

Covenant of Calvary Mennonite Fellowship

Approved 5/22/2022

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this covenant is to document what we believe is an acceptable application of Scripture and to emphasize the outworking of Biblical principles that we feel are important to maintain. It is not necessary for these applications to be matters of personal conviction but that we agree to their practice as good guidelines for this local Body of Believers.

DAILY WALK WITH JESUS

Just like eating food to sustain life physically, we need to provide for spiritual nourishment to have a vital relationship with Jesus Christ (Ps. 1:2-3; 119:97-99; Phil. 3:10).

- ◇ **I am committed to maintaining a meaningful regular devotional life and pursuing continuous spiritual growth.**

PEACE AND NONRESISTANCE

Christians are part of the Kingdom of God and pilgrims in this world (John 18:36). We recognize that God puts governments in place for the good of society (Rom. 13:1-5). We should pray for our government (1 Tim. 2:1-4) and obey the authorities unless it conflicts with our higher loyalty to God (Acts 5:29). The government's methods of maintaining order in society are different from the scriptural teaching of love and overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:18-21). We do not resist evil with violence. We do not get involved in political office or military service. Members who are elected to political office or join the military forfeit their church membership. Since we belong to a different kingdom, we advise members to avoid jury duty when possible. Jury duty in capital punishment cases is forbidden. Disputes should not be settled by filing lawsuits in secular courts (1 Cor. 6:1-8). We must endeavor to live at peace with everyone (Matt. 5:38-48).

- ◇ **I am committed to living a life characterized by peace and love, overcoming evil with good whether the adversity comes from a brother/sister or a stranger.**

SANCTITY OF LIFE

God is the Creator of life, which has its beginning at the time of conception (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:14-16). God also determines the length of our lives. We believe the taking of human life, whether by abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or any other method, is wrong and forbidden by Scripture (Ex. 20:13). We encourage each member to have a living will. We discourage the use of extraordinary methods to prolong life. We urge members not to be influenced by the humanistic society around us but to accept all people as God's special children.

- ◇ **I am committed to valuing all human life.**

MEDIA

Media continues to evolve and can highly influence our lives. We need to carefully consider three concerns when choosing our forms of media:

1. Is it wasting our time (Eph. 5:15-17)?
2. Is the content appropriate for Christians according to Philippians 4:8 and 1 Peter 2:11-12?
3. Does it give subtle messages that can lead us away from godly principles (Ps. 1:1-2)?

We strongly urge members to use content filters and accountability partnerships to protect the innocence of young children, to maintain purity, and to uphold integrity for all. Whenever the use of any media promotes an ungodly world view or a desensitization to sin, such use must be avoided.

- ◇ **I am committed to carefully evaluate and limit my use of media to avoid excessive use, inappropriate content, and subtle ungodly influences.**

HEADSHIP AND MARRIAGE

God created male and female and declared His work very good. We believe the Word of God clearly defines the levels of authority in our everyday lives. We should have respect for those in leadership and authority and willingly obey them whether in church, home, business, or society. In the home this means that all family members will recognize God's order and embrace a servant attitude. The husband/father should lead his family lovingly, and the wife/mother should contribute in supportive submission (Eph. 5:21-30; 6:1-6).

God's design for marriage is that one man and one woman commit themselves to one another as long as they both are living. In his fallen nature mankind has spoiled God's sacred design. We do not accept into membership those remarried after divorce if the former spouse is still living. A member who marries a divorcee forfeits his/her church membership. We do not believe that wearing the wedding band contributes to the significance of the wedding vows nor to fidelity in marriage, and we ask members not to wear it (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-16).

Sisters are to give expression of their relationship to God and man by their long hair and consistently veiled head. To express affirmation of the headship principle, a covering recognizable as a religious symbol is to be worn. The covering should be simple and modest in

color, of adequate size, and not for decoration, but rather a symbol of submission to authority (1 Cor. 11:1-16). Our understanding of long hair is natural length.

A brother's hair should be short and his head should be uncovered during worship services or while praying, teaching, or preaching (1 Cor. 11:4).

- ◇ **I am committed to the family as the foundational unit of church and society. I believe in the permanency of marriage terminated only by death. I support the policy of not receiving members who are divorced and remarried while a former spouse is living. I am committed to the wearing of the head veiling by our sisters.**

PURITY FOR GOD'S DWELLING

Christians have the blessing of having God's Holy Spirit living within. We are a part of Christ and members of His body. Because of this, God calls us to use our bodies for His glory (1 Cor. 6:9-20). We believe all sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage, as defined in the second paragraph of "Headship and Marriage" (Rom. 1:26-28), are perversions of God's design (Lev. 18:22-24). Anyone who abuses others, whether those abuses are sexual, emotional, verbal, physical, or with the abuse of authority, are committing sins against God our Creator and the victims. Viewing pornography pollutes the mind, promotes sinful desires, destroys relationships, and can lead to addiction. All these are sins against God. Persons involved in these activities must repent to receive the grace of God for forgiveness, reconciliation, and victorious life.

We take seriously the Scriptures warnings about the spiritual dangers and consequences of the sins of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). As Christians, our lives should demonstrate self-control, avoid excess (including drunkenness and gluttony), and show care for our physical bodies (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Addiction is a trap that wrecks lives and families. These addictions are in direct conflict with the works of the Spirit and for this reason great care should be given to avoid misuse. Although not strictly required by Scripture, there are compelling reasons to completely abstain from all use of alcohol, tobacco, and recreational and illicit drugs. As a congregation we support and encourage everyone to maintain high standards in order to avoid the traps of addiction, abuse, and causing offense.

- ◇ **I am committed to a life of purity and self-control.**

WORSHIP SERVICES

The New Testament Church observed the resurrection of Christ by gathering on the first day of the week for worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). We believe that corporate worship is a vital part of a Christian's life (Heb. 10:24-25). The Lord's Day is for our good (Mark 2:23-28) and should be kept as a day of devotion, worship, rest, and service as much as possible. In an effort to promote and uphold a cappella singing, instruments will not be used regularly during worship services.

WEDDINGS - Weddings shall be conducted in a Christian manner avoiding lavish display. Brethren and sisters, including members of the bridal party, shall attire themselves with modesty and simplicity.

FUNERALS – Simplicity, good stewardship, and decorum shall characterize our funerals. We encourage viewings to be reverent and respectful, honoring the deceased and those grieving. The funeral service should be a time of God-honoring reflection and worship and a call to the living to seriously consider their eternal destiny.

- ◇ **I am committed to regularly attending worship services and participating as opportunity arises. I will participate in nurture opportunities/ministries such as Sunday school, Bible school, revival meetings, prayer meetings, and small groups for my personal spiritual growth and for building up the body of Christ.**

SERVICE AND MISSIONS

We practice mutual aid within the church and give generously and cheerfully to share with others in need (2 Cor. 8:1-15). The Scriptures teach tithing and offerings (Mal. 3:6-10; 2 Cor. 9:6-7) and evangelization of the lost (Matt. 28:18-20). Scripture also instructs us to financially support those who minister the Word to us (1 Cor. 9:9-14).

- ◇ **I will give to the needs of people in the church, support evangelism, and participate in service activities with gifts of time, prayer, and finances as the Lord enables me.**

COMMUNITY

It is important to live in peace with God and with others (Rom. 5:1, 12:8). We need to be open to the counsel of others and honest about our relationships. When conflicts arise between members, those involved should seek reconciliation following the steps given in Matthew 18:15-20. Until this has been done, no church leader shall accept a complaint.

All sins affect the power and testimony of the Church. Confession of sin shall be made personally to God. Where inter-personal relationships with others are involved, appropriate

confession shall be made with those affected. Open transgressions shall be confessed publicly (Prov. 28:13; Gal. 6:1-2; Matt. 5:23-24).

- ◇ **I am committed to mutual accountability and responsibility as a member of this congregation. I will participate in mutual sharing of joys and sorrows for the welfare of the body of believers. I will work toward reconciliation in all personal relationships. I am open to give and receive counsel from the brotherhood.**

LEADERSHIP

We affirm team leadership of the congregation including the roles of overseer, pastors, deacons, and laymen on the Leadership Team. Church leadership should be characterized by service, humility, and joy. Christians are called to support and pray for our church leaders (Heb. 13:17).

- ◇ **I will support those in church leadership by prayer and encouragement.**

MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

We believe that everything belongs to God, and we are called to be faithful stewards of all that He entrusts to us. This stewardship includes our talents and gifts, the earth, possessions, and money. We are to use these things for God's glory and not for selfish purposes (Luke 16:11-13). Honesty and integrity are characteristics of God's children. Bankruptcy shall not be used to avoid personal debts and obligations. We should avoid the world's frivolous and irresponsible methods of pleasure seeking. Members shall not be involved in gambling and lotteries (1 Thess. 5:22).

- ◇ **I am committed to financial responsibility, honesty, and abstaining from gambling.**

SIMPLICITY, MODESTY, AND SEPARATION

Romans 12:1-2 instructs us not to allow the world to squeeze us into its mold. We do not base simplicity of life on frugality, but on our dependence on God. A simple, modest lifestyle best exemplifies a separation from the world. The excessive accumulation of possessions and wasteful consumption of resources are practices of a self-centered mindset.

Simple, modest clothing best portrays godly Christian character. We consider it improper to wear expensive or unusual clothing that attracts attention or immodestly exposes the body. Members are not to wear jewelry or use make-up that alters the natural appearance. Clothes shall be loose fitting. Clothes that expose the body in an immodest way shall not be worn (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-4).

To avoid the fashions and fleeting value system of the world, we ask our brothers and sisters to be neat and modest in agreement with the teachings of the New Testament. Our sisters refrain from wearing pants and all members refrain from wearing shorts, tank tops, or sleeveless shirts, except that men may wear shorts for sporting activities and private situations, etc. We believe the Christian should seek to avoid, as much as possible, the world's excessive pursuit of pleasure. Members are expected to be circumspect and prudent regarding the attendance of movies, fairs, parades, sporting events, mixed public bathing, etc. As believers we are called to be a testimony to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ in our lives without the diversions and amusements this world offers.

- ◇ **I am committed to a lifestyle that draws attention to God rather than to myself, one that is very different from the world's extravagant, materialistic, and immodest lifestyle.**

MEMBERSHIP & COUNSEL - Persons applying for baptism and membership, and those transferring from other congregations shall:

1. Be willing to support the CMF Constitution and to affirm the Covenant as a statement of belief or as an agreement to practice.
2. Complete the application for membership.
3. Complete the BMA "Assessment of Unity."

Members shall give their testimony prior to communion services, stating their peace with God and man and their desire for communion.

All members shall annually affirm this Covenant in writing.

Signed: _____

Date: _____