 14:13, 19; 1 Corinthians 8:9, 12-13, 10:23-24; Ephesians 5:15-16.

¹³ James 5:16; Jude 20-23; Romans 12:14-21; 1 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 3:13.

In keeping with biblical and Northwest ideals, community members voluntarily abstain from the following actions:

- ◆ communication that is destructive to Northwest community life and inter-personal relationships, including gossip, slander, vulgar/obscene language, and prejudice¹⁴
- ◆ harassment or any form of verbal or physical intimidation, including hazing
- ◆ lying, cheating, or other forms of dishonesty including plagiarism
- ◆ stealing, misusing or destroying property belonging to others¹⁵
- ◆ sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman¹⁶
- ◆ the use of materials that are degrading, dehumanizing, exploitive, hateful, or gratuitously violent, including, but not limited to pornography
- ◆ drunkenness, under-age consumption of alcohol, the use or possession of illegal drugs, and the misuse or abuse of substances including prescribed drugs
- ◆ the use or possession of alcohol on campus, or at any Northwest sponsored event, and the use of tobacco on campus or at any Northwest sponsored event.

4. AREAS FOR CAREFUL DISCERNMENT AND SENSITIVITY

A heightened level of discernment and sensitivity is appropriate within a Christian educational community such as Northwest. In order to foster the kind of academic atmosphere most conducive to seminary ends, this covenant both identifies particular Christian standards and recognizes degrees of latitude for individual freedom. True freedom is not the freedom to do as one pleases, but rather empowerment to do what is best.¹⁷ Northwest rejects legalisms that mistakenly identify certain cultural practices as biblical imperatives, or that emphasize outward conduct as the measure of genuine Christian maturity apart from inward thoughts and motivations. In all respects, the Northwest community expects its members to exercise wise decision-making according to biblical principles, carefully accounting for each individual's capabilities, vulnerabilities, and values, and considering the consequences of those choices to health and character, social relationships, and God's purposes in the world.

Northwest is committed to assisting members who desire to face difficulties or overcome the consequences of poor personal choices by providing reasonable care, resources, and environments for safe and meaningful dialogue. Northwest reserves the right to question, challenge or discipline any member in response to actions that impact personal or social welfare.

5. WISE AND SUSTAINABLE SELF-CARE

Northwest is committed to promoting and supporting habits of healthy self-care in all its members, recognizing that each individual's actions can have a cumulative impact on the entire community. Northwest encourages its members to pursue and promote: sustainable patterns of sleep, eating,

¹⁴ Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:31.

¹⁵ Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28.

¹⁶ Romans 1:26-27; Proverbs 6:23-35.

¹⁷ Galatians 5:1,13; Romans 8:1-4; 1 Peter 2:16.

exercise, and preventative health; as well as sustainable rhythms of solitude and community, personal spiritual disciplines, chapel and local church participation,¹⁸ work, study and recreation, service and rest.

6. HEALTHY SEXUALITY

People face significant challenges in practicing biblical sexual health within a highly sexualized culture. A biblical view of sexuality holds that a person's decisions regarding his or her body are physically, spiritually and emotionally inseparable. Such decisions affect a person's ability to live out God's intention for wholeness in relationship to God, to one's (future) spouse, to others in the community, and to oneself.¹⁹ Further, according to the Bible, sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman, and within that marriage bond it is God's intention that it be enjoyed as a means for marital intimacy and procreation.²⁰ Honouring and upholding these principles, members of the Northwest community strive for purity of thought and relationship,²¹ respectful modesty,²² personal responsibility for actions taken, and avoidance of contexts where temptation to compromise would be particularly strong.²³

7. DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

The use of illegal drugs is by definition illicit. The abuse of legal drugs has been shown to be physically and socially destructive, especially in its potential for forming life-destroying addictions. For these reasons, Northwest members voluntarily abstain from the use of illegal drugs and the abuse of legal drugs at all times.

The decision whether or not to consume alcohol or use tobacco is more complex. The Bible allows for the enjoyment of alcohol in moderation,²⁴ but it also strongly warns against drunkenness and addiction, which overpowers wise and reasonable behaviour and hinders personal development.²⁵ The Bible commends leaders who abstained from, or were not addicted to, alcohol.²⁶ Alcohol abuse has many long-lasting negative physical, social and academic consequences. The Bible has no direct instructions regarding the use of tobacco, though many biblical principles regarding stewardship of the body offer guidance. Tobacco is clearly hazardous to the health of both users and bystanders. Many people avoid alcohol and/or tobacco as a matter of conscience, personal health, or in response to an addiction. With these concerns in mind, Northwest members will exercise careful discretion, sensitivity to others' conscience/principles, moderation, compassion, and mutual responsibility. In addition, Northwest strongly discourages participation in events where the primary purpose is the excessive consumption of alcohol.

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:15-16; Hebrews 10:25.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:18-19.

²⁰ Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14,17; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 5:15-19; Matthew 19:4-6.

²¹ Matthew 5:27-28; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Job 31:1-4; Psalm 101:2-3.

²² 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

²³ 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:13; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 4:7.

²⁴ Deuteronomy 7:13, 11:14, Psalm 104:15; Proverbs 3:10; Isaiah 25:6; John 2:7-11; 1 Timothy 5:23.

²⁵ Genesis 9:20-21; Proverbs 20:1; 31:4; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 2:4-5; Ephesians 5:18.

²⁶ Daniel 1:8, 10:3; Luke 1:15; 1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 2:3.

8. ENTERTAINMENT

When considering the myriad of entertainment options available, including print media, television, film, music, video games, the internet, theatre, concerts, social dancing, clubs, sports, recreation, and gambling, Northwest expects its members to make personal choices according to biblical priorities, and with careful consideration for the immediate and long-term impact on one's own well-being, the well-being of others, and the well-being of Northwest. Entertainment choices should be guided by the pursuit of activities that are edifying, beneficial and constructive, and by a preference for those things that are "true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy,"²⁷ recognizing that truth and beauty appear in many differing forms, may be disguised, and may be seen in different ways by different people.

9. COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This covenant applies to all members of the Northwest community, that is, Employees and Northwest affiliates, and students enrolled at Northwest or any affiliate program. Unless specifically stated otherwise, expectations of this covenant apply to both on and off Northwest's (TWU) campus. Sincerely embracing every part of this covenant is a requirement for employment.

Ensuring that the integrity of the Northwest community is upheld may at times involve taking steps to hold one another accountable to the mutual commitments outlined in this covenant. As a covenant community, all members share this responsibility. Northwest also provides formal accountability procedures to address actions by community members that represent a disregard for this covenant.

Statement of Faith

Northwest's Statement of Faith is that expressed by Fellowship Pacific.

You are expected to annually affirm our statement of faith, however, you may affirm with reservations. Reservations must be communicated in writing and receive approval from Northwest's President.

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Holy Bible to be that collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation which, as originally written, was objectively the very Word of God; that it was written by men supernaturally moved; that it is verbally and plenary inspired; that it is truth without any admixture of error; and therefore is and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to men; the true centre of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

II. OF THE TRINITY

1. We believe that there is one, and only one, living, eternal and true God; an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Creator and the Supreme ruler of Heaven and earth inexpressibly glorious in holiness

²⁷ Philippians 4:8

and worthy of all possible honour, faith and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct and harmonious offices in the work of redemption.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He is truly and eternally God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; that for our redemption He took upon himself the nature of unfallen man; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a unique and miraculous manner, and was born of Mary, a virgin; that in the one Person of Christ there are two natures, the Divine and the human, each distinct, and indissolubly united; that being tempted in the flesh He lived a sinless life; that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; that the third day He arose bodily from the tomb and manifested Himself for forty days to His disciples; that in His glorified body He ascended to the Father; that as High Priest He ever lives to make intercession for His own; that according to His promise He will come again in person, visibly, with power and great glory.
3. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in creation; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that he bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and in testimony; that He is the agent of regeneration; that He dwells in every believer from the moment of his conversion; that every believer is baptized in the Spirit by Christ; that He fills the believer as control is yielded to Christ; that the evidence of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life.

III. OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that Satan is a person; that he is the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world; that he is man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints; that he is the author of all false religions, the inspirer of all apostasy, and the chief of all the powers of darkness; that he with his principalities is overcome by our appropriation of Christ's victory on Calvary; that he along with his hosts is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to suffer eternal punishment in a place prepared for him and his angels.

IV. OF THE CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not by evolution or change of species or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal life and vegetable life were effected by special creation, and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind".

V. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Creator, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state; in consequence of which all men are now sinful, and all are sinners not only by constraint but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse; that man in his fallen state is in a condition of total depravity by which is meant his utter incapacity to receive the things of the Spirit of God apart from the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit.

VI. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace; that it is through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, Who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honoured the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and expiatory atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted in the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place bearing the penalty of God's Holy Law, shedding His precious blood; the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen bodily from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Saviour.

VII. OF ELECTION

We believe that election is the eternal act of God's sovereign grace by which He chooses, calls, justifies and glorifies sinners; that it is effectuated by the Holy Spirit through God's Word in drawing sinners to Christ so that their wills are freely brought into compliance with God's elective purpose; that it excludes all human boasting; that it is demonstrated in believers by their personal faith in Christ, their love to God and their desire for holiness; that it is the ground of the believer's assurance and promotes humility and service.

VIII. OF THE NEW CREATION

We believe that in order to be saved a sinner must be born again through personal faith in Jesus Christ; that the new birth is a new creation; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life as the gift of God; that such is kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation and shall never perish; that the new birth is brought about in a miraculous manner above man's comprehension wholly and solely by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth; that its proper evidence appears in the fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

IX. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is the great blessing by which God accepts, accounts and declares man as righteous; that it includes pardon from the guilt and condemnation of all his sin, the gift of eternal life on principles of divine righteousness; that it is bestowed by grace through faith solely upon the grounds of Christ's perfect life, and expiatory death whereby the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believing sinner.

X. OF SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is primarily the believer's position in Christ by the grace of the new Testament sealed to the believer by the blood of the everlasting covenant whereby he is set apart unto God as the recipient of all heavenly perfections; that it is also a process by which the believer sets himself apart from sin to God in the gradual attaining of moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart and in obedience to the Word of God; that it will culminate in the glorious and eternal state of entire sanctification at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

XI. OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the church is a congregation of individuals baptized as believers upon profession of their faith, organized according to the New Testament pattern, associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws, and exercising the rights, and privileges invested in it by His Word; that its officers are pastors (or elders or bishops) and deacons, whose qualifications and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; that the true mission of the church is found in our Lord's commission, namely: to evangelize, to baptize, and to teach believers to observe all that the Lord commanded; that the church has absolute right of self-government free from any outside interference, and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, acting through the Holy Spirit in harmony with the Word of God; that in all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline or benevolence, the will of the church is final, that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in the furtherance of the Gospel and in contending for the faith, and that each church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its co-operation.

XII. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; that it is the direct command of Christ; that it shows forth the believer's union with the crucified, buried and risen Christ, and his death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is a condition of church membership and according to the Scriptural order baptism should precede the observance of the Lord's supper in which believers by the use of bread and the cup after solemn self-examination are to commemorate together the death of Christ.

XIII. OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is divinely appointed for the interests and good order of society; that the individual should fulfill faithfully his responsibilities as a good citizen; that magistrates should be conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the revealed will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience; that the church should remain distinct and separate from the state, and that there should be no intrusion of the one into the affairs of the other.

XIV. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is an essential difference in the nature, belief and practice of the righteous and the wicked; that those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and set apart by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in God's esteem, and those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are wicked in His sight and under the curse; that this distinction holds even after death, that the righteous depart to be with Christ, and are in a state of conscious blessedness awaiting the resurrection of the just and the receiving of their glorified bodies; that the wicked depart to Hades where they are in conscious torment until the final resurrection and judgment; at which time the righteous enter into everlasting felicity in Heaven and the wicked into everlasting conscious suffering in Hell.