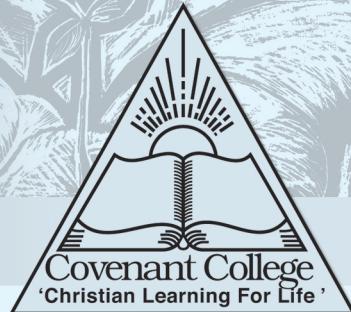


BIBLICAL BASIS STATEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL MANDATE



PREAMBLE

The Biblical Basis and Educational Mandate of the Association is anchored in the Reformational and Evangelical understanding of Scripture, which honours the Bible as the fully reliable Word of truth. From this foundation flow the Association's vision, character, and purpose. The Association, and its school/s, strives to ensure that all policies, documents, curriculums, procedures and practices find their bedrock there.

All members of the school community are encouraged to embrace the Biblical Basis and Educational Mandate as the common ground on which we promote God's work in the life of the school community in general, and in each student in particular.

HISTORY

In the mid 1970s a number of people from a variety of churches in Geelong, all of which have Reformed Creeds as their basis, met together for the establishment of an association that would reflect their Christian ethos in the teaching of their children.

Covenant College (known in its early years as Geelong Christian School) began on this basis in 1979. In more recent years the need for Christian education has become a greater issue in a wider variety of churches. This has seen an influx of families from a wider range within the Christian community. These families have added to the life of Covenant College in immeasurable ways.

A-Biblical Basis

The educational services provided by the Association can only be effective if its activities are grounded in Christ (God) and His Word. The Association shall operate on the following Biblical Basis.

This Basis (and Educational Mandate) is not to be understood as expressing, in any of its teaching /statements, anything which is inconsistent with the system of doctrine contained in the Standards of the Association referred to in section 2(d)¹ of the former Memorandum and Articles.

GOD

There is one God and He is sovereign² and eternal³. He is revealed in the Bible⁴ as three equal divine persons – Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit. God depends on no one⁵ and nothing; everything and everyone depend on Him⁶. God is holy⁷, just⁸, wise⁹, good¹⁰, gracious and merciful¹¹.

God created all things of His own sovereign will¹², and by His Word they are sustained and controlled¹³. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ¹⁴. He is also Father of all whom He has adopted as His children¹⁵. Because of God's faithfulness and His fatherly concern, nothing can separate His children from His love and care¹⁶.

JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternally existing¹⁷, only begotten¹⁸ Son of the Father. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things¹⁹. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin²⁰; truly God and truly man²¹. He lived a sinless life²² and died in the place of His people²³. He was buried²⁴, rose from the dead in bodily form²⁵ and ascended into heaven²⁶. Jesus is King of the universe²⁷ and Head of the church²⁸, His people, whom He has redeemed. He will return in glory to judge the living and the dead²⁹. He gives gifts to believers according to His sovereign will³⁰, enabling them to serve Him³¹.

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.³² He regenerates His people,³³ convicts them of their sin through the law, leads them to repentance,³⁴ and creates faith within them.³⁵ He is the source of their new sanctified life,³⁶ bringing forth His fruit in the life of believers.³⁷

THE BIBLE

The Bible, which is comprised of the books of the Old and New Testament, is the inspired, inerrant, infallible and sufficient Word of God, and the only absolute rule for all faith and conduct. It is indispensable and determinative for our knowledge of God,³⁸ of ourselves, and the rest of Creation.³⁹

COVENANT

God, who is Lord over all,⁴⁰ has a perfect and eternal plan for all His creation.⁴¹ Its ultimate goal is that Jesus Christ should be acknowledged as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.⁴²

Those who benefit from this plan are all God's people throughout history. They do so solely because of the mercy that God shows to them, and not because of anything they may have done to merit His favour.⁴³

This gracious plan of God whereby He promises to grant to His people all the blessings of eternal life is sometimes referred to as "the Covenant".

God's Covenant is revealed throughout the Bible.⁴⁴ Although it is administered differently in the Old and New Testaments, the ultimate focus throughout Scripture remains on the saving work of Jesus Christ through whom all the eternal blessings of the Covenant for all God's people throughout history have been secured for all eternity.⁴⁵

As Christians (the covenant people to whom God's promises belong), we have Christ's comforting assurance that He blesses our children when we bring them to Him.⁴⁶ We expect the fulfillment of His promises and therefore obey His command to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord.⁴⁷ Since this task has been committed to us, we have the responsibility for any education of our children that takes place inside or outside our homes.

GOD'S WORLD

God created humanity, both male and female, in His own image. Adam and Eve, the parents of all mankind, were created in the image of God.⁴⁸ The Bible teaches that families are formed through marriage and that marriage is a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. God's only ordained setting for marriage, sexual activity and human procreation is a committed and intimate relationship between one man and one woman,⁴⁹ to the exclusion of all others and intended for life.

Mankind's purpose is to worship their Creator by loving and serving Him⁵⁰, by exercising dominion under God's rule as stewards of His creation⁵¹. By sovereign appointment we are earth-keepers and caretakers, called to love God and our neighbour⁵², and tend the creation. Consequently, the purpose of human existence is to glorify God⁵³ and enjoy him forever⁵⁴. God uses our skills in the development and wellbeing of His world.

Sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience⁵⁵, because of which all people are alienated from God and each other and, as a result, they are under the judgement of God⁵⁶, and the creation is in bondage to decay⁵⁷.

All people have sinned⁵⁸ and, if outside of Christ, are in a fallen, lost condition, helpless to save themselves⁵⁹, under God's condemnation and blind to life's true meaning and purpose.

God holds each person responsible and accountable⁶⁰ for choices made and actions pursued. Human responsibility and accountability do not limit God's sovereignty. God's

sovereignty does not diminish human responsibility and accountability⁶¹.

Salvation from the penalty of sin is found only in our Lord Jesus Christ⁶², through repentance from sin and faith in His substitutionary, atoning death and resurrection⁶³. As the sinless One, He took on Himself the just punishment for His people's sins⁶⁴, and therefore the believing sinner is justified in the sight of God⁶⁵.

Through His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus has destroyed the power of Satan⁶⁶, who is destined to be confined forever to hell along with all those who reject Jesus as Lord⁶⁷.

Out of gratitude for God's grace, and in dependence on the Holy Spirit⁶⁸, God's people are to live worthy of their calling⁶⁹ in love and unity and obedience to God and His Word in all spheres of life⁷⁰. They are responsible to ensure that the gospel is faithfully proclaimed⁷¹.

Christian parents are required to bring their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord⁷² and to diligently teach them the truth of God's Word⁷³.

B-Educational Mandate

The educational services provided by the Association aim(s) to be Christ-centred and Biblically based Educational Communities, and intend to maintain the following distinctively Christian characteristics::

- The Lordship of Christ covers the whole world.⁷⁴ As Lord he guards and guides the destinies of individuals, groups and nations so as to promote his kingdom and prepare his people, those redeemed by his blood, for the glory of God. The association and its school/s acknowledge this Lordship as foundational in all areas. All life and education is based on the notion that we are called to serve Christ everywhere and in all we do.⁷⁵
- The Lordship of Christ is expressed in the philosophy, policies, curricula, and approaches to teaching and learning of the school/s.
- Everything is taught from a perspective that acknowledges God as Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Judge of the Universe.⁷⁶
- Teaching and learning are based on the Bible, with a view to the development of a Biblical world and life view.⁷⁷

STUDENTS

- Students are valued as God's image bearers.⁷⁸
- They are loved and accepted regardless of their beliefs, culture, race, abilities, or disabilities. They are challenged with the message of the gospel.

- They are encouraged to recognise the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of life, and to apply what they have learnt at school.
- They are provided opportunities for the development and sharing of their gifts and abilities, recognising that such gifts and abilities are given in order to serve the Lord and others.⁷⁹
- They are disciplined with love and justice as their school seeks the glory of God, the well being of the school community and the individual.⁸⁰

TEACHING STAFF AND ALL OTHER EMPLOYEES

- All those who hold employment positions in a Christian educational institution, including those who are not directly employed to teach in the classroom, are a vital part of the community that makes up a vibrant and authentic Christian learning environment based on Biblical principles. Christian teaching, education and modelling are required in each subject and field of study across the curriculum but also extend beyond the classroom into all aspects of the life of an educational institution. This includes those working in administration, properties and maintenance staff, bus drivers and every other person employed.
- All staff accept their position of authority and responsibility for the education of students and for modelling Christian behaviour as taught in the Bible and summarised in this statement of faith. They hold their position by virtue of their gifts and the authority delegated to them by parents through the Association.
- All staff will profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and as His disciples, strive to be obedient to His Word in all areas of their lives.⁸¹
- All staff will be provided with opportunities for ongoing training and professional development, including perspectives on Biblical world and life views and how these can be lived, taught and modelled.
- All staff will, by example in word and deed, provide students with a role model of the behaviour of mature Christian adults. It is an inherent requirement of all staffing positions that they be held by mature Christian adults who can fully subscribe to, promote and model the Biblical teachings as summarised in this statement of faith.

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMUNITY

The Christian Education community recognises the inter-related role of parents, the church, and the state in the education of children. As a community we:

- Accept that God has given to parents the prime responsibility for the education of their children and acknowledge the role that parents have in their home or in association with others to educate their children.⁸²
- Recognise that parents delegate aspects of this task to the school, and will encourage, value and support the authority and role of parents and their involvement in the school.
- Accept that God has given to the church a significant role in education that may be expressed in, among other things, supporting a Christian school.
- Acknowledge that God has instituted government to protect its citizens and ensure their welfare. Therefore the Association, and its school/s, must act with honesty and integrity in meeting the minimum requirements established by government for these purposes, except where these are clearly contrary to Biblical principles.⁸³
- The school community prays regularly for other Christian schools.

MEMBERS

- Members are called to love each other as Christ loves His people.
- Members shall seek in all personal interactions to show evidence of love, patience, and forgiveness and to uphold other Biblical standards of personal relationship.⁸⁴
- Members are urged to love and value each person as God's image bearer, regardless of his/ her beliefs, culture, race, abilities or disabilities. They support and encourage each other to work co-operatively for the glory of God.⁸⁵
- They are called to recognise that God has given appropriate authority to each person to carry out his/ her God given role in the school community.⁸⁶

THE BOARD

- The Board of the Association are servant leaders of the community for Jesus' sake.
- Board members profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and as His disciples strive to be obedient to His Word in all areas of their lives.⁸⁷
- Following Christ's example they exercise their God-given authority by serving their community.⁸⁸

- They formulate policies and make decisions prayerfully, depending on the wisdom of God in the light of practical Biblical principles.⁸⁹

THE ASSOCIATION

- The Association, and its school/s, co-operates with other Christian schools in order that God's kingdom is advanced.
- In whatever ways it can, the Association, and its school/s, encourages and supports the establishment and development of Christian schools.
- The Association is a non-denominational Christian community fostering Christian unity grounded in the truth of Scripture.⁹⁰ The Association encourages understanding of the rich diversity of Christian denominational expression⁹¹ as far as is consistent with the Word of God.
- While acknowledging the authority of schools to determine their own individual actions, the Association, and its school/s, co-operates with other schools in order that God's kingdom may be advanced.
- The Association, and its school/s, prayerfully maintains and regularly renews its vision for distinctively Christian education, reviewing curriculum and program goals in conjunction with its adopted Biblical Basis.⁹²

¹ That the Reformed Confessions commonly known as the Heidelberg Catechism the Belgic Confessions, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647 and ratified by Acts of Parliament of 1649 and 1690, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England as agreed upon in 1562, and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms agreed upon and approved in 1648 by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland set forth the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures.

² Romans 8:28-30; 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

³ Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:1-2

⁴ Matthew 3:16-17

⁵ Isaiah 40:12-14

⁶ Acts 17:24-25

⁷ Psalm 71:22; Isaiah 6:3

⁸ 1 John 1:9

⁹ Romans 11:33

¹⁰ Psalm 25:8

¹¹ Exodus 34:6-7

¹² Genesis 1; Revelation 4:11

¹³ Deuteronomy 8:3; Hebrews 1:3

¹⁴ II Corinthians 1:3

¹⁵ Romans 8:15-1, 23

¹⁶ Romans 8:29-39; John 6:37; 10:27-30

¹⁷ John 8:58

¹⁸ John 3:16

¹⁹ John 1:3

²⁰ Matthew 1:20-25

²¹ Philippians 2:5-8

²² Hebrews 4:15

²³ Romans 5:6; John 10:11; Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁴ John 19:41-42

²⁵ Luke 24:36-39; I Corinthians 15

²⁶ Acts 1:9-11

²⁷ Psalm 2; Philippians 2:9-11

²⁸ Ephesians 1:22-23

²⁹ John 14:3; Acts 1:11

³⁰ I Corinthians 12:1-7

³¹ Ephesians 4:8-13

³² John 15:32

³³ John 3:3

³⁴ John 16:8-15

³⁵ Romans 1:17

³⁶ Romans 8:4, 10-11s

³⁷ Galatians 5:22-23

³⁸ Acts 17:11

³⁹ II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21

⁴⁰ I Chronicles 29:11-12

⁴¹ Ephesians 3:11

⁴² Philippians 2:9-11

⁴³ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁴⁴ Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 15; 17; Exodus 2:24; II Kings 13:23; II Chronicles 30: 6-7; John 8:56; Galatians 3:5-6, 29; Hebrew 11:8-10

⁴⁵ John 10:28-29; Acts 4:12; Romans 8:28-29; II Corinthians 1:18-22

⁴⁶ Matthew 19:13-15; Acts 2:39

⁴⁷ Ephesians 6:1-4

⁴⁸ Genesis 1:26-27

⁴⁹ Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-24

⁵⁰ Luke 10:27

⁵¹ Genesis 1:28

⁵² Matthew 22:35-40

⁵³ Romans 11:36

⁵⁴ Psalm 16:11

⁵⁵ Romans 5:12-14

⁵⁶ John 3:36

⁵⁷ Romans 8:19-22

⁵⁸ Romans 3:9-23

⁵⁹ Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 8:7; I Corinthians 2:14

⁶⁰ II Corinthians 5:10

⁶¹ Exodus 34:6-7; Ezekiel 18

⁶² John 14:6; Acts 4:12

⁶³ Acts 2:38

⁶⁴ II Corinthians 5:21; Acts 20:21

⁶⁵ Romans 5

⁶⁶ Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 2:14-15

⁶⁷ II Peter 3:7; Revelation 20:7-10

⁶⁸ Romans 8:5-17

⁶⁹ Romans 12:1-2

⁷⁰ Ephesians 4:1-3

⁷¹ Matthew 28:19-20

⁷² Ephesians 6:1-4

⁷³ Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 1:8, 22:6

⁷⁴ Philippians 2:1-11

⁷⁵ Romans 12

⁷⁶ Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 10:12-14

⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Proverbs 1:7; Hebrews 11:3, 6

⁷⁸ Genesis 1:26-27

⁷⁹ I Corinthians 12; Romans 12

⁸⁰ Hebrews 12:1-11; Revelation 3:19

⁸¹ II Corinthians 6:14

⁸² Psalm 103:17-18; II Timothy 1:5; 3:14

⁸³ Romans 13:1-7

⁸⁴ Colossians 3:13

⁸⁵ Galatians 3:28-29

⁸⁶ I Peter 2:13-17

⁸⁷ Philippians 2:11; Micah 6:8

⁸⁸ Matthew 20:28

⁸⁹ Joshua 1:8

⁹⁰ Ephesians 4:3-6

⁹¹ Romans 14:4-13, 19

⁹² I Corinthians 10:31