

March 2007

Dear Staff and Students,

Attached to this letter is a copy of the final work done by the Ad Hoc Committee of the PBI Senior Administration focusing on a review of PBI's Community Standards. Seventeen months ago Cabinet struck this Ad Hoc Committee and gave it the mandate to review our current Community Standards document and to determine if it was possible to re-cast Prairie's statement on community membership from a perspective that attempted to make explicit our commitment to and understanding of Christ's grace in the Christian life.

On behalf of PBI's Administrative Cabinet I would like to thank the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for all the long hours of discussion and work that went into the production of this final statement. I would also like to thank all of the students and staff who took the time to be engaged in the conversation that helped shape this document. Finally, we extend thanks to Mr. Kevin Kirk for effectively chairing the committee and graciously leading the discussions to a conclusion.

Having carefully reviewed the final document Cabinet is pleased to endorse its contents and recommend it to the PBI Board of Directors for approval at their April 2007 semi-annual meeting. Cabinet is of the opinion that the ideas and concepts of PBI's emerging spiritual formation model are under the purview of the Institute's Administration but that the Community Covenant – which is a part of the SF model - should receive the endorsement of the PBI Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be provided with a copy of the final report from the Ad Hoc Committee, a copy of all the written submissions generated through the discussion period as well as a recommendation from Cabinet for the Board's affirmation of the Community Covenant.

Personally, I fully support the contents and intentions of the proposed Community Covenant. But while I am happy to support the document I also realize that its implementation will require as much grace as will the experience of its day-to-day and year-by-year affect on our community. Christ states that his "yoke is easy" and his "burden light." However, often from our perspective it appears to be the opposite. In my opinion, living life under the old community standards could be described as relatively easy compared to what it will take to live under the intentions of the new covenant. Yet I also believe that for the benefit of enabling men and women to live and experience grace-filled lives, there are few initiatives that we can take that will make a greater contribution and have a greater effect on the needs of the North American church as I see it today.

I believe that a significant component of the North American church experience has been permeated by a crude sense that a lifestyle of "dos and don'ts" will somehow find God's approval. While it is true that the Christian life includes a call to holiness – which I believe is thoroughly and strongly articulated in the covenant – favour with God is only found through the grace and mercy offered in a relationship with Jesus Christ. If we and our students can grasp and truly experience this, the transformations in Body Life experience that our students will transport outside of Three Hills will be revolutionary!

I invite all of you who are interested and intrigued by the prospects of this transformation in community experience at Prairie to join with us on this critical journey. It will not be easy but if we truly believe in the sufficiency of God's grace I can think of no better option.

In service of God's Kingdom purpose,



Jon Ohlhauser
President
Prairie Bible Institute

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Prairie Bible Institute Community Covenant

Preface

Prairie is a leading centre of higher education for Christians. We equip students to achieve their life, ministry, and career purpose and to fulfill their role within the Body of Christ. Together, our desire is to build a passionate Body of Christ. Prairie Bible Institute consists of three schools: Prairie Bible College, Prairie School of Applied Arts & Technology and Prairie School of Mission Aviation (use of the word "College" in this document refers to the collective).

Prairie's mission as a post-secondary educational community is to enable the Body of Christ to reach the world with the gospel of Christ. This requires not merely the transmission of information but the development of whole and effective Christians who will impact the Church and society worldwide. Along with the privileges of membership in such a community come responsibilities that we take seriously.

As a complex Christian community we seek to live according to the biblical standards laid down by Jesus Christ for His body, the Church. The biblical foundation of Christian community is expressed in Jesus' two great commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-40). Jesus himself perfectly demonstrated the pattern: love for God, acted out in love for others, in obedience to God's Word.

Our Community Covenant

For the sake of fulfilling the community's purposes, its members voluntarily enter into a covenant. We understand this covenant to be a commitment to one another during the time that we are involved in the Prairie community. We desire that the Prairie community be a covenant community of Christians marked by integrity, responsible freedom, and dynamic Christ-like love where we lovingly encourage one another in our spiritual growth, a place where the name of Jesus Christ is honored in all we do. This requires that each of us keeps his or her word by taking the commitment to this covenant seriously as covenant keepers, whatever pressures we may face to do otherwise.

Our responsibilities to the community are articulated within the covenant. For Prairie Bible Institute's community covenant to serve the following purposes, it is crucial that each member of the College family clearly understand and sincerely embrace the covenant. In joining this covenant we are, before the Lord, entering into a compact with other members of the Prairie community. Acknowledging our dependence on the power and grace of God, the members of the Prairie campus community humbly covenant to live according to this ideal. Personal agreement should be with the full intention of living with integrity.

The purposes of this community covenant are as follows:

- to glorify our great God.
- to cultivate a campus atmosphere that encourages spiritual, moral and intellectual growth.
- to integrate our lives around Christian principles and devotion to Jesus Christ.
- to remove whatever may hinder us from our calling as a Christ-centered community.
- to encourage one another to see that living for Christ involves dependence on God's Spirit, and
- to embrace passionate obedience to his Word.

As a community we are responsible for ourselves and to other members of the community. With this in mind we must be accountable to one another. It is the desire of this community to respond biblically to those who contravene this covenant. A restorative discipline process will be used in such cases.

Affirming Biblical Standards

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16¹

¹ Note: All scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV).

We desire to build this covenant on basic biblical standards for godly Christian character and behavior. We understand that our calling includes the following:

- The call to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over all of life and thought. This involves a wholehearted obedience to Jesus and careful stewardship in all dimensions of life: our time, our possessions, our God-given capacities, our opportunities and our relationships:
 - Deut. 6:5-6 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts."
 - 1 Cor. 10:31 - "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."
 - Col. 1:18 - "And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."
 - Col. 3:17 - "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- The call to love God in every aspect of our lives with our whole being, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Christ-like love should be the motive in all decisions, actions, and relationships:
 - Matt. 22:37-40 - "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
 - Rom. 13:8-10 - "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."
 - 1 John 4:7-12 - "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."
- The call to live a crucified life through identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection:
 - Gal. 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
- The call to pursue holiness in every aspect of our thought and behavior:
 - 2 Cor. 7:1 - "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."
 - 1 Thess. 4:7 - "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life."
 - Heb. 12:14 - "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."
 - 1 Pet. 1:15-16 - "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.' "
- The call to humbly submit ourselves to one another:
 - 1 Pet. 5:5 - "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' "
 - Eph. 5:21 - "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

- The call to practice loving regard for the needs of others, including exercising our Christian freedom responsibly within the framework of God's Word:
 - Phil. 2:3-11 - "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 1 Thess. 4:9 - "Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."
 - Rom. 14:1-23 - "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin."
- The call to treat our own bodies, and those of others, with the honor due the very temple of the Holy Spirit:
 - 1 Cor. 3:16-17 - "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."
 - 1 Cor. 6:17-20 - "But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but

- he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."
- Romans 6: 12-14 – "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace."
 - The call to gathering and active responsibility within the local church, which forms the basic biblically-mandated context for Christian living:
 - Acts 2:42-47 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."
 - Heb. 10:25 - "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
 - 1 Tim. 3:14-15 - "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

Living the Christian Life

We believe these biblical standards will show themselves in a distinctly Christian way of life, an approach to living we expect of ourselves and of one another. This lifestyle involves practicing those attitudes and actions the Bible portrays as virtues and avoiding those the Bible portrays as sinful.

A. According to the Scriptures, followers of Jesus Christ will:

- show evidence of the Holy Spirit who lives within them, such as:
 - Gal. 5:22-23 - "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control";
- "put on" compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and supremely, love:
 - Col. 3:12-14 - "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."
- seek righteousness, mercy and justice, particularly for the helpless and oppressed:
 - Prov. 21:3 - "To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."
 - Prov. 31:8-9 - "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
 - Micah 6:8 - "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."
 - Matt. 23:23 - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."

- Gal. 6:10 - "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
- love and side with what is good in God's eyes, and abhor what is evil in God's eyes:
 - Amos 5:15 - "Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph."
 - Rom. 12:9 - "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."
 - Rom. 16:19 - "Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil."
- uphold the God-given worth of human beings, from conception to death, as the unique image-bearers of God:
 - Gen. 1:27 - "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."
 - Psalm 8:3-8 - "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas."
 - Psalm 139:13-16 - "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."
- uphold chastity among the unmarried,
 - 1 Cor. 6:18 - "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body."
- uphold the sanctity of marriage between a man and woman:
 - Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."
 - Gen. 2:24 - "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."
- be people of integrity whose word can be fully trusted:
 - Psalm 15:1, 4 - "Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? . . . He who keeps his oath even when it hurts."
 - Matt. 5:33-37 - "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No' 'No;' anything beyond this comes from the evil one."
- give faithful witness to the Gospel,
 - Acts 1:8 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
 - 1 Pet. 3:15 - "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,"
- demonstrate respect and appropriate submission to those in authority,
 - Hebrews 13:17 - "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."
 - Romans 13:1-5 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have

been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience."

- Romans 12:10 – "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."
- I Peter 2:17 – "Show proper respect to everyone; love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the King."
- practice good works toward all,
 - Gal. 6:10 - "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
 - Eph. 2:10 - "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
 - Heb. 10:24 - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
 - 1 Pet. 2:11 - "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."
- be faithful stewards of life and resources,
 - Gen. 1:26-28 – "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"
 - II Thes. 3:6-9 – "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked day and night, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any one of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow."
- and live lives of prayer and thanksgiving:
 - 1 Thess. 5:17-18 - "Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
 - James 5:16 - "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."
 - Titus 2:7-8 - "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us."
 - Eph. 6:18 – "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

B. By contrast, Scripture condemns the following:

- Sinful attitudes and practices such as pride, dishonesty, injustice, prejudice, immodesty in dress or behavior, slander, harassment, gossip, vulgar or obscene language, blasphemy, greed and materialism, covetousness, the taking of innocent life, and illegal activities:
 - Proverbs 16:18 - "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

- 1 Cor. 6:10 - "nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."
- Exodus 20:7 - "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."
- Rom. 13:9 - "The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "
- Col. 3:8-9 - "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices."
- James 2:1-13 - "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!"
- Gal. 3:26-29 - "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- Rom. 13:1-2 - "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves."
- 1 Tim. 2:8-10 - "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."
- Heb. 13:5-6 - "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'"
- Gal. 5:19-21 - "impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."
- hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and legalism;
 - Acts 15:5-11 - "Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.' The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he

accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

- Matt. 23:13-36 - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices -mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth; all this will come upon this generation.”
- Colossians 2:20-23 - “Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”
- pre-marital sex, adultery, lust, homosexual behavior, all sexual relations outside the bounds of marriage between a man and woman, and other forms of sexual immorality such as the use of pornography:
 - Rom. 1:21-27 - "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and

reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."

- 1 Cor. 6:9-10 - "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor the drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."
- Gen. 2:24 - "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."
- Eph. 5:31 - " 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' "
- Matt. 5:27-28 - "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Exercising Christian Freedom

Beyond these explicit biblical issues, the Prairie community seeks to foster the practice of responsible Christian freedom:

- Gal. 5:13-14 - "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
- 1 Pet. 2:16-17 - "Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king."

Christian freedom is not the right to do whatever one pleases, but rather the power and capacity both to will and to do as one ought. The freedom of Christian liberty is the freedom from sin in order to be like Jesus Christ. Christian liberty is never freedom from responsibility.

Because we have personal freedom to do something does not mean we have the Christian freedom to do so. We seek God's help in abstaining from all choices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith. Responsibility for choices on issues that are not explicitly biblical should be based on at least the following principles:

- Love – Will exercising my freedom build the Body of Christ? Will someone be hindered if I make this choice? Will it cause someone to use my actions as license for the misuse of liberty? Am I causing division in the Body of Christ? Though convinced that I have liberty to do something, nevertheless, out of love for the weaker brother, I will limit my freedom when necessary to avoid being a stumbling block (Romans 14:15-21; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13). Liberty should not cause another person to stumble, be made weak, or turn from Christ.
- Conscience – Will these offend my own conscience? (Romans 14:22-23)
- Edification – Is it profitable to my spiritual life, to God's goals for me, to my health, to my testimony to the lost and my life as an example to other believers? (1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23)
- Control – Will it enslave me? Has it enslaved me? Will this choice be evidence of or does it contribute to my enslavement? (1 Corinthians 6:12b).

- Temple – Will this choice help or hinder my body as an instrument of serving God? The New Testament teaches us that the body is the temple, the very dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and should be cared for accordingly (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- Exaltation - Will it glorify or exalt the Lord and His glory? (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- Constraint – Is this choice for building the kingdom of God or simply my selfishness (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)?

While there are dangers with having a wrong view of Christian freedom, there are also dangers with the opposite extreme of “legalism.” There are three problems that typically fall under the name “legalism” which have been condemned by Scripture and the Church through its history:

- Holding to a merit-based approach to salvation, that one must do good deeds to accrue merit before God in order to attain or maintain salvation.
- Adding regulations to clear biblical teaching and elevating these additional regulations to the status of authority held by Scripture.
- Emphasizing outward conduct as the measure of genuine Christian maturity without regard to inward thoughts and motivations.

Spiritual Formation

At the core of our educational community is a passionate pursuit to know and love God. Together, we are learning to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

While this pursuit is a profound manifestation of God’s gracious action, it is simultaneously a human responsibility to follow after God (Philippians 2:12-13). We are dependent on God for divine enablement, but we are responsible and not passive in this process of spiritual formation. Christians are called to deliberate involvement in this pursuit.

With a sincere desire to be a community that pursues God with passion Prairie has designed intentional spiritual formation activities and exercises. These are noted below.

Worship

Humanity is created to magnify God’s glory! In the truest sense, all of our lives should be a worship experience in that all of life is to intentionally be lived for His glory. At the same time as all of life is a worship experience; it is also true that the community of Christ gathers to intentionally express worship in specific services. This practice of worshipping corporately has been a component of the historical community of Christ (Heb. 10:25) and it is a heritage of Prairie Bible Institute. It is a present commitment to worship and to seek God. Chapel is not a replacement of or substitute for either personal worship or the worship service of the local church. Students participate in daily chapel. Staff/Faculty participate in the weekly Community Chapel.

Service

We deem it both a privilege and responsibility to serve God in this educational community. We delight in our pursuits of thinking, listening, study, teaching, research, writing, practice, performance, field education, manual labour, and witness as a worship offering to God. We engage these commitments with integrity, humility, diligence, and excellence in order to submit our best to God (Col. 3:17).

Community

The Triune God has existed eternally in perfect community. Created in His image, humanity is designed to live and work in community with Him and others. We are called to grow together as His Body. Christian maturity is not nurtured in seclusion and isolation. Prairie students/staff participate in tangible face to face community within the organized small group ministry.

Prayer

Prayer is intimate conversation with God. Prairie students/staff are learning to practice prayer daily. One of the ways this community engages in prayer is participation in the designated Days of Prayer.

Bible

The Bible is foundational to growth in Christ. We are learning to practice daily devotional reading of the Word.

Spiritual Disciplines

In our journey of faith we are learning to practice habits of godliness to help us focus on God. Prairie students/staff participate in the Conferences designed for the Prairie community (e.g. Christian Life Week, Mission Conference).

Accountability

We need one another to assist in keeping our commitments to God and each other. We accept that we are dependant on others to keep us accountable; and we also accept our responsibility, according to the principles of Matthew 18 and Galatians 6:1, to restore those caught in sin.

Discipling

Discipling is the relational process of life to life influence. This concept is firmly rooted in the Scripture (2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 2:3-5, Hebrew 10:24). We practice both discipling and being disciplined toward maturity in Christ.

Embracing College Standards

Christian freedom requires a wise stewardship of mind, body, time, abilities and resources on the part of every member of the community. Responsible freedom also requires thoughtful, biblically-guided choices in matters such as behavior, entertainment and interpersonal relationships. Standards prescribed in this section reflect the needs and commitment of our unique Prairie community. These are not viewed as "codes" of deeper spirituality; rather, we follow these standards to help us achieve our Prairie community goals. Our intent is that the understanding and application of the standards within this context will equip us to work within diverse communities.

To foster the kind of campus atmosphere most conducive to becoming the Christian community of living, learning, and serving that Prairie aspires to be, the College has adopted the following institutional standards. These standards embody such foundational principles as self-control, avoidance of harmful practices, the responsible use of freedom, sensitivity to the heritage and practices of other Christians, and honoring the name of Jesus Christ in all we do.

Of concern in a collegiate environment are those issues related to alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco. Use of illegal drugs is by definition illicit, and the use of tobacco in any form has been proven to be injurious to health. Therefore, all members of the Prairie community will refrain from the use of either. The situation regarding beverage alcohol is more complex.

The question of alcohol consumption requires a responsibility for Christians to exercise their freedom carefully and in Christ-like love. The Bible prohibits the misuse and abuse of fermented drinks – and requires total abstinence in certain situations by mandate and example, particularly by spiritual leaders. Although a total abstinence policy may secure a common practice, a policy can not guarantee a pure people who live according to the Spirit. Imposing a restriction which the New Testament never imposes involves us in a legalism that has its roots in unbelief.

We acknowledge the potential for alcohol to cloud the mind and spirit to the extent that effective spiritual direction may be seriously inhibited. The New Testament offers being filled with the Spirit of God as a serious contrast to overindulgence of alcohol. We seek to abstain from *all* drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

Prairie's campus will be alcohol free - the possession or consumption of alcohol is prohibited on campus. The same prohibition applies to all members of the College Community when involved in any Prairie-sponsored off campus events or program.

The Prairie community also expects responsible freedom in matters of entertainment, including the places where members of the College community may seek it, such as television, movies, video, theater, concerts, dances, games and the Internet. If our community is to grow together in grace and knowledge each individual member must be guided in entertainment choices by the godly wisdom of Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

It is acknowledged that there are differing views related to the issue of dancing. Since Prairie is a diverse community and in the interest of maintaining unity, social dances are not permitted on campus. On-campus instructional and performance-based dance will be permitted only with official College sponsorship. All members of the Prairie community should demonstrate discretion and appropriateness within the context of the Community Covenant and care must be taken to avoid any entertainment or behavior, on or off campus, which may be immodest, sinfully erotic, or harmfully violent.

As God-created beings we are to respect ourselves and others in our relationships. To avoid exclusivity and discomfort amongst others, we are expected to be discrete, modest and polite in our expression of physical contact with others. Members of the College community are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with scriptural principles and in harmony with the spirit of the Community Covenant. "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or greed, for these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Eph 5:3-4). For our benefit God has provided boundaries for the expression of our sexuality, reserving sexual activities for the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. While some individuals may struggle with gender identity, Prairie maintains that homosexual behaviour is contrary to scripture.

Dress and fashion are constantly changing. We recognize that within a College community there is a broad range of values and opinion with respect to fashion and appearance. It is impossible to issue a detailed dress code that is binding for all times and for all places. As individual Christians, as students of a Christian institution and as members of the Christian church at large, we are often subject to the standards and expectations of others. While dress is largely a matter of taste and custom, we should be willing to forgo our liberties if the well-being of others will be served. We are to "be like-minded . . . in humility considering others better than ourselves. Each of us should look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:2-4). Our appearance should not be immodest or draw inappropriate attention to ourselves. Our appearance should accentuate rather than distract from the inner qualities and character essential to a consistent testimony. This includes developing cultural sensitivity to appearance and the humility to give up personal preference in order to prevent barriers to ministry.

Confirming our Covenant

We recognize our constant, deep need for grace to participate in community, as we confess our failures and sins, accept His forgiveness, are restored to His fellowship and live in a godly way.

The issue of keeping one's word is for a Christian an important one. Being faithful to one's word is a matter of integrity and godliness. "Lord, who may live on your holy hill?" asks the Psalmist. "He who keeps his oath, even when it hurts" (15:4), comes the reply. Christian integrity dictates that if we have voluntarily placed ourselves under Prairie's community covenant, we must make every effort to fulfill our commitment by living accordingly.

Keeping our covenant may also on occasion require that we take steps to hold one another accountable, confronting one another in love as we work together to live in faithfulness both to God's Word and to our own word. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). Such loving acts of confrontation are at times

difficult, but when performed in the right spirit, they serve to build godly character for both the individuals involved and the community as a whole. Only in this way, as we are willing to speak the truth in love, will we "grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph. 4:15).