

Arc of the Covenant: The Evolution of Trinity Western University's Community Covenant as a
Response to Secularization

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Waterloo, 2015

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by

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Abstract

Over the last five years, Trinity Western University has become known for its Community Covenant, a five-page religious-based “Codes of Conduct” that, according to many, contains discriminatory language, particularly towards LGBTQ people.

While this document has been in existence only since 2009, Trinity has had a Christian-informed code of conduct since its early years. When looking at these documents—five in total—from one iteration to the next, what we see on the surface is a school that has, over time, increased its demands on the behaviour of its staff and students by requiring greater restraint on everything from sexual behaviour to the kind of entertainment in which they engage. What appears to be happening is that TWU, as an institution, is becoming more conservative while the rest of North America becomes more secular and more liberal. However, an examination of student newspapers and handbooks, as well as interviews with past and present students, faculty and staff reveals a much more complex relationship to a rapidly changing world. These latter sources shows that how individuals within the institution respond to secularization are not always aligned with the evangelical Christian goals of the school.

This then begs the question: are TWU’s formal guidelines evidence of an institution that has, at times, been both insular and unaware of changes not only within the outside world, but among its own people? Or instead, do these documents reflect an astute awareness of changing societal norms? In other words, is the evolution of this document a direct response to secularization and an attempt to hold on to conservative Christian values? In this thesis, I argue that the latter is true.

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Dedication

To David Seljak, who took a chance on me. So much of my academic success today started with your encouragement.

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Introduction

“This decision marks a lost opportunity for Canadians... today’s decision impacts the contribution faith communities add to Canadian diversity.”¹

~Earl Phillips, Executive Director of Trinity Western University’s proposed school of law, speaking on the Supreme Court of Canada’s ruling against TWU (2018)

In December of 2017, Trinity Western University (TWU), a private evangelical university located in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley, found itself before the Supreme Court of Canada for the second time in its almost 60-year history. Like their previous time before the court, public bodies were demanding that Trinity be held accountable for the allegedly discriminatory rhetoric contained within their Code of Conduct. However, whereas TWU won their 2001 court case in which the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) attempted to prevent the school from offering a four-year education degree, the courts would not rule in their favour a second time.

In June of 2018, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) upheld the decisions of the Law Society of Upper Canada (now the Law Society of Ontario), and the Law Society of British Columbia to deny accreditation to TWU’s proposed law school. By a margin of 7-2, the Supreme Court Justices contended that the law societies were correct in both their belief (TWU’s policies

¹ Lorna Dueck, *The Globe and Mail*, “Trinity Western decision is a big loss for Christian Freedom.” (June 17, 2018). <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-trinity-western-decision-is-a-big-loss-for-christian-freedom/>

contravened the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms [henceforth to be referred to as the Charter]), and their decision (such a law school should not be allowed to exist). At the centre of the debate was the school's Community Covenant, a five-page document that outlines the school's behavioral expectations for its students, faculty, and staff, and which has to be signed by all applicants and prospective employees before being accepted as a student or given an offer of employment. Among the outlined expectations, the Covenant informs students, faculty, and staff that they must "abstain from sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."² For the courts, it was these words and, perhaps most significantly, the *mandatory* nature of the Covenant that ultimately moved them to side with the law societies. While many (including, as we will see, some of TWU's own students and faculty) regarded the SCC's decision as the right one, consider for a moment the decision of the courts in 2001.³ As mentioned, the BC College of Teachers was attempting to prevent TWU from providing students with a full five-year education degree.⁴ Some of the BCCT's concerns were similar to that of the law societies: a school espousing discriminatory rhetoric and holding its community members to such rules, should not be allowed to produce—in this case—teachers.⁵ More specifically,

² Trinity Western University, Community Covenant (2009), 2.

³ In both *Law Society of British Columbia v. Trinity Western University* and *Trinity Western University v. Law Society of Upper Canada*, the majority opinion judges placed significant focus on the mandatory nature of the Covenant. In fact, in instances where the Covenant is mentioned, it is preceded by the word "mandatory" 46 times. While the judges raised concerns regarding the school's definition of marriage, it was "TWU's "unwillingness to compromise on the *mandatory* nature of the Covenant," and not the words contained there within, that seemed to prompt their decision.

⁴ Prior to this, TWU offered students the opportunity to take their first two years of a B.Ed. at TWU. From there, they would have to transfer to SFU to complete their degree.

⁵ At this time, the Community Covenant did not yet exist. Its precursor, *Community Standards: Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Students*, asked its members to abstain from "practices that are biblically condemned" including premarital sex and homosexual behavior. It should be noted here that TWU uses the word "members" to refer to its students, faculty, and staff. As well, they use the

however, the BCCT argued that a school that considered same-sex relationships as “biblically condemned” would produce homophobic and discriminatory teachers and therefore was not in the public’s best interest. There was a similar argument in 2017 where the Law Societies of Upper Canada and of British Columbia also viewed a law school that practiced discrimination as well outside of the public’s interest and argued that the Community Covenant would exclude LGBTQ students from attending Trinity’s law school, should it be allowed to exist. While the arguments in each case differed, at the centre of both cases was the belief that TWU was discriminating against LGBTQ people and that that discrimination contradicted the Charter. If the central concerns in each case were similar, then we must ask ourselves, “What broader social changes occurred within the years between the two cases that prompted the SCC to rule in favour of TWU in 2002, and against them in 2018? And more importantly, how has Trinity responded to such changes?”

While Trinity’s battle with the courts is not the central focus of this thesis, the difference in the two outcomes does speak to the question of what has happened to religion in Canada, and how changes to the ways in which we view and treat religion have impacted Trinity’s sense of fitting (or not fitting) into Canadian dominant social and religious norms. While the most recent court case focused on Trinity’s 2009 Community Covenant, the school has actually had several iterations of a Code of Conduct going back to 1962, their inaugural year.⁶ I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have acquired five of these documents from the years 1972, 1975,

word “membership” to describe being a part of TWU. The SCC also referred to TWU’s students, faculty and staff as “TWU members.”

⁶ The 2009 document entitled *Community Covenant Agreement: Our Pledge to One Another* is TWU’s acted as TWU’s Code of Conduct until 2018 and was the document examined in 2018 SCC decision. The Covenant can be found on TWU’s website at https://www.twu.ca/sites/default/files/community_covenant_without_signature.pdf

1976, 1995, and TWU's most recent code from 2009.⁷ When one examines these iterations and the changes that occurred from one version to the next, what we see is a school that appears to have grown more conservative, and more directive over time. When considering the growing secularism of Canada over these same years, one might conclude that the Trinity community is both ignorant of change and unaware of shifting values.

Contrary to this perspective, I argue here that Trinity does not operate with its head in the sand, and, in fact, is hyperaware of shifting Canadian attitudes towards religion, LGBTQ persons, and other equality rights. In fact, I would argue that these shifts in attitude have, at least in part, contributed to the changes one can observe in TWU's codes of conduct over the years. Instead of simply ignoring ongoing secularization, I argue that many of the changes to TWU's Code of Conduct have been in direct response to secularization. Secularization, which has resulted in a move away from traditional religious values at the centre of public life, has brought with it greater permissiveness particularly with regards to things such as divorce, gender, and sexual activity. It is the collective result of secularization to which Trinity has responded.

By measuring each iteration of the Code of Conduct against the backdrop of what was happening in Canada (socially, morally, religiously, politically, and legally), we can begin to see how such changes influenced, informed and shaped each new Code of Conduct and the language therein. In addition, by talking to members of the TWU community, I also am able to reflect critically on how members of this community responded both to broader social and cultural changes, and to Trinity's responses to them through the changing codes of conduct.

⁷ While no copy of this document exists, it is referenced in a Trinity Junior College (the precursor to Trinity Western University) newspaper from 1962.

Terminology

Secular, Secularism, and Secularization: What does it all mean?

It continues to surprise me that in a country where secularism and secularization are often debated—on the news, in classrooms, at the workplace—many of us continue to have only a vague understanding of what these terms mean. The words secular, secularism and secularization are often used synonymously with “non-religious.” While this is not incorrect, it is certainly incomplete, and perhaps even muddled. Even scholars cannot agree on a set definition for these complex phenomena. As this paper will frequently use these terms, it is important to provide readers with an operational definition of the ways in which they are used here.

These days, news stories regarding religion are plentiful, with words like “secular” appearing frequently to describe everything from public education to legal systems. Here, I use the word in two ways; one to simply refer to those things that have no “official” connection to the religious or spiritual, such as a secular piece of music or a court of law.⁸ Secondly, the secular is now a place where religious ideas and values have less influence (or no influence at all) where they once did, such as public schools and hospitals.

More central to our argument here, however, is the means by which a society moves towards the secular. Secularization refers to the process by which religion loses cultural and social value and is characterized by a number of things including: displacement of religion from the centre of human life towards the margins, the shift of social activities and services from religious to secular, and an overall replacement of religious consciousness by empirical, or rational

⁸ I use the word “official” here to mean something that is formally recognized by the state. While Canada does not have a state-sanctioned, or “established” religion (such as the Catholic Church in Italy or Islam in Libya), there is a tremendous amount of Christian privilege in Canada. Christmas decorations in public spaces such as city halls, malls, public schools and even parliamentary buildings show that Christian privilege is not a thing of the past. Instead of a formally established religion, Canada has what is sometimes referred to as a “shadow establishment.”

orientation.⁹ In this thesis, I will use secularization, not so much as a move *towards the irreligious* (as we will see, many people move away from church attendance while still maintaining a belief in God or the spiritual), but instead a move *away from the authority and legitimacy of religion within the public sphere*. This is at the heart of the process of secularization. While I speak of secularization simply as a process, I do so with an awareness of how polarizing a discussion regarding religion's loss of power can be. This awareness is necessary if we hope to understand what it is that many TWU members believe themselves to be resisting.

While secularization is a process that occurs over time, secularism is quite different. Secularism is the ideology that the above set of social changes are beneficial and perhaps even necessary. Secularism argues that religion must continue to lose its influence if we are to have things such as gender equality, marriage equality, and greater personal freedom. It is this ideology, more than the process itself, that many rally against. In a myriad of ways, the idea of secularism now conjures up images not only of a growing population of non-believers but is also associated with an indifference—even hostility—towards organized religion.¹⁰ Regardless of where on the spectrum one lands, both groups often see secularization as a process that is both *ideologically* motivated, and ends with leaving “old ways” behind. From this perspective, both views are right.

⁹ This is a summary of Steve Bruce's definition of secularization. For an in-depth definition and list of characteristics, see Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory*, 2011.

¹⁰ It is perhaps with no surprise that those speaking most often of the hostility towards religion tend to be scholars of faith. People like theologian John Stackhouse, sociologist David Martin, and lawyer for the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, Barry Bussey, all discuss at length the what they perceive to be an attack on Christianity. For more on the evangelical perspective of the detrimental effect that secularization has had on religion, see Stackhouse's “Religious Diversity, Secularization, and Postmodernity,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*. ed. Chad Meister (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195340136.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195340136-e-18?print=pdf>

Many Canadians would like to see religion placed solely in the private sphere, where one's beliefs and practices become a strictly private affair.¹¹ Others, however, believe that secularization is a move away from something inherently Canadian, an integral part of who we are as a country (i.e., a nation founded on Christian principles, with laws, customs and national holidays reflecting those principles) and in doing so, is a threat to religious (read: Christian) freedom, and an infringement on the fundamental freedoms guaranteed in Section 2 of the Charter.¹² It is these two opposing beliefs that have been at the centre (or at least close to the centre) of the Trinity Western University law school debate.

Evangelicalism or Fundamentalism: Is there a difference?

As the term evangelicalism will be used throughout this paper, it is important for us to understand its meaning. Here, the definition provided by John Stackhouse is useful. Stackhouse emphasizes that evangelicalism emphasizes “the unique authority of Scripture and salvation through faith alone in Christ.”¹³ One should also live a disciplined life according to scripture and believe in the importance of evangelism—sharing the message and teachings of Christ—for all people. Stackhouse also points out that while evangelicals believe in the importance of evangelism, they are not necessarily evangelists. In other words, evangelicals are not necessarily

¹¹ A current example of this is the recently passed Bill 21 in Quebec. Bill 21 prevents all public servants from donning any religious symbols. (The use of the word “symbols” here is problematic. Wearing a crucifix is a symbol of Catholicism, but not integral to being a Catholic; this is different than wearing a kippa or tzitzit, which many Jews believe to be commanded of them and thus integral to their faith.)

¹² The fundamental freedoms are freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of belief, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association.

¹³ John G. Stackhouse, Jr. *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 7.

out in the world engaged in the activity of evangelizing.¹⁴ Stackhouse goes on to say that evangelicals believe that through the Scriptures is the “promise of moral and spiritual rebirth through Jesus Christ.” In this way, a personal relationship with Jesus is a necessary part of evangelicalism.¹⁵ Certainly, for (almost) everyone that I spoke with, a personal relationship with Jesus exists in their lives.¹⁶

Fundamentalism is another term that is misunderstood and is often used as a synonym for evangelicalism. While evangelicals may also be fundamentalists, this is not always the case. While it may be accurate to say that all Christian fundamentalists are also evangelicals, it would not be accurate to say that all evangelicals are fundamentalists. While fundamentalists also emphasise the importance of scripture, the salvation afforded only to those who have faith in, and a personal relationship with Christ, fundamentalists are seen as having a stricter adherence to Scripture as well as a “militant opposition to (1) liberal theology or (2) what they perceive as the relation of cultural values in North America in the past century,” as well as anything directly or indirectly associated with modernism such as feminism, LGBTQ rights, and evolutionary theory.¹⁷ As we will see in Chapter Three, while all of the conservative students and faculty that

¹⁴ Evangelizing seemed to be a regular activity for Trinity students throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Several articles in Trinity’s early papers highlight the importance of street evangelizing and actively attempt to recruit students to do so.

¹⁵ See also, Paul Bramadat, *The Church on the World’s Turf: An Evangelical Christian Group at a Secular University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) for a useful definition of evangelicalism (pp 10-12).

¹⁶ I have added “almost” as there was one interviewee that would no longer claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

¹⁷ Bramadat, 11.

I spoke to at TWU identify as evangelical, none were willing to identify as fundamentalists.¹⁸

For those that appear to be progressive or liberal, almost all identify as Christian, and most of those people still identify as evangelical.¹⁹

Historiography

Within the realm of secularization theory, theorists tend to lean towards one of two camps: those for whom the steady and irreversible decline of the power and influence of religion is undeniable and irreversible, and those who disagree because they believe that religion is on the upswing and/or that secularization is a myth propagated by the intelligentsia of the western world.²⁰ Some of the theorists who fall into the former camp have been accused by those in the latter camp of not just exaggerating the impact of secularization, but of trying to promote secularity (as though it is not possible to write about something without also promoting it).²¹

¹⁸ Using the definitions given above, I would argue that many some that I spoke with would meet the definition of fundamentalist. Indeed, Trinity, through its policies and past Codes of Conduct, does also appear to be at least skimming the edges of fundamentalism, insofar as they appear to take scripture seriously and are certainly opposed to things such as LGBTQ rights, and sex outside of heterosexual marriage.

¹⁹ I should note here that the use of the words “conservative” and “liberal” are my own and not necessarily how others described themselves. Conservative Christians were more likely to describe themselves more specifically as “Baptist,” “Mennonite,” or even “Anglican.” These often included a belief in “traditional,” heteronormative marriage, and reverence for scripture, including an often literal reading of the Bible. Those that supported things like marriage and gender equality, were more likely to describe themselves as “liberal” while also Christian. For convenience, I have opted to use the word “conservative” or “conservative Christian” when referring to those who hold so-called traditional values, and “liberal” or “liberal Christian” when referring to those not bound by conventional ideas on things such as marriage and gender. It’s also important to note that there are liberal evangelical Christians, and many of my interviewees identified themselves as such.

²⁰ Reading secularization theory can sometimes feel like reading conspiracy theory. The arguments as to who, what, when, where, how, and why are endless and everyone seems just a bit suspicious of what others have to say. It is virtually impossible to cover the plethora of historians, sociologists, theorists, and religious studies scholars that have chimed in on this increasingly popular debate. As both time and space are limited, I have chosen just a handful of authors to illustrate the main arguments occurring within the realm of secularization theory. Additional authors will be used throughout this thesis.

²¹ It is worth noting that both sides allude to the others’ religious beliefs (or lack thereof) as interfering with the ability to provide sound, unbiased, empirical information on such a complex topic. (Historian Callum Brown argues that a completely unbiased argument is likely unachievable and not necessarily beneficial.)

It is important to highlight the ongoing debate regarding secularization over the last 40 years. To do this, I will include those sociologists, historians, and theorists who argue that, in fact, secularization is an undeniable phenomenon. These theorists include sociologists Steve Bruce and Reginald Bibby, and historians Ramsey Cook, David Marshall, Tina Block and Callum Brown. While all agree that the process of secularization is real and irreversible, their theories on the causes of such differ greatly.

On the opposite side of the divide are sociologists David Martin, Grace Davies and Wade Clark Roof as well as historians Robert Orsi and Jon Butler. Many of these scholars—while recognizing that churches are empty and religion has been pushed into the shadows—still resist the idea that religion is losing its importance and, in fact, some see religion as being on the upswing. Indeed, when one looks at things such as the continued success of the Catholic church, the rise of evangelicalism in places such as South America, Asia and Africa, and the power that conservative Christianity holds in US politics, it is easy to see how one can believe that religion is just as popular, just as influential—perhaps even more so—than ever.²²

In addition to these two positions, there is a third—and perhaps more interesting—philosophy that argues that secularization exists only within a narrowly defined understanding of religion. By “overcoming pre-existing hierarchies and boundaries” this third camp encompasses people who bring religion into their lives in ways that meet their individual needs.²³ Sometimes referred to as “Sheilism,” designer or individualized faith practices have seen its numbers

²² Indeed, one cannot look at secularization as a global phenomenon. Religion does maintain much influence in many parts of the world.

²³ Ulrich Beck, *A God of One's Own*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 52.

increase dramatically over the last 40 years.²⁴ Places like the west coast, while seen as the most irreligious place in Canada, has also long been a hotbed of alternative forms of spirituality, suggesting that faith *with* borders has been replaced by faith without. Sociologist Ulrich Beck, and scholars of religious studies such as Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas, broaden their interpretation of religious belonging to include those for whom religion does not require a house of worship or a set doctrine. Often referred to as Spiritual but Not Religious, SBNR's "use their religious experiences to construct their individual religious shelter, their 'sacred canopy'" under which they find a god, or perhaps gods, that meet their individual needs.²⁵ While this paper necessarily operates from the belief that secularization has made religion both peripheral and insignificant to many, this third group has been able to expand the meaning of religion in ways that make religious practice far more prevalent than many scholars would have us believe.²⁶

Secularization: An Undeniable Existence

Steve Bruce, in his book, *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory*, argues for the significance of the Protestant Reformation in moving the western world towards secularization. While the Reformation moved us away from the "idea that God could be manipulated through ritual, confession, and penance," thereby reinstalling some of God's power, it also "stripped away the angels and saints, eliminated the ritual and sacramental manipulation

²⁴ Named for Sheila Larson, Sheilism is the practice of designing one's own religion by taking pieces of multiple religions and worldviews and co-opting them into one individualized belief system. Coined by Robert Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*. The term is sometimes used derogatorily as a way of dismissing these customized religions.

²⁵ Beck, 16.

²⁶ It should be made clear that not all people that leave behind organized religion end up in the SBNR category. Indeed, of those proclaiming no specific religious affiliation, only a third identify as "spiritual." Many who leave behind religion, also leave behind any trace of spirituality. Still, a third is not an insignificant number and in places like the Pacific Northwest, that number is higher and growing.

of God, and restored the process of ethical rationalization.”²⁷ This sentiment echoes others such as Emile Durkheim who also argued that the rise of modernity and replacement of the old gods by scientific reasoning led to the decline of religious significance.

While Bruce and Durkheim both make convincing arguments for the long arc of secularization, they are outnumbered by those that argue that secularization is a more recent phenomenon occurring over the last 100 years.²⁸ And while many of those historians and theorists now argue that secularization began in earnest in the 1960s, there are others that tuck this phenomenon neatly between the distant and recent pasts by pointing a finger to the 19th and early 20th centuries as significant turning points in the move away from religious adherence. In Europe in this period, philosophers such as John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx challenged the authority of religion and governments or royalty that was supposedly sanctioned by God and encouraged people to challenge those systems that kept them docile and unquestioning. Authors such as Hugh McLeod and Owen Chadwick speak of the secularization that was advancing in Europe during the latter half of the 19th century, due to the rise of religious pluralism,

²⁷ Bruce, 28.

²⁸ It is important here to mention German sociologist, Jürgen Habermas. Like Bruce, Habermas also concedes the connection between modernity and secularization citing the significance of the Enlightenment and the ensuing “progress of science and technology...A scientifically enlightened mind cannot be easily reconciled with theocentric and metaphysical worldviews.” Unlike Bruce, however, Habermas now challenges the validity of this particular secularization thesis due to its Eurocentric slant. Habermas holds up the US as a bastion of modernization and asks the reader to consider why, if modernization is the gateway to secularization, does the US continue to have “undiminished vibrancy of its religious communities (an) unchanging proportion of religiously committed and active citizens”? According to Habermas, secularization theory can only be applied to the more affluent countries of Europe, as well as places such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. (On this question, see David Voas, “Is the United States a Counterexample to the Secularization Thesis?” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 121, 5 (March 2016), 1517-56. Habermas also argues that we are in what he calls a “post-secular” society in which countries are not undoing secularity but are forced to reimagine secularism in the advent of religious pluralism due to immigration as well as the rise in orthodox or conservative groups such as the Pentecostals. There is a myriad of scholars who pick up on this theme either to further it or challenge it. Time and space do not allow me to discuss them here. Importantly, see Jose Casanova, “Exploring the Post-secular; Three Meanings of the Secular and Their Possible Transcendence” in *Habermas and Religion*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan Van Antwerp. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 27-48.

industrialization and urbanization, and the onset of socialism. So wide-spread were these phenomena that the secularization occurring in Europe inevitably influenced Canada.²⁹

In his book *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in late Victorian English Canada*, Canadian historian, Ramsay Cook, argues that while Christians used religion to “emphasize social utility and to downplay doctrine, these advocates of the Social Gospel movement were in fact making church irrelevant in a world where other institutions were better equipped to perform the socially useful roles once fulfilled by the church.”³⁰ While promoting Christian service in the name of social welfare did lead to the creation of religiously based social service agencies, it also resulted in people challenging those “religious beliefs (that) sanctioned the social order.”³¹ The path “blazed by nineteenth-century religious liberals led not to the Kingdom of God on earth but to the secular city.”³² While this did not result in a mass exodus from the church, it did spur an era of religious doubt, and carved a path down which secularization could travel.

David Marshall also speaks to the “emergence of a liberal theology,” in his book *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940*, that attempted to develop a “new religious understanding” that would mesh with “modern social and intellectual

²⁹ For more on 19th European secularization, see Hugh McLeod’s *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848-1914* and Owen Chadwick’s *Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*. While Chadwick’s book is now rather dated (1975), it does a good job of outlining the impact that liberalism, Marx, and science had on religious belief. McLeod focuses on changes to religious identity and practice within France, Germany, and England, and the significance of the years of 1848 (the French Revolution) and 1914 (the Great War). Both make strong arguments that Europe gave birth to secularization during this timeframe.

³⁰ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in late Victorian English Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 6. Note: The Social Gospel movement, popularized in the late 19th century, followed the biblical principles of charity and compassion in order to address social issues such as poverty, addiction, and child labour. Current religious groups such as the Salvation Army operate under the principles of the social gospel.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³² *Ibid.*, 229.

trends.”³³ Meshing the religious with the modern, included discussions of the then recently published *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin’s book on evolutionary biology which challenged the creation story. As both Cook and Marshall argue, the combination of social reform, liberal theology, and the emergence of evolutionary theory within the latter part of Victorian Canada, came together to start (or at least strengthen) the secularization of Canada.³⁴

As already discussed, there is no shortage of scholars who place the origins of secularization, firmly in latter half of the 20th century. Reginald Bibby is one of many who take the position that secularization is the result of fairly recent historical events. In his book *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada*, he shares the bleak reality of both religious belief and attendance in Canada. While this book is now considered old by academic standards (1993), the picture that Bibby draws is as valid in 2019 as it was then. Bibby illustrates the “continuing exodus” from church attendance and religious affiliation that has occurred in Canada since the 1940s (for Protestants) and the mid-1960s for Roman Catholics. Relying on data from churches, surveys to the general public, Stats Canada and other sources, Bibby shows a Canada that has been irreversibly impacted by secularization. While Canada’s Christian history remains a part of our story, its importance and influence has shifted.³⁵ For many (young people,

³³ David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 49.

³⁴ The impact of evolutionary theory, as well as other scientific theories had a significant impact on religious belief in late-Victoria Canada. For more, see Marshall, noted above, as well as Cook, 7-25. For an interesting look at how religious communities in the Maritime provinces during this time were responding to evolutionary theory, see Jerry N. Pittman, “Darwinism and Evolution: Three Nova Scotia Religious Newspapers Respond, 1860-1900.” *Acadiensis, Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region/Revue d’histoire de la region Atlantique*. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadiensis/article/view/11946>

³⁵ These days, the story of Canada’s Christian roots has more significance in the Truth and Reconciliation movement than it does in how we structure our day-to-day lives.

new waves of immigrants) Canada's Christian history is not their own.³⁶ Bibby, like others, points to things such as the modernization of Quebec, the marginalization of women by the churches, and changing attitudes towards things such as homosexuality and abortion as reasons for leaving religion behind.³⁷

Like Bibby, many scholars cite changes to women's rights as a reason for secularization. In *Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularization in Canada, Ireland UK and USA since the 1960's*, UK-based historian, Callum Brown argues that the significant changes for women that arose out of the 1960s has had a major impact on the pace of secularization. Says Brown, "the sexual revolution was a key component undermining the place of religion in the West."³⁸

While Brown references post World War II changes such as smaller family sizes, it was the mid-1960s, characterized by an increased acceptance of individual autonomy, and an increase in divorce coupled with a decrease in marriage rates, that affected women most positively. Beginning in the mid-1960s, increasing numbers of women were released from the goal of becoming the perfect housewife and could now make decisions for themselves outside of the confines of marriage and motherhood. The Second Wave of feminism allowed women to challenge the things that were standing in the way of autonomy. Through this new lens, women

³⁶ It is important to note that over the last 15 years, Bibby has written more on the resurgence of religion within Canada. In his books *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* and *Resilient Gods: Being Pro-Religious, Low-Religious, or No Religious in Canada*, Bibby more recently focuses on the rejuvenation of religion in Canada as well as the shifts along the pro- and low-religious continuum.

³⁷ It should be noted that in his most recent work, *Resilient Gods: Being Pro-Religious, Low Religious or No Religious in Canada*, Bibby expands his view to look at spirituality in Canada, as well as what he refers to as a "religious comeback" due in great part to shifting immigration patterns. Increased immigration from places like Africa and the Middle East have resulted in increased numbers of those identifying as religious.

³⁸ Callum Brown, *Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularization in Canada, Ireland UK and USA since the 1960's* (Suffolk: Boydell Press), 128.

began to recognize religion as a major obstacle to gender equality. As a result, scores of women left the church behind.³⁹ For Brown, so significant is the women's movement that he pays little-to-no attention to earlier changes that Bruce identifies as contributing to secularization such as the Reformation and the changes in technology and science since the Enlightenment. Brown mentions these areas only in passing and in order to dispute their influence. In fact, in earlier works by Brown, he explicitly attacks the argument that secularization is the result of modernity.⁴⁰

Sociologist Linda Woodhead takes Brown's work several steps further in her article, "Gendering Secularization Theory." In this, Woodhead agrees with Brown that "women seem to be leaving the churches at a faster rate than men," but states that Brown neglects to recognize that while women were experiencing greater autonomy in several areas such as paid labour, *how* women responded to new freedoms determined whether or not they left religion behind.⁴¹ For women who remained "committed to 'traditional' roles of domestic work and care," they were more likely to do so under "the sacred canopy of religion" since that was one of the few spaces "in western societies...in which such identity continues to be affirmed and legitimized rather than stigmatized."⁴² In other words, greater freedoms were not enough to drive women away

³⁹ The women's movement led to greater opportunities for women in the work force. This also led to a significant decrease in the number of women becoming nuns, as well as a significant number of nuns leaving their Orders.

⁴⁰ In *Death of Christian Britain*, Brown points out that while many scholars have "imagined religious decline as one of the characteristics of the modern world, caused by the advance of reason through the Protestant Reformation," (1) this theory imagines religious decline as a long-term process without end. Brown, on the other hand, sees the 1960s as the beginning of the "'endgame' of Christian decline in Britain" (7) and until this time, Britain remained a "highly religious nation." (9) In other words, in the long-arc of religious decline, the catalyst for, and the process of, secularization are two different things.

⁴¹ Linda Woodhead, "Gendering Secularization Theory." In *Social Compass*, June 1, 55 (2), 2008. p. 188.

⁴² Woodhead, 190.

from the church. Instead, how women responded to the so-called revolution determined their relationship with the church.⁴³

Other historians, such as Tina Block, also mention the impact that gender has had on religion. While Block focuses on the particularities of secularism in the Pacific Northwest, she also notes that women began to recognize that their role within the church was “restricted” due to their gender and eventually “drifted away from churches that seemed out of step with changing gender ideals.”⁴⁴

Among those who challenge these theories of secularization, we will begin by looking at David Martin’s, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*. Martin is a sociologist of religion based in the UK and one of the earliest (and perhaps most influential) critics of secularization theory. In this book Martin attempts to disprove commonly held beliefs within secularization theory by arguing against many of Bruce’s arguments regarding the causes of secularization.⁴⁵ Martin disputes Bruce’s description of social differentiation as a cause of secularization by arguing that while social differentiation and the pluralism that came out of it was an initial “shock” to the church, differentiation inevitably allowed for religion to separate

⁴³ I say “so-called” revolution because as Woodhead and others have pointed out, while women were presented with greater autonomy and broader opportunities, they were also expected to continue being the sole-providers of domestic care, leaving them with “two forms of labour, two sets of obligation, and two forms of identity.” (Woodhead, 190.) As Woodhead says, this “hardly amounts to a straight-forward revolution, let alone a liberation.” (189)

⁴⁴ Tina Block, *The Secular Northwest: Religion and Irreligion in Everyday Post-War Life* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 68).

⁴⁵ It’s important to note here that *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* was published in 2005, several years before Bruce’s *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory* (2011). As such, Martin’s criticisms of Bruce are based on Bruce’s earlier works. Martin’s later book, *Religion and Power: No Logos Without Mythos* was published in 2014. As such, many of his criticisms of secularization theory allude to Bruce’s more recent works such as *Secularization*. Reading secularization theory of the last 20 years can feel like you’re watching a tennis match. It can also be tedious, as you become aware that you are also witnessing a pissing contest.

itself from the “realpolitik of the state” allowing religion to “gain its own autonomy.”⁴⁶ Martin also argues that the separation of church and state in areas such as Latin America, allowed for the “onset of pluralism and the emergence of several denominations...which would help vitalize the religious field by competition.”⁴⁷ In other words, the onset of pluralism caused the church to up its game.

Grace Davie, too, casts doubt on common understandings of secularization by discussing the concept of “believing without belonging.” In her paper, “Believing Without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?”, Davie acknowledges that statistical information gathered by sociologists indicates that a “significant number of their 18-24 age-group are rejecting even nominal belief. In short...disconnected belief is giving way to no belief at all.”⁴⁸ Davie, however, is able to dismiss this theory by widening the definition of religion to include questions regarding our responsibility to one another and “to the Earth itself.” By looking at young people’s response to “ecological, moral, and ethical issues” Davie suggests that engaging with these issues is akin to “believing without belonging” as though involvement in social justice issues cannot be independent of a belief in God.⁴⁹ It is important to note that increasing numbers of young people have been raised without any religious practice or belief in God, while still maintaining a moral compass. Davie seems unable to separate the two. She, along with Martin,

⁴⁶ David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*. (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21

⁴⁸ Grace Davie, “Believing Without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?” In *Social Compass* 37 (4), 1990. p. 462

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

often criticizes the works of Bruce and others who promote a brand of secularization that sees religion as increasingly unimportant.

Wade Clark Roof is another important scholar as he provides the reader with a clear picture of the importance of religion within the United States. While some scholars such as David Voas recognize the anomaly of the US with regards to secularization, Roof uses the US to argue that a move away from religion simply is not happening. If one examines closely the rise of the Moral Majority in the 1980s, it can be argued, that in the political arena, the role of religion has increased in importance instead of the opposite experience of the rest of the Western World.⁵⁰

What Roof leaves out is that the numbers of religious adherence in the US—particularly in areas such as the Northwest and especially for those identifying as Christian, have in fact been decreasing since 1965.⁵¹ Research done by Gallup, the Religious Landscape Study, and the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) all show that the numbers of Religious Nones have increased steadily over the last 20 years and that the numbers of people who identify as members of a particular faith continue to decrease. Research shows that the percentage of Nones in the US is approximately 22 percent, not far behind Canada’s estimated 24 percent.⁵²

⁵⁰ Founded in 1979 by Baptist Minister, Jerry Falwell, the Moral Majority attempted to mobilize conservative Christians in order to advance conservative Christian values. The Moral Majority effectively influenced American politics by supporting the Republican party through voter registration, lobbying, and fundraising. While the group disbanded in the late 1980s, conservative Christians continue to have a strong influence in American politics. See Tom McCarthy, “Faith and freedoms: why evangelicals profess unwavering love for Trump,” *The Guardian*, (July 7, 2009); <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/07/donald-trump-evangelical-supporters>; André Gagné, “The Christian right’s efforts to transform society,” *The Conversation*, (July 24, 2019), <http://theconversation.com/the-christian-rights-efforts-to-transform-society-120878>

⁵¹ Gallup, “Religion,” 2007. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>

⁵² It should be noted that this number is from the 2011 National Household Survey. This number is likely closer to 30 percent now. The next National Household Survey will happen in 2021. For an overview of religious identity in America see Frank Newport “2017 Update on Americans and Religion,” <https://news.gallup.com/poll/224642/2017-update-americans-religion.aspx>; Daniel Cox and Robert P. Jones, “America’s Changing Religious Identity,” <https://www.prri.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian->

Still, what people like Davies and Roof is able to illustrate, is that religion—in a myriad of forms—remains important to many people. While this does not translate into full churches, it does appear in how people live their lives. Historian, Robert Orsi, is able to illustrate how people continue to shift and mold religion in a way that meets their needs. His works such as *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*, and *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem* are able to show how communities take even the smallest symbol of faith and use it to great importance. In his essay, “Who Cares About Religion? The Blind Spot in Contemporary Historiography,” Orsi argues that religion—while it may look very different—remains as present and significant as ever. We have been largely blinded to this fact by the “secularization narrative,” and by a liberalism which has led to “religious irrelevance.”⁵³ Orsi is correct when he says that scholars focus more on the disappearance of religion over the last three centuries than its ongoing significance. The narrative now is that of “religious absence.”⁵⁴ Jon Butler makes a similar argument in “Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History,” by illustrating how “scholarly hostility to religion” as well as “misplaced fears of violating the separation of church and state,” coupled with an emphasis on “secular politics and modernization,” has led to an absence of meaningful scholarship on religious history.⁵⁵

Designer Gods

[religiously-unaffiliated/](https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/); and Pew Research Centre, “Religious Landscape Study,” <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

⁵³ Robert Orsi, “Who Cares About Religion? The Blind Spot in Contemporary Historiography,” Quilicum History Conference, January 30, 2003, 2-3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ Jon Butler, “Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History,” *The Journal of American History* (March 2004), 1358.

In this third and final perspective on secularization, several authors explore the rise of alternative spirituality not as the replacement for religion (as many have argued), but as a broader, or perhaps post-modern, version of religion.

Those taking this approach argue that religion need not be defined as a belief in a strict set of doctrines accompanied by church attendance. Instead, individuals now use their own individual experiences, beliefs and practices to weave together a practice or a set of beliefs that speaks specifically to them. This may include pieces from their own religious upbringing (if any), as well as aspects from both eastern and western belief systems. This is further evidence of Davie's "believing without belonging" argument.

Ulrich Beck's *A God of One's Own* expands on the individualization of religion and personal relationship to God. Ulrich recognizes the challenge of this, given that the individualized god is no longer the same god that our parents once believed in. Instead, it is a god that one has designed to reflect one's world-view.

Other works such as Paul Heelas' and Linda Woodhead's *Spiritual Revelation: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, and Woodhead's "Gendering Secularization Theory" speak of this shifting spirituality. And while Woodhead points out that "women make up 80 percent of those who are involved in such (alternative) spirituality," what is important here is not that the majority of practitioners of alternative religions are women, but that instead of women (and men) walking away from the church altogether, an alternative practice was often sought out.⁵⁶ As church attendance numbers began to shrink in the 1960s, the rise of those practicing alternative forms of

⁵⁶ Linda Woodhead, "Gendering Secularization Theory" in *Social Compass*, 55 (2), 2008: 18

spirituality began to increase.⁵⁷ The authors speak of a 50 percent decline in the numbers of people attending church since the 1950s, coupled with an increase in those participating in activities deemed “spiritual” (i.e., yoga, meditation, etc.).⁵⁸ Almost three-quarters of those interviewed saw spirituality as being associated with the individual and not with “organized religion and church doctrine.”⁵⁹ While the authors are clear that not every person leaving the church are replacing one form of religious practice with some kind of spirituality, a significant number have done just that.⁶⁰

Over the last 20 years, secularization theory has shifted from focusing solely on empirical evidence such as the number of people attending a mainstream religious service, as well as the importance of religion in people’s everyday lives and the power it held in the public sphere, to include a broadening of the definition of religion by removing narrow doctrine and a collectively defined god. While some scholars still look at adherence to religion primarily through numbers, many are also looking at how people design and interact with their own customized spiritual practice. The scholarship is now mixed, making room for a wide variety of methodologies. During TWU’s early years, many people would have considered something to be “worship” only if it took place in a formally recognized “house of God.” Now, however, scholars are recognizing that interaction with one’s “god” may happen on a yoga mat or in a forest with more frequency than within a chapel. From this perspective, those defining and studying a broader definition of

⁵⁷ Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005); see Chapter Three, “Evidence for a Spiritual Revolution.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, see Chapter Four, “Bringing the Sacred to Life: Explaining Sacralization and Secularization.”

religion, make a convincing case against the notion that social processes of secularization will eliminate religion, understood broadly from western societies.

In the end, declining church attendance figures, the growing number of young people who have never been exposed to religion in any form, and the absence of the authority of God in political debates regarding so-called moral arguments around LGBTQ rights and abortion, makes the waning of the significance of religion in people's lives undeniable. In much of the public sphere within Canada, the authority of God—even references to God's existence—is seldom heard. And while 70% of Canadians still identify with a particular religion, now more than ever before, God has become something to study and debate rather than live one's life around. Still, for many people, religion remains a significantly important aspect of their lives. Because of this, there continues to be interesting and often difficult conversations happening with regards to religion in the public realm, particularly within the western world.

The Canadian Context

Before moving on to Chapter One, we need to understand what has been happening to religious identity, belief, and practice amongst Canadians between 1962 and today.⁶¹ In order to do this, we need to understand and identify a). the religious (and irreligious) environment of which TWU was (and is) a part, and b). the resistance that an evangelical organization within an increasingly secular nation may experience. By providing this framework, we will be able to better understand how each iteration of the code operates as an organic document that responds to the times in which we live.

⁶¹ I would argue that it is impossible to create clear boundaries between what was and is happening socially, religiously, legally and politically within Canada as each one impacts the others. What we see is not clearly defined steps towards change, but an unbroken arc that has carried us from there to here. However, for the purposes of this paper, I will try to outline specific events/changes within the last 55 years of Canada that may have had a direct impact on the shape-shifting of TWU's codes of conduct.

The last 50 years has been witness to a dramatic change in the religious identity, beliefs and practices of Canadians. Beginning with Quebec's "Quiet Revolution" in the 1960s and continuing through to today, the number of people claiming a religious identity has steadily decreased.⁶² Statistics shows that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of religious "nones" (those claiming "no religion") over the last 40 years. Between 1971 (one year before the first document that I am exploring was written) and 2011, there has been a 600% increase in Canadians who identified as having no religious affiliation.⁶³

Within Canada, British Columbia is unique in its religious identity. Long seen as the most irreligious province in Canada, BC has a higher proportion of religious nones than any other area of Canada. Between 1972 and 2011, the percentage of religious nones in BC went from 13.1 percent to 44.13.⁶⁴ This is almost double the current Canadian average of 24 percent. Recent research on the question of religious identity in the Pacific Northwest shows that that number has continued to grow. By 2014, "over half (55%) of the BC population said they never attend religious services...and another 21% said they only attend once or a few times a year."⁶⁵ It should be noted that not attending religious services is not the same as having no religious affiliation. Still the numbers of those not attending and those identifying as having no religious

⁶² The Quiet Revolution refers to an intense period of socio-political change in Quebec beginning in 1960. These changes led to the government taking control of services previously under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. These changes saw the creation of a welfare state, education becoming the domain of the province, and most significantly, a substantial decrease in the numbers of people who regularly participated in Catholicism as well as a major decrease in the number of men and particularly women entering the clergy.

⁶³ According to the National Household Survey, 2011. The Canadian Census asks about religion only every 10 years. More recent publication such as Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald's *Leaving Christianity* (2017) still rely on data that is now close to 10 years old.

⁶⁴ Again, see National Household Survey, 2011.

⁶⁵ Wilkins-Laflamme, Sarah. *The Religious, Spiritual, Secular and Social Landscapes of the Pacific Northwest – Part 1*. UW Space: <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/12218>

affiliation are almost the same, with 49 percent of the population now identifying as the latter. This is a 5 percent increase from 2011.⁶⁶ Despite being an area of significant religious disaffiliation, however, multiple religious groups have a presence in BC. Instead of this environment leading to an overall apathy, or even a rejection of religion, many religious movements have been able to flourish here. It appears that multiple groups are flourishing not *in spite of* the lack of significant religious affiliation, but because of it. The absence of any one prominent religion in the region has allowed other groups to establish themselves, albeit with smaller numbers.⁶⁷ While BC is home to a growing number of “nones,” evangelicalism (as identified earlier in this chapter) has had a significant presence in BC since the early 20th century. This is particularly interesting given that adherence to conservative religious groups was and is difficult to do in an area that values individualization. According to Robert Burkinshaw, however, in his book, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land*, evangelicals saw the transient and migrant nature of late 19th century BC as an opportunity to bring to people “the conversion experience.”⁶⁸ While some may have seen as a near-impossible task, the “activism and pragmatism [of evangelicals] proved especially useful in enabling [them] to respond to the needs of a rapidly

⁶⁶ Ibid., Part 2. UW Space: <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/13406>

⁶⁷ For example, in Utah The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints accounts for 55% of the population (Pew Research Centre, “Religious Landscapes Study,” 2017. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/utah/>); and in New Brunswick, 49.7% of the population identifies as Catholic (National Household Survey, 2011).

⁶⁸ Robert Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia 1917-1981* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press), 9. “Conversionism,” that is, turning an individual away from sin and towards Christ, is seen as a defining characteristic of evangelicalism. Burkinshaw notes the remoteness of the west coast, the absence of God among white settlers, and the high number of Chinese immigrants in early 20th century BC as presenting significant opportunities for evangelicals.

growing and far-flung populace.”⁶⁹ The fact that evangelical churches offered a sense of community to the many migrants coming to BC was also important.

The relative success of the evangelical movement in BC has, in no small way, contributed to the success of Trinity Western University. The sense of community offered by evangelical churches is emphasized at TWU and this remains as important to Trinity now as it was in 1962. Several of TWU’s Codes of Conduct speak to valuing the rights of the many over the rights of the few, and all of the codes (with the exception of 1972) talk about the “betterment of the community as a whole.”⁷⁰ Further to this, the 1976 document tells students that Trinity is not “a place to ‘do your own thing,’” and in 1995, signatories are offered not only a place to work and study, but also a place where they “gain the privilege of enjoying the benefits of community membership and to undertake to work for the interests of the whole community.”⁷¹ Trinity, with its modest size student body and remote location, allows for a tighter community.⁷² This became particularly important as Vancouver grew and as the importance of religion within the public sphere shrank.

This “displacement of religion from the centre of human life” has been particularly present within academia.⁷³ While many Canadian universities once taught through a predominately

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁰ Trinity Western College, *Responsibilities of Membership in Trinity Western College Community*, 1976.

⁷¹ Trinity Western University, “Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University,” 1995.

⁷² As mentioned at the start of this paper, the Fraser Valley is home to Trinity Western University. While current highways and public transit systems mean that TWU students can now easily make their way to Vancouver, in 1962 students would have been surrounded by farmland and the wide variety of leisure activities and alternative lifestyles of urban centres would not have been easily accessible. Fraser Valley became significant to the evangelical movement as it kept members away from temptation of urban centres such as Vancouver.

⁷³ Bruce, 1.

Christian lens, by the 1920s the academy was beginning to secularize. By the 1960s “any explicit Christian language had been stripped away” and academia was considered to be largely secular.⁷⁴ There was significant hesitancy on the part of the evangelical Christian movement to encourage members to attend college, believing that “a university education was quite incompatible with a strong and warm commitment to Jesus Christ”.⁷⁵ The fear of secularized education where a young person could lose their faith led evangelical Christians to avoid education all together. Dr. Ian S. Rennie, in his forward to *On the Raw Edge of Faith*, says this,

In Canada, as the tide of secularization has inundated so many of our formerly Christian educational institutions, we have been, perhaps typically, slow to develop anything much in its place. So, we have lacked the contribution of distinctly Christian colleges and universities.⁷⁶

By the 1950s, however, there was a growing understanding that “most young people were not led by God to be pastors, missionaries (or) church workers,” and so needed to be educated in a Christian setting as to not lose them to a secular world.⁷⁷ An evangelical university would serve dual purposes, teaching young people “not only to be competent at their jobs but also to be good

⁷⁴ Catherine Gidney, *A Long Eclipse: The Liberal Protestant Establishment and the Canadian University 1920-1970* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), xv.

⁷⁵ Calvin Hanson, *On the Raw Edge of Faith: The Miracle of Trinity Western College* (Langley: Trinity Western College, 1977), 47. As quoted in Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the 20th Century*, 147. Note: Calvin Hanson was a member of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada and was the founding president of TWU. TWU now has an alum award called the “Raw Edge of Faith” award. More information can be found at <https://twualumni.org/alumni-distinction-awards/raw-edge-faith-award/>

⁷⁶ Ian S. Rennie, in “Foreword” to Calvin Hanson’s *On the Raw Edge of Faith*, vi.

⁷⁷ Stackhouse, 149. It is interesting to note here that Throughout the 1950s, within the Free Church in BC, there was only one pastor with a university degree. So strong was the opposition to higher education, that according to Calvin Hanson, said pastor actually left the church due, in part, to his opposition to the college. It seems that “because many of the university educated clergy were within the liberal church element a kind of cause and effect relationship was summarily assumed between one’s training and one’s doctrine.” Interestingly, while many within the evangelical movement were less than happy about the school, the school’s opening was met with enthusiasm by the Ministry of Education.

evangelists among their workmates.”⁷⁸ It was not the intent of Trinity to become “another Bible Institute as the country (had been) blessed with a number of such outstanding schools.”⁷⁹ As the importance of things like science and technology grew, having a college education became increasingly important. For many, this heightened the importance of Christian-based post-secondary institutions. A 1979 publication of *Trinity Western World* states that:

a recent study shows that many Christians who attend a secular college lose their faith by the time they’ve completed their third semester. When a leading newspaper admits on their editorial page that some staff at the public universities may be ‘avowed atheists, Marxists, or anarchists,’ one does not wonder why... We want to (be a school that) is thoroughly ‘Christian’ and thoroughly ‘college’ at the same time.⁸⁰

Religion within post-secondary institutions has been pushed to the margins and faith (particularly Christian faith) is expected to be absent in the classroom. This is starkly different from Trinity, where their “liberal arts and sciences curriculum...are designed to be *faith-affirming*.” [Emphasis in the original.] As we will see, the social processes of secularization made a school such as Trinity a necessity. It is not in spite of a secularization that Trinity exists, but precisely because of it.

Methodology

For my research, I relied on both primary and secondary sources. In addition to codes of conduct, primary sources included Trinity Western documents such as newspapers and student handbooks. In fact, I would argue that while the Codes of Conduct, including the 2009

⁷⁸ Stackhouse, 149.

⁷⁹ Arnold Olson, “Why a School in Canada?” *The Beacon*, February 23, 1960. As quoted in Hanson, 50.

⁸⁰ “Historical Perspective: A Christian Alternative,” 4. This was published in a 1979 special edition of *Trinity Western World* following the school earning the right to grant degrees. *Trinity Western World* was a Trinity Western College magazine specifically for patrons of TWC. The publication was started in 1972 and ran until 1988. For more information, see <https://archivesearch.twu.ca/trinity-western-world-2>

Community Covenant, are a significant part of Trinity's history, and central to this thesis, student newspapers and handbooks are likely more valuable to students. Student handbooks contain a wide variety of information including library hours, on- and off-campus housing, student healthcare, dining services, and academic expectations. These are more likely to be read and carried around by students (particularly those in first year), than a Code of Conduct. In fact, as we will see in Chapter Three, many students are unable to recall reading or even signing the Community Covenant. Student handbooks, with their plethora of information, provide solid evidence of change over time. The same can be said of student newspapers. From the school's earliest newspaper, the *Trinity Junior College Pioneer*, to its current *Mars Hill*, student newspapers appear to reflect what is most important and relevant to its student body at any given time. However, as we will see in Chapter Three, not all students that I spoke with feel that their voices are being reflected here.

In addition to written materials, I was also able to conduct interviews with members of the Trinity Community. Interviews took place over the course of approximately four months, and included 22 Trinity faculty, students and staff, both past and present. Interviews discussed TWU members' attitude towards the Code of Conduct and the impact that they believe secularization is having on their freedom of religion. While I will discuss this at length in Chapter Three, it is important to note here that while I expected to struggle with finding people willing to speak with me, in the end not only did many people volunteer their time, but virtually all of the interviewees were very open and candid with their answers.

As these interviews contributed most significantly to my overall research, it is important here to say more about oral history including what it is, how it is conducted, and its intended purpose. As Lynn Abrams says in her book, *Oral History Theory*,

Oral history is a catch-all term applied to two things. It refers to the process of conducting and recording interviews with people in order to elicit information from them about the past. But an oral history is also the product of that interview, the narrative account of past events...in other words, it is both the act of recording and the record that is produced.⁸¹

People that I spoke with did share their own historical experience as members of Trinity, but more than this, they shared personal opinion on a variety of things such as religious identity and upbringing, the Covenant, and the Supreme Court of Canada case. Because of this, the term oral history seems to fall short. Abrams also suggests terms such as “personal-testimony research” and “life-story research.”⁸² Both of these terms are better fits for what unfolded during these interviews.

While this personal-testimony research involved both the interviews themselves, and the records they produced, there is a third, and more important aspect to gathering these stories. The interviewer must then take all of those records and analyse their meanings. For my purposes, these records were used in two main ways: as evidence of ongoing change within Trinity, and as a way to analyse and interpret interviewees’ responses to these changes. While I was hopeful that the information I gathered would allow me to do this, I was careful to not manipulate the conversations or ask leading questions. As people were so open and candid with me, there was not a lot of “interpreting” to do. People meant what they said and said what they meant. However, I was mindful going into these interviews that the stories that people shared were not necessarily exactly as things unfolded within TWU but instead were “memories reworked in the context of the respondent’s own experience and politics.”⁸³ In the end, the significance of the

⁸¹ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸³ Abrams, 7. (Here, Abrams is drawing from the work of Luisa Passerini, particularly, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge, 1987).

interviewees' stories was that it allowed me into Trinity's university world, and allowed me to get a sense of how many students and some faculty saw this world, in a way that documents alone would never have accomplished.

In addition to these interviews, I have gleaned information from other materials such as TWU student newspapers. TWU opened their archives to me, allowing me to access student handbooks and lists of student rules dating back to 1962. And of course, the Codes of Conduct themselves play perhaps the most significant role in my research. While board meeting minutes where changes to the codes and/or the two legal cases were discussed would have been very insightful, they were not available to me. However, through other sources such as handbooks and interviews, I was able to have a reasonable understanding of what was happening behind the scenes.

Chapters

This thesis has been divided into three main chapters. Within those chapters, it is my goal to have the reader understand the evolution of TWU's codes of conduct, the Canadian social and religious context in which each code was written, and TWU's responses to these changes.

Chapter One describes each Code of Conduct—starting with 1972 and ending with 2009—highlighting the “do's and do nots” expected of its members, as well as the omissions and additions of each iteration. In this chapter I also examine how the overall purpose of the codes shift from something that appeared to be more of a general guide to an absolute way of being. It is important to understand what the Codes of Conduct looked like and how they changed before we begin to analyze the reasons for the changes I identify here.

In Chapter Two, we will look at the Canadian social and religious context during each iteration of the codes of conduct to identify what might have prompted the changes between

documents. Specifically, I argue that each change occurred in response to shifting values in Canada, particularly the shift towards a more irreligious way of being. As already mentioned, the irreligiosity of Canada does not simply refer to the shrinking number of people that claim affiliation to a particular religious group but also to the significance that religion plays in government and public services. This irreligiosity has significantly impacted not only attitudes, but also Canadian law in significant areas such equality rights. Gender equality has led to legal changes in areas such as medicine and employment. Changes in attitudes towards LGBTQ people has meant not only that Pride Parades are now mainstream events, but that since 2005, the Civil Marriage Act made same-sex marriage legal across Canada. For conservative Christians, these changes have meant that Canada, as a secular state, no longer reflects their own identities. It is these changes to which Trinity's Code of Conduct has responded. Chapter Two will measure said shifts against each iteration of the codes of conduct to argue that changes to Canadian norms have led directly to changes with Trinity's codes of conduct.

Many people have offered opinions on how secularization has impacted (or not impacted) Trinity and those within it, but perhaps none more so than Trinity's own members. In order to answer my key questions, the opinion of those studying and working within the eye of the storm is perhaps more valuable than anything offered by the media, the legal profession, or human rights' groups. As mentioned in my methodology section, I have been fortunate enough to have conducted interviews with 22 Trinity Western University members including staff, faculty and students, both past and present. It is their perspectives that are the focus of Chapter Three. Interviewees were asked not only questions about the Community Covenant (or, for past members, whichever Code of Conduct was in place during their time at Trinity), but also general questions about being a faith-centered person in an increasingly secular world. As the reader will

see, the responses of the interviewees run the gamut of the Christian spectrum from very conservative to quite liberal. In fact, the vast majority of people that I interviewed, lean well onto the side of liberal Christianity. It is hard to know whether or not this was coincidental, or whether liberal Christians were more intrigued by my project (how interviewees were recruited will be discussed in Chapter Three). Interviews and other materials suggest that TWU members are overwhelmingly in favour of making significant changes to the current Community Covenant or getting rid of it altogether. This was expressed by both conservative and liberal Christians. Editorials in TWU student newspapers over the last few years suggest the same. While it is difficult to determine the percentage of TWU members in favour of changes to the Covenant, what these interviews and newspapers indicate is that a relaxing of strict Christian morals has impacted all corners of Canada, including conservative Christian bodies such as TWU. Changes to the Codes of Conduct have not only pushed back against the rest of Canada, but increasingly against their own members.

Conclusion

As I have shown, a number of things will be considered as I look at the evolution of Trinity's codes of conduct. Most importantly, I will be looking at how the social processes of secularization have impacted Canada's identity, its laws, and the place of religion within the public sphere, and how those things led to changes to the codes of conduct. I will also examine how Trinity's own members have responded to changes both inside and outside of TWU, and how those responses have also prompted change to how the school operates. First, though, it is important for the reader to understand exactly what those changes to the codes have entailed. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter One: The Arc of Change

“Trinity is never going to change—not in my lifetime.”

~Trinity Alumni

The sentiment above—implying that Trinity Western University is somehow stuck in time, unwilling to shift—is one that seems pervasive among those both inside and outside of the school. This, of course, is based on TWU’s expectations of its students, faculty and staff, expectations that many view as static. As with most colleges and universities, TWU has what could be described as a Code of Conduct; a list of do’s and do nots designed to promote integrity, respect and safety among its students and staff. And as with most schools, that Code of Conduct has, in fact, changed several times over the last 45 years. Much of what is said in the present Code of Conduct—the hotly debated Community Covenant—mirrors what one would expect to read in any college or university: prohibitions on plagiarism and a need for behaviour that ensures a safe and respectful learning environment. Unlike public post-secondary institutions, however, TWU’s code espouses an evangelical Christian world-view, a way of being that is meant to capture the teachings of Christ. So, whereas a code of conduct at a place such as the University of Victoria may contain much of the same or similar messaging, TWU’s document goes further by reminding students that they are called on by God to act in a particular way. For each behavior, either required or prohibited, a biblical passage is cited “to serve as a point of reference,” answering any member of TWU who may question why they are being

called on to act in a particular way.¹ Perhaps in response to a country that has continued to move away from Christianity over the last several decades, TWU’s Code of Conduct has responded by adding more and more biblical points of reference and Christian moral strictures. As fewer Canadians now base their personal ethics on Christianity, TWU has responded by letting students, staff, and faculty know that it is not the individual or even the school that decides what is right and wrong, but God himself.

In spite of the some 100+ biblical footnotes contained in the 2009 Community Covenant, TWU did not always deem it necessary to use the Bible to back up its demands. As already mentioned, TWU has been providing students with a code of conduct since at least 1972. And yet, throughout more than 20 years and several changes to their Code of Conduct, until 1995 TWU deemed it unnecessary to cite the Bible as a way to strengthen its rules. While Chapter Two will focus on the “why?” of these changes, it is important to first explore what kinds of changes have happened over time. This chapter explores behavioral expectations—both prescriptive and prohibited—for students (and later faculty and staff) that occurred during each iteration of the code. (Table 1 at the end of this chapter gives an overview of the more significant changes that occurred with each iteration.)

In addition to exploring what these documents contain, we will also explore what many of these documents did *not* say. The silence on certain issues is as important, and in some cases, *more* important than the items that are included. Beginning in 1972, with Trinity Junior College’s “Some Basic Principles,” we see a document unlike all of the subsequent documents in that it serves to provide the student with logistical information that might be normally found in a

¹ Trinity Western University *Community Covenant: Our Pledge to One Another*, (2009): 1.

student handbook, such as where to find the lost-and-found, and the cost of locker rentals.² It is important to note that while Trinity Western University was founded in 1962 (as Trinity Junior College), the earliest Code of Conduct in my possession is from 1972. While a search through TWU's archives did not turn up an earlier document, it is likely that students were informed (at least verbally) of behavioral expectations beginning in its inaugural year. Student handbooks were not made available in these early years and so information on behavioral expectations was often passed along via student newspapers. Trinity's first student newspaper, known as the T.J.C. Pioneer, says this in its first editorial entitled "High Standards,"

In any institute of learning there is a standard established therein for the students by which they are to live. These standards are of course, sought to be the highest that can possibly be achieved...Consequently establish a high standard of conduct, the students must exhibit their best Christian example possible at all time...Therefore, they must keep the college standards high, display an upstanding Christian testimony to all around; and above all, maintain the standards of God...³

While there is no way to determine how many students read this editorial, Trinity Junior College began its existence with the enrollment of 17 students. Passing information along to a student body of this size would have been rather easy. As well, any transgressions in behavior would have been easily observed.

By 1972, enrollment at the junior college had increased to almost 350 students, and school administrators may have believed that it was now prudent to implement a more formal Code of Conduct that clearly spelled out expectations. As mentioned, the 1972 "Some Basic Principles" covers an array of information from study hours to course load. Much of this document provides

² From 1962-1977, Trinity Western operated as a junior college. Junior colleges generally offered program from one to three years and were considered to be preparatory schools for university. Junior colleges, now often called Community Colleges, do not confer degrees.

³ Trinity Junior College, "High Standards." *The Pioneer*. Volume 1, No. 2. (1962): 2.

information that is similar to the kind of information that other schools might pass onto their students, such as dorm curfews and the commitment of the school to make the students' experience "a memorable one." Unique to this school, of course, is the Christian framework in which it is written.⁴ While many well-known universities, from Harvard to Yale started as Christian institutions and had mandates and mottos in keeping with Christianity (such as Southern Illinois University's motto, *Deo Volente*, or God Willing), few would describe themselves as such by the early 1970s. None would request—or even suggest—that students are to "attend services" on "The Lord's Day" as TJC demanded of its students. Beyond Sundays, "chapel attendance is expected of all students."⁵

While certain things are clearly spelled out to the students, such as academic load ("No student will be allowed to register for more than 18 units") or the need to register one's car with the Dean of Students, what remains unexplained in the 1972 document is what was meant by a "Christian" way of being. What exactly does it mean to *act* Christian? The administration must have felt that no explanation was needed as the phrase "Christian behavior" or similar language, was used several times in the document. Statements such as "students are expected to use mature judgement in decisions relating to Christian behavior"; "The Christian character of the students should serve as guide lines"; and "The Dean of Students is empowered to withhold any or all privileges from individual students or couples who fail to *maintain satisfactory Christian* or social standards" receive neither explanation nor elaboration.⁶ Students are quite simply

⁴ There are five Christian-based liberal arts schools across Canada. In addition to TWU, there is Ambrose University in Alberta; Redeemer University College and Tyndale University College, both in Ontario; and St. Stephen's University in New Brunswick. All other Christian Colleges within Canada are Bible Colleges.

⁵ Trinity Junior College, "Some Basic Principles." (1972): 1.

⁶ *Ibid*, 1-2.

expected to understand what is meant by Christian character, or Christian standards. In Chapter Two, we will explore why this may have been the case in this period.

Also unique to this document are specific expectations targeting female students. Under “Social Regulations,” “Women students making trips with men must have written permission from their parents and be accompanied by a Chaperone approved by the Dean of Students.”⁷

While it was common at this time for public universities to have sex-segregated dorms that had rules regarding visiting members of the opposite sex, these same institutions were not keeping tabs on who their (female) students were going away with.⁸ Given that 1972 was perhaps the height of the sexual revolution, expectations for women to seek permission and secure a chaperone before going on a trip with a man, seems to place Trinity at a significant distance from what was socially acceptable at the time. Student handbooks from UBC make no mention of “women making trips with men,” and no mention of chaperones. While Trinity’s dated and often-times misogynist attitudes continue to appear in the student newspaper well into the early 1980s, the 1975 iteration makes no mention of different expectations for men and women. In fact, there is no specific mention of either women or men in the document, indicating that Trinity was now more in tune with gendered expectations.⁹

The 1975 “Responsibilities of Membership in the Trinity Western College Community,” reads as a very different document when compared to the first iteration. In an attempt to assert the college’s inclusivity, the document opens by stating that “admission is open to any qualified

⁷ Ibid, 2. Note: I could find no information on what qualified a person to be an approved chaperone.

⁸ Most women-only dorms in Canada today still do not allow men to stay overnight. Adelaide Hall at Queen’s is a “women-only environment” where male guests cannot stay overnight, even in single-occupant rooms. However, the emphasis here is on women feeling safe and comfortable; the rules do not stem from a religious, spiritual, or puritanical practice.

⁹ Students are still referred to using male pronouns such as he and himself.

person regardless of race, colour or creed.”¹⁰ However, while this newer version is opening itself up to a wider diversity of people, it is also becoming more rigid in its expectations. While the earlier version reads as both a friendly reminder of behavioral expectations and provided useful information, the following document minces no words when telling students exactly how to behave. Gone is anything superfluous to behavior; the few behavioral expectation outlined in the previous iteration are still present but with significantly stronger and clearer language. Instead of reminding students that Christianity should guide their behavior and allowing each individual to come up with their own interpretation of what that means, Trinity informs the reader that they have come up with a list that they believe to “be consistent with its profession of Christian faith, (and) which is conducive to Christian growth and development.”¹¹ In other words, by 1975 Trinity was willing to articulate exactly what Christian behavior looks like and removes any guess work for the student. The new document provides adherents with a relatively short list (six items) of both proscriptive and prescriptive regulations in just a single page, believing that “regulations designed to promote (a Christian) atmosphere (should be) kept to a minimum in the belief that growth to maturity is best fostered as the individual himself comes to see the patterns that lead to meaningful growth.”¹² Still, it is clear that there were some items that Trinity was not willing to leave up to individual judgement nor wait for “growth to maturity” to take place. Some of the proscriptive rules prevent students from participating in activities such as watching movies or television programs of their choice, smoking or (of-age) drinking. The “Responsibilities of

¹⁰ Trinity Western College, “Responsibilities of Membership in the Trinity Western College Community,” (1975), 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Membership” reminds students that “Trinity is not a place to simply ‘do your own thing’” and that this may require “relinquishing certain ‘rights.’ To some, it may seem unreasonable to expect university students to forgo activities that are legally permitted and promoted by the broader youth culture. However, within the context of Trinity the total was greater than the sum of its parts:

Trinity Western is primarily a residential college and as such provides many opportunities for growth outside the classroom...it is a group of people who have chosen to form a learning community in which personal preferences may need to be modified in the interest of the larger group.¹³

While students were allowed to watch television and attend movie theatres, they were reminded to “exercise careful judgement in the choice of entertainment.”¹⁴ In this case, students were left up to their own judgement when deciding what was a suitable form of entertainment.

Expectations around smoking and the use of alcohol, however, are made much clearer. Tobacco and alcohol use are banned—no amount of “careful judgement” nor legal entitlement warrants the use of either. As a small student body living together in student housing, the need to remove any obstacles to a cohesive and safe living environment was necessary if Trinity was to create a tight community.¹⁵ A student newspaper article from the mid-1980s reporting on a “Resident Advisors Conference”—hosted by UBC and attended by all BC-based universities—stressed that all resident advisors (with the exception of Trinity) reported that “alcohol has been their major problem” and that after hearing about Trinity’s community standards “wished that they too could

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In 1975, the Trinity Western College student body numbered just slightly above 400, and Trinity Western College required all students under 21 to live on campus for the first two years of student. Married students were exempt from this. This rule still applies.

have an alcohol-free residence.”¹⁶ Eliminating alcohol from the equation was as much about removing potential chaos as it was about promoting “Christian growth and development.” Banned also is the use of “hallucinatory drugs or narcotics.”¹⁷ While this is hardly surprising, it is worth noting that Trinity waited until 1975 to acknowledge the potential existence of drug use among its students. While 1960s counter-culture is often synonymous with drug use, Trinity saw no need to institute a ban sooner. It would appear that prior to 1975, the school administration trusted that a group of students choosing to attend an evangelical Christian school would not need to be reminded that drugs were prohibited. Students were expected to be on the same page as the administration. By 1975, however, the school acknowledged that this may not be the case:

*While it is recognized that some may not have personal convictions wholly in accord with these responsibilities and standards [emphasis added] the purpose and ideals underlying them necessitate the student’s conscientious support of these responsibilities and standards while under the jurisdiction of the college.*¹⁸

Why the school suddenly found it necessary (after 13 years in existence) to recognize that “some may not have personal convictions” that aligned with its standards, will be further explored in Chapter Two. What is important for the purposes of this chapter, is to recognize this as a significant change from the previous iteration. One could imagine that for a strongly identified conservative Christian school, admitting that its own student body did not agree wholeheartedly with rules and regulations designed to “uphold... Christ, our Lord, here at TWC” would have been met with resistance.¹⁹ In spite of this, Trinity trusted that each student would recognize the

¹⁶ Trinity Western University, “RA Interchange,” *The Today*. November 14, 1986.

http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1980s/19870213.pdf

¹⁷ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership,” 1975.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Trinity Western College, *The Salmon River Digest*. February 7, 1976.

http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1970s/19760207.pdf

“purpose and ideals” of both pro- and prescriptive behaviors and follow them accordingly. While much of the controversy surrounding the current Community Covenant has revolved around the mandatory signature of each member, in 1975 the school did not see the necessity of such a step—compliance was simply expected:

It is *assumed* [emphasis added] that the student in making application for admission and subsequently enrolling agrees to accept the responsibilities of membership in the academic community of Trinity Western College, which included adherence to the specific standards of conduct stated in the preceding paragraphs.²⁰

It appears that Trinity felt confident that students, in spite of their own personal convictions or proclivities, would understand the importance and end goal of the rules set before them and follow them unhesitatingly. Of course, properly gauging the temperature of Trinity students based on documents other than the “Responsibilities of Membership” is difficult as few other documents exist. Throughout the entire decade, only 13 school newspapers were printed (or exist) and most of those were published towards the end of the 1970s. A pushback against, or questioning of, the rules becomes more apparent later in Trinity’s existence.

While asking students to be mindful of their entertainment choices or having a campus that bans alcohol and other substances is not inherently Christian, other requirements appear to appear Christian, or at least religious, in nature.²¹ Similar to the previous document, students are

²⁰ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership.”

²¹ Several Canadian universities now host dry events and some, such as Carleton University in Ottawa, and St. Thomas University in New Brunswick, have instituted “strict no-alcohol policies until the end of ‘Welcome Week’ even for students who are 19 and older.” Isaac Würmann, “Wet vs. Dry: Why Some Universities Choose to Ban Alcohol During Frosh.” *The Charleton: Carleton’s Independent Weekly*.” September 1, 2016. <https://charleton.ca/2016/09/wet-vs-dry-why-some-univeristies-choose-to-ban-alcohol-during-frosh/> Regarding entertainment choices, Feminist groups across Canadian universities, as well as other human rights focused groups, often speak out against and discourage the consumption of porn or attending strip clubs. The goal, of course, is the protection of women and the promotion of equality. This is quite different than discouraging the use of porn for reasons of Godly purity.

required to make “attendance at a church of their choice a normal part of Sunday’s activities.”²²

It is interesting to note that in spite of the document’s claim to be open to any qualified student regardless of creed, the use of the word church and the assumption that a weekly religious service happens on Sunday would suggest that creed referred only to religious diversity that fell under the Christian umbrella.²³ In addition, one of the six conditions asks student to “regularly” attend chapel services as a way to “engage in the honest pursuit of knowledge...”²⁴ While it could be argued that the use of the word Sunday is simply a substitute for any sabbath day and that students of faith could attend a place of worship on an alternative, but equivalent day (Muslim students could attend mosque on a Friday, for example, and not be expected to attend services on a Sunday), asking all students to regularly attend chapel services, does not speak to religious inclusivity. As well, within academia, there is an oddity in asking students to pursue knowledge by attending chapel services. Interestingly, students are asked to pursue knowledge not only by attending chapel, but also regularly going to class as well as practicing a “vigorous shunning of the temptation to academic cheating or plagiarism.”²⁵ While the requirement to attend chapel services stood alone in the previous iteration, the decision to make it a part of “the honest pursuit of knowledge” in this iteration is an interesting one and will be further explored.

²² Ibid.

²³ It should be noted that some Christian groups, most notably 7th Day Adventists, regard Saturday as their sabbath. As well, religious diversity has increased at TWU over the years. There are now a number of Muslim and Sikh students attending TWU.

²⁴ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership.” While there is no definition of what was meant by “regularly,” it’s likely that students were expected to attend chapel as often as possible. As the student body counted less than 350 students in 1972, absence from chapel would have been noticeable. Chapel services at Trinity are offered every weekday during the regular academic year.

²⁵ Ibid.

The last piece of this document that deserves discussion is its expectations around dating. The 1972 document gives clear parameters around dating. It reads:

Normal and natural relationships between men and women students are approved and encouraged. Conduct should at all times be above reproach, especially in regard to expression of affection publicly. Dating should be restricted to the weekend. Couples may be together until 12:00 Friday, Saturday on Sunday nights. Dating is not restricted on holidays or days preceding holidays.²⁶

This seems like a relaxed set of rules regarding dating and what might have been considered reasonable for other young people at that time. By 1975 however, the rules around dating omit all time restrictions and simply ask students to “use discretion in relationships with the opposite sex, including the avoidance of public displays of affection.”²⁷ Christian colleges and universities were known for promoting marriage among young people, so it should not be a surprise that by this time most barriers to dating have been removed. The use of the phrase “normal and natural” however is an interesting one. It is hard to know whether or not Trinity simply intended to imply that relationships between men and women were normal and natural and should be encouraged, or whether they were warning against abnormal and unnatural relationships. It’s likely that the former is true as, at this point in their existence, Trinity had nothing to say about same sex relationships.²⁸ Even the 1975 document speaks of using discretion only in relation to the opposite sex, thereby assuming that no such equivalent warning needed to be provided for dealings with same sex couples. And yet, by 1976, only a year later, Trinity starts warning its students against homosexuality and categorizes it as a “biblically forbidden” practice. This warning comes in the form of yet a new code of ethics, the now titled

²⁶ Trinity Junior College, “Some Basic Principles.” (1972), 2.

²⁷ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership.”

²⁸ Trinity was not unique in their silence. The notion of same-sex relationships would not have been on the radar of most institutions at this time.

“Responsibilities of Membership in the Academic Community of Trinity Western College.”

While the document was specifically meant for students only, the addition of the words

“Academic Community” seems to suggest that all members of Trinity must commit to this new document.²⁹ In fact, when interviewing long-term faculty, each told me that they also had to agree to the contents of the agreement but were given more flexibility (in areas such as alcohol consumption) than students.³⁰

In addition to the mention of homosexuality and the need for all members to abide by the 1976 document, the “Responsibilities of Membership in the Academic Community of Trinity Western College” implemented other significant changes over the previous document. While this document is close in style and spirit to the 1975 document, it stands as unique in its expectations of both its students and the college as a whole. While the previous two documents spoke only to what is expected of its students, this document also provides the reader with a list of the college’s responsibilities, most of which are Christian-focused. Like most universities, the school accepts the responsibility of providing the student with a “broad beginning in liberal arts education by introducing him to the major organized fields of human knowledge, [and] developing a foundation for further educational study.”³¹ The addition of a list of college responsibilities results in a document that is almost twice the length of the previous iteration. While some

²⁹ This document makes reference to students only and became part of the application package. It was required that the document “must be signed at the end” in order for an application to be complete. It is likely that faculty and staff also had a Code of Conduct, but I was not able to confirm this. In interviewing faculty, I was told that they were given the freedom to make changes and/or notations to their similar document before signing it. However, I was only able to confirm that back to the mid-1980s.

³⁰ This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

³¹ *The Responsibilities of Membership in the Academic Community of Trinity Western College Trinity Western College*, (1980), 1. It should be noted here that at this time, Trinity Western was still a two year college requiring students to transfer to other schools to complete a four year BA. This may speak to why the college was only committed to a “broad beginning” that gave students a “foundation for further educational study.”

sections, such as the mandatory attendance in classes and chapel, and the mention that standards have been kept to minimum so that students can learn for themselves how to make healthy decisions were not altered during these two years, there are a significant number of changes to this document. For reasons not fully explained, this document is considered to be the pre-cursor to the current Community Covenant, written in 2009. This may be due to the implementation of a now mandatory signature required of all students. While many criticized the mandatory signature required by the Community Covenant, this practice actually began with the 1976 document. The responsibilities of membership begins:

In order for this application to be complete it must be signed at the end of the following statement on responsibilities. The student's continued registration each semester at TRINITY WESTERN COLLEGE following his initial enrollment will be considered his re-affirmation of acceptance of the responsibilities and adherence to the community standards of conduct which follows.³²

Not only does this new agreement require a signature, but it is now a part of the application package. While I was not able to confirm how previous iterations were delivered to students, there is nothing to indicate that they were part of an application package. It is more likely that they were given to students once admitted to Trinity. The addition of a mandatory signature changes the document from one where it can be “assumed that the student...agrees to accept the responsibilities of membership” to one where greater accountability is required.³³ No longer is it enough to simply believe that students will abide by a Code of Conduct. By asking for a signature, the document acts as a contract between student and school. It leaves no room for negotiation, nor space to claim that anyone was unfamiliar with or unaware of what was

³² TWC, “The Responsibilities of Membership” (1976), 1.

³³ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership” (1975), 1.

expected of them. It also places the school and student in a watcher/being watched situation as it is only through watching that one can know whether a contract is being followed.

Here, the school creates a kind of panopticon, from where faculty and administrators could watch students without their direct knowledge. This is the brilliance of the panopticon: the possibility that one is either always being watched or never watched and one never knows which.

In *Discipline & Punish*, Foucault describes the panopticon and its effect as such:

All that is needed then is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy...Each individual in his place is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by his supervisor...he is seen but he does not see; *he is the object of information, never a subject in communication* [emphasis added]...and this invisibility is a guarantee of order...If the inmates are...school children, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time...

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So, to arrange things so that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action.³⁴

To be clear, this is not to imply that Trinity students were locked in cells, nor that the school operated as a prison; only that this new document, by introduction of a mandatory signature, made students beholden to a set of rules, with the knowledge that they could now be “caught” breaking rules by watchful eyes that saw but were not seen. Student newspapers throughout the later 1970s speak to students being punished (sometimes by expulsion) for a transgression of the Responsibilities of Membership. It is almost certain that these students did not break rules openly or brazenly, yet their actions were noticed by someone on the lookout. The addition of the signature helped make this new order possible. As Foucault states, these students were now “objects of information”—watching their actions could provide the administration with a host of

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: Random House Inc., 1980), 200-201.

knowledge about how students were spending their time, both on and off campus. In a student newspaper (now called *The Echo*) from Spring 1980, the writer criticizes the school for now spending its time “separating the straights from the rowdies.”³⁵ The article goes on to say,

And then the saddest thing possible began—the personnel began to try and flush out those students bringing down the morale and standards of this “church supported community.:

I’m not saying that many of the students don’t deserve the reputations which they have, but why meet their actions with only another unloving action—suspension? Shouldn’t we forget the about the Standards for a while and start thinking about individuals?³⁶

As this story and others report on students being suspended and expelled (often for the use of alcohol), one must acknowledge that it may have been more than just the administration that was monitoring student behavior. That behavior contrary to the code was being witnessed by students more often than by faculty or staff is likely.

Shortly after the 1976 document was introduced, there was an influx of letters and editorials expressing the frustration of some students who felt that the school was making a myriad of decisions without their input or involvement. It would appear that the student had become a source of information without ever being a “subject in communication.”³⁷

As mentioned earlier, this new document warned students against homosexuality as part of a longer list of “biblically condemned” behaviors. Homosexuality falls under what Trinity refers to as “sexual sins” including adultery and premarital sex. This is the first time that Trinity refers to sexual activity in a direct way. While previous documents speak of “using discretion” in relation to the opposite sex, any direct mention of physical intimacy is absent.

³⁵ June De Kleine, “What Happened to Love?” *The Echo*. Vol. 2, No. 1. (Spring 1980), 2.

http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1970s/19800000.pdf

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Foucault, 200.

In addition to sexual sins, Trinity also lists “all forms of dishonest practices” as being condemned in the Bible. This includes not only stealing but cheating as well. It is worth noting that while previous documents warned against cheating and plagiarism as *academically* prohibited, the new document positions them as being “*biblically* condemned [emphasis added].”³⁸ It’s hard to know the reason behind this other than the fact that labelling something as biblically prohibited carries a very different threat than something that is academically prohibited. In addition to sexual sins and cheating, this document now adds drunkenness among its list of sins. It seems redundant to list drunkenness given that alcohol use is already prohibited both on and off campus. An interesting addition to this document is the warning against “involvement in the occult.” Evidence of this fear can be seen in the decision to cease Hallowe’en celebrations on campus. Until the mid-1970s, Hallowe’en was celebrated on campus before being replaced with Harvest Fest. In 1976, the “administration and students at TWC decided that Hallowe’en was not to be celebrated anymore.”³⁹ The reason given was that Hallowe’en was a pagan festival that happened on the “eve of the festival of Samhain (The lord of the dead – Satan).”⁴⁰ Why Hallowe’en was allowed at Trinity for 15 years before being removed, along with a sudden concern regarding the occult will be explored in the next chapter.

While the previous document closed with an almost friendly reminder of the importance of adhering to the standards of conduct, the 1976 document closes with statement that feels almost legal in its language:

³⁸ “Responsibilities of Membership in Trinity Western College Community,” 1976.

³⁹ Trinity Western College, “Hallowe’en night hoe-down.” *The Echo*, Volume 1, No. 1 (December 1979), 7. http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1970s/19791200.pdf

⁴⁰Ibid.

I hereby certify that I understand the Statement of Responsibilities of Membership in the Academic Community of Trinity Western College and that I will accept the responsibilities, including adherence to the to the Specific Standards of Conduct, stated here and in the Student Handbook while I am enrolled at Trinity Western College.⁴¹

Language such as “I hereby certify” has an almost “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” air to it; a reminder to students that they have taken a sacred oath and entered into a binding promise with Trinity Western.

While the 1970s bears witness to three iterations of Trinity’s Code of Conduct, there are no further changes again until 1995, leaving an unexplained 15 year gap between iterations. Why Trinity saw fit to write three different documents within eight years, and then waited 15 years to design another one is not discussed within school papers, nor within the documents themselves, leaving one to speculate on the reasons for such a lengthy gap.

The 1995 “Community Standards: Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Students” (commonly referred to as the “Community Standards”) is a two-page document that is overtly Christian in nature. While each iteration of the 1970s documents reads as increasingly religious in nature, they are consistent in placing academic standards alongside Christian ones. The Community Standards, however, reads as an exclusively Christian document. This is no longer a document that outlines how one behaves within a Christian school, but instead one that guides students towards being faithful Christians. Aside from one mention of faculty, students and staff, it is easy to forget that this document is a set of guidelines intended for a post-secondary institution. While the 1995 iteration does refer to Trinity as a place of learning, this could as easily be read as a set of standards for church membership. Whereas the previous iteration was divided into the

⁴¹ TWC, “Responsibilities of Membership” (1980), 2.

responsibilities of the college and the responsibilities/requirements of its students, this newer documents is broken down into three sections: Preamble (which includes its mission statement); Core Values and Community Standards; and, Application of the Community Standards to Students. Trinity’s Mission Statement now refers to the school as “an arm of the Church,” (caps in the original] shifting it from university, or even Christian university to a religious organization.⁴² This is not to say that Trinity didn’t take itself seriously as a post-secondary institution—by this time, Trinity had become a four year university and was a fully recognized member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada—but to define themselves as a part of the church before they define themselves as a post-secondary institution is a significant shift in their messaging. How one behaves in a university is undoubtedly different from how one behaves in a church, or even within an “arm of the Church.”

The preamble to the 1995 document states that all members are expected to engage in “spiritual maturity,” and to “maintain a distinctly “Christian living and learning environment.”⁴³ In order to do this, a “rigorous study of the liberal arts and sciences from the perspective of a biblical worldview” is required.⁴⁴ This means that one does not attend Trinity simply as a Christian-identified person but must always see their studies through the lens of the Bible. So, while there may be space for objective thinking, and opportunity to study the perspective of others, this must be done through a very narrow (and unwavering) lens. This is not to argue that one should—or can—totally remove their faith during their studies, but instead to illustrate the

⁴² Trinity Western University, Community Standards: Responsibilities in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Students. (1995), 1.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

significant changes between this code and the previous ones and to argue that at least during this period, a biblical worldview was the only acceptable worldview. It is important to note that everyone is informed by a particular worldview and that for those outside of the norm (white, heterosexual, secular, etc.), a space where one can safely operate within their unique worldview is important.⁴⁵ Still, there is an important difference between having space for one's worldview and eschewing all others. Other universities that make space for unique worldviews such as Howard University, or Wellesley College, recognize the importance of such universities but do not encourage their students to espouse only one way of seeing the world.⁴⁶ Howard University, for example, while it does encourage students to "provide solutions to contemporary global problems, particularly ones impacting the African Diaspora," does not demand that students see the world through that lens only.⁴⁷ The same can be said for Wellesley and other women's universities throughout the United States.

Furthering this, is the 1995 document's section entitled "Core Values and Community Standards." Of the four values, three speak exclusively to the university's "distinctly Christian character."⁴⁸ Included are the need to accept the authority of the Bible and to "submit to its divine teaching," to pursue "personal holiness," and "to let nothing stand in the way of becoming

⁴⁵ In this case, the "norm" is referring to the religious (or secular), societal, legal norms of Canada during each iteration of the Covenant.

⁴⁶ Founded in 1867, Howard University is a historically Black private university located in Washington, DC. <https://www2.howard.edu> Wellesley College is one of the top women-only universities in the United States. Founded in 1870, it is known as one of the "Seven Sisters," a name given to the seven women's liberal arts universities established in the Northeastern US.

⁴⁷ Howard University, "Mission and Core Values." <https://www2.howard.edu/about/mission> Accessed September 17, 2018.

⁴⁸ Community Standards, 1.

‘godly Christian leaders.’”⁴⁹ As mentioned previously, this reads more as a guide to being a good Christian than it does behavior specifically related to campus life (although in the case of Trinity at this time, it seems unbefitting to separate the two). Furthering this, students are informed that the “Community Standards are intended to reflect a preferred lifestyle for those who belong to this community rather than ‘campus rules’ (and as such) they apply both on and off campus.”⁵⁰ Here it becomes clear that this new document goes beyond a set of school rules; it is meant to follow the student wherever they go, not just as representatives of TWU but as representatives of Christ. This is not merely conjecture; the document itself states that these core values are “easily transformed into principles of Christian conduct.”⁵¹ This does not read as an aspirational document; the standards leave little room for divergence. Students are expected to “engage in an honest pursuit of biblical holiness” and to “make the University’s mission their own mission.”⁵² This leaves little room for choice as the rules laid out in the Bible—and by extension, the Code—is not subject to negotiation. In fact, school handbooks from this time inform students that they have signed a binding document and that acquiescence should reflect one’s “personal convictions in every detail” and that “failure to respect the Responsibilities of Membership is a breach of personal integrity, a matter which may, in some cases, be of greater concern than the violation itself.”⁵³ In other words, aside from whatever external disciplinary

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ TWU, Student Handbook, 2000-2001, 15.

action a student may face, someone violating the Community Standards would have to live with knowing that they have violated an important part of themselves.

It is important to note that throughout the 1980s, numerous articles show up in the Trinity Western school paper that question the demands placed on them. Occasionally students complained that while they are clearly being told what to do, they aren't being told *why* they have to follow a particular rule. The Community Standards provides reasons by inserting biblical reference to a number of its rules. Under the section entitled "Application of the Community Standards to Students" a number of rules such as "Obey Jesus' commandment to his disciples" and "Utilize careful judgement in the exercise of personal freedom," are followed by a list of Biblical references. Presumably, students can find the answer to the question "why must we follow this rule?" by looking up the cited chapter and verse. Under "refrain from practices that are biblically condemned," biblical references are added for each example of condemned activity. Sexual sins points the reader to I Cor. 6:12-20 (among others), while the prohibition on swearing sends the reader off to look up Eph. 4:29.⁵⁴ Regardless of the passage or its interpretation, the use of biblical verse is put into place to satisfy anyone that might ask why they are expected to follow such rules. As an evangelical school that expects its members to accept the authority of the Bible and to "voluntarily submit to its teachings," the addition of biblical "backup" for its rules is perhaps the most striking change to TWU's Code of Conduct. To ask for submission and to "prove" that the rules contained inside the document come directly from the

⁵⁴ This verse initially forbade sex with a prostitute; later versions condemn fornication in its entirety. Regarding swearing, the New International Version says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Other versions translate "unwholesome" as "filthy," "harmful," "dirty" "foul," and "evil." Given the array of translations, interpreting this line as referring to swearing is only one of several possible interpretations. This line could just as easily be warning against slander, abuse, lying, etc. Of 25 different versions, "corrupt" is the word most often chosen.

Bible is to remove all potential for criticism, all ability to explore personal choice. Again, the 1975 document cautions students that certain rights may need to be relinquished in order to benefit the common good. In all, 30 biblical references are given for just four directives. We can easily see a pattern emerging where each iteration is becoming more directive and more extensive in its demands on students. While the 1995 document did stir controversy within the public domain—particularly with regards to TWU’s legal battle with the BC Teachers College in 2001—the greatest controversy was to come with the next, and most recent, iteration.⁵⁵

In 2008, “President Raymond charged the Trinity Western community and Provost with the mandate to revisit the University’s *Responsibilities of Membership Agreement* for the purpose of updating, strengthening, revising and renewing its formal written statement of covenant.”⁵⁶

Approved on August 17, 2009, the result was the now controversial *Community Covenant: Our Pledge to One Another*.⁵⁷ At five pages, the Community Covenant is significantly longer than its predecessors. What is perhaps most striking about the Covenant when compared to previous iterations, is the warmth with which it appears to have been written. Despite discriminatory language that denies marriage equality for LGTBQ2 people, I have often described this document as being “love forward.” While the 1995 document feels very legal in its approach, this document takes time to promote things such as kindness, forgiveness and compassion. The Covenant presents signatories with five distinct sections: The TWU Community Covenant,

⁵⁵ The BC College of Teachers protested Trinity’s application for a school of education based on their beliefs around homosexuality. In 2001, TWU won that right at the Supreme Court of Canada. (See *Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teacher* [2001], S.C.R. 772, 2009 SCC 31. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1867/index.do>)

⁵⁶ Trinity Western University, “TWU Community Covenant Agreement.” <https://www8.twu.ca/governance/presidents-office/community-covenant.html>

⁵⁷ The Community Covenant can be found on TWU’s website at <https://www8.twu.ca/governance/presidents-office/twu-community-covenant-agreement.pdf>

Christian Community, Community Life at TWU, Areas for Careful Discernment and Sensitivity, and Commitment and Accountability. The fourth section, Areas for Careful Discernment and Sensitivity is further broken down into sub-categories including Wise and Sustainable Self-Care; Healthy Sexuality; Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco; and Entertainment.⁵⁸ While iterations from the 1970s seem to address the school part of Trinity separately from the spiritual part and where the previous iteration speaks almost entirely about the Christian commitment of its members, the Community Covenant weaves the two together by emphasising that they are not only a Christian body, nor simply a university, but a “distinctly Christian university,” “with a vision for developing people of high competence and exemplary character who distinguish themselves as leaders in the marketplaces of life.”⁵⁹ In other words, well-developed students would now carry their Christianity into the workforce.⁶⁰

The first section of this document, The TWU Community Covenant acts as an introduction to the university’s mission to educate its students in the liberal arts and sciences within a Christian worldview, its deep commitment to “Jesus Christ as described in the bible,” and perhaps most

⁵⁸ This section, along with “Community Life at TWU” are the sites of the recent controversy regarding TWU’s failed application for a law school.

⁵⁹ TWU, Community Covenant: Our Pledge to One Another. (2009), 2. The idea of making students leaders in the “marketplaces of life,” was introduced in 1980 as part of Trinity’s mission statement. The belief was that the “corporate marketplace needed skilled workers who were godly, committed Christians.” R. Neil Snider, *Against All Odds...Trinity Western University:1974 to 2006—to the praise of His glory* (Langley: Trinity Western University, 2016), 48. Snider goes on to say that by “marketplace,” the writers “didn’t mean solely commercial enterprises, but rather the ‘marketplace’, broadly understood as those arenas that shape the life and culture of a nation. Christian faith was not to be shelter in a cloister; but rather to be carried boldly and unapologetically into the hustle and bustle of society and life”(117). The belief was that an emphasis on “the various marketplaces of life” would move TWU toward “academic programs that could have strategic impact on those marketplaces,” by introducing Christians and Christianity into all areas of life (118). Still, this phrase conjures up images of a kind of capitalism that Jesus railed against when “he went into the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there.” *Christian neo-liberalism is still neo-liberalism.*

⁶⁰ Up until the 1950s, the evangelical movement was wary of higher education as the belief was that the university was full of Marxists and other non-believers and that Christian students would lose their faith while in there. Places like TWU were built so that students who were not called to minister could become educated and carry their faith into the workplace.

importantly, its sense of community.⁶¹ From the beginning, the signatory is reminded of the school's deep connection to God, and its roots "in the evangelical Protestant tradition."⁶² The document informs everyone involved that the school is comprised of "Christian administrators, faculty and staff" (students need not be Christian, they only have to agree to abide by the Covenant), helping students to formulate the "Christian world view" emphasised in the 1995 Covenant.⁶³ But what seems most important within this section (and throughout the document) is the fact that TWU encompasses not just a unique learning environment, but a community. Within four paragraphs, the word community is used six times (not including the times where the phrase "Community Covenant" is used) letting signatories know that each individual is responsible for the welfare of the whole. As community can be defined as a "set of interactions, and human behaviours that have meaning and expectations between its members [and] not just action, but actions based on *shared expectations, values, beliefs* [emphasis added] and meanings between individuals,"⁶⁴ it is not surprising that TWU would see themselves as fitting into this construct. The importance that TWU places on being a community that stands apart from not only other universities but from much of Canada, is echoed throughout the entire Covenant. So important is this aspect of the document that signatories are cautioned that they are about to "enter into a contractual agreement and relational bond" again giving it the tone of something that is legally

⁶¹ Community Covenant, 1.

⁶² Ibid, 1.

⁶³ Ibid. It has been a public source of contention to have a school that is open only to Christian-identified staff and faculty. However, it seems reasonable that this would be the case. Black colleges employ black faculty and women's colleges employ female faculty. The difference is, of course, that Howard University does not espouse only one way of being black, nor does Wellesley College espouse only one way of being female.

⁶⁴ Phil Bartle, "What is Community? A Sociological Perspective." (2011) *Community Empowerment Collective*, <http://cec.vcn.bc.ca/cmp/whatcom.htm>

binding. In fact, the choice to call this new document a “Covenant” also lends itself to being not only a promise to God, but a contractual agreement.⁶⁵

The Covenant’s subsequent section—Christian Community—deepens the obligation of the community by reminding its signers that through a “distinctly Christian way of living...exemplified fully by Jesus Christ” they can bring to the community “humility, self-sacrifice, mercy and justice” all in the name of “mutual submission for the good of others.”⁶⁶

While students are there to experience “rigorous intellectual learning,” what Trinity emphasizes is that members “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 fulfilled.”⁶⁷

Fulfilling God’s purpose now exists alongside a robust educational experience. This perhaps suggests that pursuing an education can also be a way to fulfill God’s purpose.

The Covenant’s next two sections, “Community Life at TWU” and “Areas for Careful Discernment and Sensitivity,” have been the main source of recent hostilities aimed at Trinity Western. “Community Life at TWU” contains a total of sixteen bullets, each designed to promote a safe community, as well as “actions identified in the Bible as virtues.”⁶⁸ The overwhelming majority of these speak not only to biblical “virtues,” but to what is needed for any group of people to coexist peacefully. Things such as living “exemplary lives characterized by honesty, civility, truthfulness, generosity and integrity,” are practices to which few would

⁶⁵ Community Covenant, 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 1-2.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

object.⁶⁹ Virtually all of the items within the Covenant aspire to create a kind of evangelical safe place, where one is encouraged to apply their faith to their studies; however, one new addition to the Covenant has come under attack as promoting hate.⁷⁰ While Trinity's previous codes of conduct explicitly name homosexuality as a biblically condemned act, the Community Covenant now asks signatories to abstain from "sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."⁷¹ Instead of condemning an action, Trinity can now claim to simply be upholding a traditional view of marriage.⁷² The following section, "Areas for Careful Discernment and Sensitivity," reiterates this by informing its members that "according to the Bible, sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman, and within that bond it is God's intention that it be enjoyed as a means for marital intimacy and procreation."⁷³ Much like the 1995 document, these statements are backed up by numerous footnotes that reference biblical passages. Beyond what the 1995 document provided the reader— 32 bible references for two pages of dialogue—the Community Covenant backs up the document with 130 references for just five pages. This means that on average, the Covenant employs 26 references per page—significantly higher than the 16 passages per page cited in the previous iteration. The need to justify its contents appears to have grown over time. Interestingly, this document allows for the consumption of alcohol by its members for the first time in its 47-

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See Elaine Craig, "Religiously Inspired Hate is Still Hate," *Huffington Post*, (June 23, 2016). https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/elaine-craig/twu-law-school_b_10630728.html

⁷¹ Ibid, 3

⁷² TWU has argued that upholding a traditional view of marriage is not the same as being homophobic. One conservative TWU member told me that he is in support of marriage equality. However, for him a same-sex marriage would be legally recognized but not religiously recognized. In other words, sanctioned by law but not sanctioned by God.

⁷³ Community Covenant, 4.

year history. And in spite of the previous document's use of the Bible to justify its ban on alcohol (specifically "drunkenness") it now uses the Bible to justify the "enjoyment of alcohol in moderation."⁷⁴ It's interesting to note that while the Community Standards cited only one biblical passage to prohibit drinking, the Covenant cites seven different passages to now allow for this same action.⁷⁵

In spite of a document that attempts to create community, a document that implies that all members of TWU have equal parts to play within this community, it is the school alone that determines whether its members have acted in accordance with the Covenant. While the document appears to suggest that each member lives *alongside* one another, it is clear that "TWU" as a governing body, sits *above* the rest. Says the Covenant,

TWU 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. *TWU reserves the right to question, challenge or discipline any member in response to actions that impact personal or social welfare.*⁷⁶ [Emphasis added.]

And yet, in its final section, "Commitment and Accountability," the Covenant lets it be known that it is the responsibility of everyone present to police the actions of others:

Ensuring that the integrity of the TWU 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. The

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ TWU's use of the bible to both condemn and allow for the same action calls into the question the legitimacy of using biblical passages for either prescriptive or proscriptive measures. If passages can be used to both condemn and later allow for drinking, could passages not be used to allow for other prohibited actions such as homosexuality? It should be noted that I was told that there was significant pushback from parents with regards to lifting the ban on alcohol consumption. Adding biblical references allows Trinity to defend their position.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 3. While the Covenant mostly uses "TWU" to refer to a community of the whole, in this instance, TWU refers only to its administrative body. There appears to be a line drawn between TWU as a cohesive community, and TWU and as the decision makers. This existence of two separate TWUs will be the focus of Chapter Three.

university also provides formal accountability procedures to address actions by community members that represent a disregard for this covenant.⁷⁷

While the 1976 document added a layer of complexity and accountability by virtue of its mandatory signature, the Covenant goes beyond this by placing many sets of eyes on everyone present. While the initial signature sets up a panopticon, with the school alone watching its members, the Covenant sets up a kind of super-panopticon with not only one central body watching the movement of others, but with each individual acting as their own watch-tower. While previous iterations certainly did not espouse a “mind-your-own-business” attitude, the sense was that if everyone abided by the Code of Conduct, there would be no need to fret over the actions of others. This new feature suggests that relying on everyone’s ability to self-govern is, in fact, unreliable. This is indicative of not only an important change within the school’s document, but more significantly, a change in attitude towards its members. What is interesting, however, is that these same members, while not fully trusted to self-govern, are simultaneously being asked to govern others. As we will see in Chapter Three, the ways in which some students have been held accountable has not always been practiced evenly or fairly.

Conclusion

As indicated by the quote at the start of this chapter, some critics believe that Trinity Western is stuck in time, unable to progress or acknowledge a world outside of their own. However, by examining the various Codes of Conduct, we can see that evolution has been continuous and unceasing. The move from a document in which only a few written rules were deemed necessary, to one in which every expectation is thoroughly laid out, is undoubtedly the most significant change that has taken place since the Code’s inception. So significant are these and

⁷⁷ Ibid, 5.

other changes that it is hard to refer to them as an evolution, but rather a complete metamorphosis. Evolution is slow, and typically each change within that process is almost imperceptible. It is only when examining the *longue durée* that change becomes evident. And yet in these documents, almost every iteration looks completely different from either its predecessor or its successor. Recall that in 1972, Trinity Junior College provided students with a document entitled, “Some Basic Principles.” While there were some guidelines with regards to student behavior, it acted mainly as helpful tips and friendly advice. Three years later, however, this handy guide was replaced with “Responsibilities for Membership.” The document no longer contained superfluous information such as how to purchase a parking pass, but now focused solely on the behavior of its students. Significant changes continued to happen with every iteration: the introduction of a mandatory signature, a list of “biblically condemned” behaviors, and the introduction of “sexual sins” to name a few.

While the changes themselves are important, the temporal proximity of the documents to one another also speaks to something significant. Three rapid fire documents in 1970s with nothing else for 20 years causes anyone with a curious mind to ask a myriad of questions: Why so many documents in the 1970s? Why nothing in the 1980s, or, for that matter, the 1960s—a decade known for significant changes in everything from politics to women’s rights? What was happening in 1975 or 1995 that prompted change? In other words, while we have answered the question *How did these documents change?* we must also ask ourselves, *Why* did these documents change? What was happening both within the school as well as in the larger world that moved Trinity to alter a document that was satisfactory at the time written? This is what we will attempt to answer in the next chapter.

Question	1972: Some Basic Principles	1975: Responsibilities for Membership in Trinity Western College	1976: Responsibilities for Membership in Academic Community of Trinity Western College	1995: Community Standards: Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Student	2009: Trinity Western University Community Covenant: Our Pledge to One Another
Length of Document (all documents are single-spaced)	Two and half pages (some of which speaks to logistical matters such as parking and lost & found items).	One page (all of which speak to prohibited and prescriptive behavior).	Two pages (speaks to both students' and college's responsibilities)	Two pages (increasingly biblical language)	Five pages (all of which speaks to Christian community, behavioural expectations and prohibitions).
Signature Required?	No. In fact, this was not even an option.	No. (Document states that it is "assumed that the student...agrees to accept the responsibilities of membership")	Yes.	Yes, by both faculty and staff.	Yes. This is mandatory. Students cannot complete an application without signing the covenant.
Target Audience?	Students only.	Students only.	Students only.	All staff, faculty and students (faculty were allowed to raise objections to anything they disagreed with).	All staff, faculty and students. Like students, anyone employed at the university must also sign the Covenant.

<p>Delivery</p>	<p>Uncertain. It is likely that “Basic Principles” were outlined in some kind of student handbook</p>	<p>Uncertain.</p>	<p>Part of the application package</p>	<p>Part of application/job offer package.</p>	<p>For students, this is part of the application process (which is now exclusively online). Until recently, TWU’s application included the Community Covenant and applications were considered incomplete until students “agreed” to live by the Covenant. For those employed by the university, this is less clear. A recent conversations with a TWU faculty suggests that the Covenant must be signed before employment can be confirmed.</p>
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<p>Religious Language?</p>	<p>Yes. Basic Principles refer to the “Christian Character” of the students. As well, students are expected to attend services on “The Lord’s Day.” Overall, however, the religious language of the document is minimal.</p>	<p>Very minimal.</p>	<p>Yes. First mention of "biblically condemned practices."</p>	<p>Yes. The language of this document is almost exclusively religious. First mention of the "authority of the bible" and first use of biblical references to back up standards.</p>	<p>Yes. The Community Covenant contains much religious language. Signatories are reminded multiple times that TWU is a Christian community. The Bible is referred to on several occasions, and for every direction given, a biblical reference is cited.</p>
<p>Legal Language?</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Not concretely, but this document has a certain legal feel to it with phrases such as "obey the law."</p>	<p>Yes. While the legal language of the Covenant is minimal, the very word “Covenant” implies a legally binding contract.</p>

<p>Prescriptive Behaviour</p>	<p>Several. Students are expected to attend services on Sundays and are expected to behave in ways that reflect their “Christian character.”</p>	<p>This document is less prescriptive than the earlier document stating that "regulations have been kept to a minimum" in order to allow individuals their own "growth to maturity."</p>	<p>Like the 1975 iteration, this document also states that regulations have been kept to a minimum. Most of the required behaviors speak to the responsibilities of the college to provide things such as "a wholesome Christian environment," and a "broad beginning in liberal arts."</p>	<p>Emphasis on the need to "limit the exercise of their Christian liberty."</p>	<p>Several. In addition to others, students are required to “cultivate Christian virtues,” “observe modesty” and “reserve sexual expressions of modesty” for marriage.</p>
<p>Proscriptive Behaviour</p>	<p>Only a few that are explicitly stated. Students must refrain from public displays of affection; students are advised to not get married during the school year and are not allowed to leave their dorm rooms during study hours</p>	<p>This document contains less proscriptions than the earlier document but does add new items such as a prohibition against drugs and alcohol.</p>	<p>First mention of biblically condemned practices such as adultery and "homosexual behavior."</p>	<p>First mention of abortion and pornography.</p>	<p>Several. Among others, no sexual intimacy outside of heterosexual marriage, no consumption of pornography, no tobacco use, and no alcohol consumption on campus.</p>

<p>Consequences for Breaking Rules</p>	<p>Yes. The Basic Principles warn students that breaking rules will result in demerits as determined by the “Committee on Student Personnel.” The more demerits, the more severe the penalty.</p>	<p>No mention of consequences although it is reasonable to assume that students were penalized for breaking rules.</p>	<p>While one can assume that there were consequences in place for breaking rules, this document makes no mention of them. This document refers students to student handbook for a "more complete explanation of community standards and guidelines."</p>	<p>Again, this document makes no mention of consequences. It is likely that a student handbook outlined potential consequences for not abiding by the standards.</p>	<p>Yes. The Covenant speaks to accountability for all students, faculty and staff and reminds signatories that hold oneself and others accountable is part of everyone’s responsibility. Exact consequences are not outlined in the Covenant, but rather in the Student Handbook and in Employment Policies.</p>
<p>Media Attention/ Lawsuits</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Yes, beginning in 1996 and ending with SCC decision in 2001 (TWU v. British Columbia Teachers College)</p>	<p>Yes, beginning in 2014, involving three separate law societies across the country and ending with SCC in 2018. Media attention has been vast.</p>

Chapter Two: From the Outside Looking In

*“I think the changes regarding the Covenant are good. It shows we’re moving forward.”*¹
~Trinity Faculty Member

In Chapter One, we were able to capture the changes happening to Trinity Western’s Code of Conduct. As we saw, each iteration is markedly different from one another. From its beginning, the code was subject to an ongoing metamorphosis. While some that I interviewed believe TWU and its Community Covenant to be “stuck in time,” an unmoving object that feels more like a relic of the past than a document of the present, the last chapter showed us that, in fact, the Covenant has been a dynamic, ever-changing work-in-progress. More than that, I argue in this chapter that the Covenant has not existed *in spite of* changes within the larger world but precisely *due to* changes within the larger world. The Covenant manages to simultaneously defend a way of being while standing against an ever-shifting world. The latter makes the former necessary.

As we will see, each iteration can be viewed, at least in part, as a response to specific changes within Canada. In particular, each new version of the Code responded to shifting attitudes in the minds and practices of Canadians; these changes were themselves expressions of

¹ Interview No. 7

tumult in the country's legal, political, and religious arenas.² For example, the shifting public attitudes and changes in the law regarding abortion in Canada resulted not just in a flurry of articles within TWU's student newspaper as well as the creation of an on-campus "Pro-Life" group, but also prompted TWU also listed abortion as a "biblically condemned" practice shortly after the legalization of abortion on demand. While abortions were certainly happening prior to its legalization, the first three Codes make no mention of it.³

This chapter will explore each iteration of the Codes within the Canadian context of the time in order to understand what may have prompted each change, to determine where TWU may have sat on significant issues impacting Canadian society; and lastly, to show that TWU, far from existing with its "head in the sand," continues to be acutely aware of changing norms.⁴

As discussed in the introduction, during the school's almost sixty-year existence, Canada has undergone major changes socially and politically. Those changes have impacted how people interact with faith. To recap some of the most significant information, in 1962 approximately 98 percent of Canadians identified as Christian (the vast majority of whom being either Catholic or Protestant) and "well under 1% of the total population" identified as having no religious affiliation.⁵ Compare this to 2011, where only two-thirds of Canadians identify as Christian and

² One could just as easily argue that the changes were attitudinal first which ultimately lead to changes with the systems listed (i.e., legal, religious, etc.). This speaks to bottom-up vs. top-down systems of change. For more on this, see Paul Bramadat, "Managing and Imagining Religion in Canada from the Top and the Bottom: 15 Years After," in *Religion and the Exercise of Public Authority*, eds. B. Berger and R. Moon. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing), 2016.

³ While abortion laws in Canada began to ease in 1969, forcing a woman to carry a foetus to term was not found to be in violation of the Charter until 1988.

⁴ A number of my interviewees used "head in the sand" or similar metaphors (clueless, fearful, behind-the-times) to describe what they saw as TWU's willful ignorance of not only social changes within Canada, but diversity of beliefs and practices among its own members.

⁵ Clarke and Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity*, 163.

a very substantial 24%—almost one-quarter—of Canadians claim to have no religious affiliation.⁶ Combine this with changing attitudes towards abortion, equality rights for historically marginalized communities, the advent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the embrace of multiculturalism, and it becomes evident that Canada is a significantly different place than it was sixty years ago. For places like Trinity Western—an institution devoted to maintaining a conservative Christian way of being no longer embraced by most Canadians—these changes must be disconcerting if not frightening. The discrepancy between what society deems acceptable versus Trinity’s expectations of its students has grown wider as years have passed. The moral expectations Trinity placed on its students during its early years were not entirely different from the moral expectations of most Canadians at the time. Churches were full, expectations of men and women were divided along gender lines, homosexuality was broadly understood as a pathology, and prayer within public schools was a daily occurrence.⁷ While larger societal expectations were at least somewhat aligned with Trinity’s own approach to things such as gender roles and the importance of attending church, public universities had

⁶According to the 2011 National Household Survey. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=01&Data=Count&SearchText=Canada&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=10#tabs1> As noted earlier, this survey, conducted by Statistics Canada, replaced the long-form Census and is conducted only every 10 years (as a supplement to the Canadian Census). The percentage of “no religious affiliation” was up eight percent from the 2001 Census, which saw the percentage of Canadians claiming no affiliation at 16.2 percent. If this rate of growth continues (and evidence shows that it has), the 2021 National Household Survey will see the percentage at or around 32 percent.

⁷ According to Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada Since 1945* (Montreal and Kingston, 2017), at this time about 45 percent of mainstream Protestants were attending church on a regular basis. For Catholics, that number was closer to 85 percent (See especially Chapter One: “What happened to Canada’s Mainstream Protestant Population?” and Chapter Two: “Other Protestant Denominations.” Reginald Bibby, in his book *Fragmented Gods* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987), shows similar numbers. It is also important to note that Clarke and Macdonald point out that there are “only four reports of attendance (for mainstream Protestants) for the entire period of the 1950s and 1960s” (111). In addition, Homosexuality was not removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) until 1973, and The Public School Act of 1944 made the use of the Lord’s Prayer compulsory at the start of every school day; in addition, compulsory bible reading also occurred. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 made this no longer compulsory but it was not as a violation of the Charter until 1996.

begun severing denominational ties beginning in the 1940s. Prior to this, however, several Canadian universities such as Dalhousie, McMaster, and the University of British Columbia (UBC) had successfully created a “Christian moral atmosphere on campus” and “Christian beliefs and values pervaded, implicitly or otherwise, every facet of campus life.”⁸ This was further promoted by associations such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM) and the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF). By the 1950s, however, the SCM began to decline and universities lost their *in loco parentis* status. In post-war Canada, as universities became more diverse in the types of programs they offered, a slow-growing secularizing was also taking hold and “many denominational universities turned into public bodies.”⁹ In places like Ontario, “the provincial government became reluctant to support denominational colleges,” and schools were under pressure to modernize.¹⁰ It could be argued that public institutions were becoming progressively more secular ahead of the rest of Canada. However, while universities were becoming secular institutions, the majority of them still prescribed to so-called Christian values insofar as the rules they tried to impose on students into the early 1960s.¹¹ Still, “neither administrators nor student governments could control changing student values,” and, unlike Trinity, “the regulation of campus life [eventually] changed as social mores changed.”¹² While Trinity has continued to push back against changing social mores, when other schools’

⁸ Catherine Gidney, *A Long Eclipse: The Liberal Protestant Establishment and the Canadian University 1920-1970*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 26.

⁹ Gidney, 93.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹ In 1965, UBC expelled two women from residence after finding men in their beds. As well, UBC allowed parents to check up on the status of their daughters by “requesting access to the number of late leaves taken by them.” (Gidney, 43)

¹² Gidney, 43, 44.

“administrators perceived rules to be out of date, they generally did not hesitate to accept student demands for change.”¹³ Because of this, the administration of Trinity Junior College believed that they were creating something that did not exist at public universities: a place of higher learning where faith would remain intact. Founding chairman of the board Rev. David E. Enarson states, ‘We wanted a college that would support, not tear down, those values taught at home... We wanted to be thoroughly ‘Christian’ and thoroughly ‘college’ at the same time.’¹⁴

Yet, in spite of believing that they were creating something unique within the academic world, Trinity Western College’s earliest Code of Conduct, “Some Basic Principles,” says surprisingly little about behavioral expectations, and surprisingly little about Christianity. As discussed in the first chapter, the first document I am working with is from 1972—a full 10 years after the establishment of Trinity Western College. However, one of Trinity’s earliest school papers, “The Pioneer,” makes reference to “Some Basic Principles,” a document that was handed out to students during orientation week.¹⁵

So, why does the 1972 document give such little direction to its students when they believed that they was creating something unique among higher education? What was Canada like in the years leading up to 1972? We know that the 1960s were years of great change; there was a counter-culture movement among young people that shifted how they thought about things such as the nuclear family, marriage, and God. The Quiet Revolution separated religion from the centre of government in Quebec, and church attendance throughout Canada began to shrink

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Trinity Western World, 1979. As quoted in Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the 20th Century*, 150-151.

¹⁵ While it is likely safe to assume that the document kept the same name between 1962 and 1974 (the year prior to its change), we cannot assume that it did not go through regular changes. Unfortunately, as those earliest documents have not been located, we will not spend time guessing what those changes may have looked like.

significantly towards the end of the decade. Still, in 1972 Canadians still identified as overwhelmingly Christian.¹⁶ Given this, it is not entirely surprising that “Some Basic Principles” gives little direction regarding Christianity or Christian behavior. Recall from Chapter One the language used in this document: students are told that the “Christian character of the students should serve as guide lines,” that they should “maintain satisfactory Christian standards,” and that they are “expected to use mature judgement in decisions relating to Christian behavior.”¹⁷ Many young people today would not fully understand what such a document is trying to convey. And as we will see in Chapter Three, even among Christians, the definition of “Christian character” can be very different from one person to the next. However, in 1972 with the vast majority of Canadians still identifying as Christian, asking someone to behave as such would require little explanation. Most people would have been likely to interpret such direction as being modest, attending church, obeying parents (and, if you were a married woman, your husband), and other behaviors either proscribed or prescribed by the Bible. While things such as divorce and premarital sex were creeping toward social acceptance, one was still at risk of judgement for such things. Things that were changing significantly in Canada, such as shrinking attendance at church, were dealt with in the document by reminding students that church attendance on Sundays was mandatory.

Still, it can hardly be denied that the 1960s brought significant changes to the ways in which many people saw the world. Beginning in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Canada was

¹⁶ Pew Research Centre, “Canada’s Changing Religious Landscape,” June 27, 2013. Citing the 1971 Canada Census, the article shows that Protestants and Catholics accounted for eighty-eight percent of Canadians, with only four percent as religiously unaffiliated. <https://www.pewforum.org/2013/06/27/canadas-changing-religious-landscape/>

¹⁷ Trinity Western College, “Some Basic Principles.” 1972, 1-2.

being led by Pierre Trudeau, whose liberal beliefs on things such as divorce and homosexuality rankled many conservative Canadians. As well, the counter-culture movement was not something that impacted only a few key places throughout North America. While it may be true that San Francisco was at the heart of the movement, Vancouver's Kitsilano neighbourhood—only 40 kilometres from TWU—was Canada's answer to Haight-Ashbury. Given the role Kitsilano played in the late 1960s and 1970s as the west coast hub of alternative lifestyles, experimental spiritualities, drug use, and sexual exploration, it is strange that a 1972 document to make no mention of pre-marital sex or drug use. It is likely that Trinity Junior College, as a Christian college, assumed that their students would not be tempted by what was happening in the larger world, and that perhaps students chose Trinity as their school to insulate themselves from the changes that were occurring.¹⁸ It is possible that early Trinity students were already isolated enough by conservative Christian families to not fully understand changes that were occurring, but articles in Trinity newspapers during this time make enough cultural references (regarding fashion, music, etc.) to assume that at least some students were aware of what was happening off campus.¹⁹

In addition to cultural references, an examination of Trinity student newspapers from the 1960s indicate a student body that sounds much like any other—talk of parties (and things that

¹⁸ It should also be noted that while the 40 kilometres separating Trinity from downtown Vancouver is now easily travelled by both improved highways and public transit, in 1962, this was not the case. During Trinity's early years, Langley was mostly farmland, and public transit would not have served the area. Leaving Trinity to venture outwards would have required a car *and* permission from the school.

¹⁹ This brings up the question of institutional completeness. Often referring to ethnic communities, institutional completeness is the state in which minorities have organized themselves in a way that all of their needs can be met within their own ethnic, cultural, or religious community, thereby removing the necessity of integration or assimilation. In communities characterized by high levels of institutional completeness – Hassidic Jews in Montreal and New York, for example – one can often observe a significant degree of cultural insularity with respect to events and movements in the surrounding culture.

sound a lot like panty-raids), who was dating whom, and other themes common to young people appear throughout these early papers.²⁰ Trinity did not include any specific rules or prohibitions on alcohol consumption, dancing, or the types of entertainment one might enjoy—these rules all came later. The document suggests that these boundaries might simply have been understood by the students without needing to be made explicit.

Asking students to behave like Christians is, in fact, a request that is pregnant with expectations. As I demonstrate in this thesis, in this period TWU operated according to an assumed consensus around the meaning of “Christian behavior.” The administration and board seemed to assume both that students would fully comprehend what this phrase means, but also that students would attempt follow in Christ’s footsteps by acting with moral decency. While this includes things such as love and compassion for others, statements such as “the Christian character of the student should serve as a guideline,” “conduct should be above reproach,” and “maintain satisfactory Christian standards” reads as more prescriptive than proscriptive, as if Trinity felt it more important to remind students to be good, rather than warning them to not be bad (as we have seen, this tone changes with later iterations).²¹ If one believes in the inerrancy of the Bible, to live as Christ is to try to live one’s life without sin, while also knowing that one will ultimately fail. It is interesting to note that Trinity had not named the sins students were

²⁰ Panty-raids, popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s, was a common prank where male student attempted to break into, or “raid” female dormitories with the goal of stealing the women’s underwear.

²¹ It is interesting to reflect on what it means—both literally and philosophically—to be “reminded.” To remind, is different than informing; it assumes that one is already in possession of a piece of information. It is to cause someone to remember something, but it is also defined as “to bring something, especially a commitment or necessary course of action, to the attention of someone.” (Lexico online dictionary, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/remind>) Perhaps students were reminded of little else, because the school did not see the need to do so. As social change in Canada meant that things like pre-marital sex and a shift in gender roles became the norm, the need to clearly articulate a Christian subjectivity increased. Later versions of the codes of conduct seem to both inform *and* remind students of what it means to be a good Christian.

exhorted to avoid. This again suggests that the administration trusted that Trinity students would understand these phrases and in turn would simply know which behaviors were to be avoided. However, while the expectation that students may have been living with an acceptable amount of decorum in 1962 (several years before the counter-culture moment), it seems perhaps optimistic to believe the same of students 10 years later. Even when so-called “sinful” practices were clearly evident all around them (divorce, drug use, etc.), college leaders continued to assume that there was no need to be explicit about them.

Perhaps this explains why, in 1975, Trinity Junior College made significant changes to its code, now referred to as “Responsibilities of Membership in Trinity Western College Community.” Whereas the earlier “Some Basic Principles” offered itself as a guideline to help students along an already understood path of proper Christian behavior, thereby eliminating the need to make explicit the kinds of activities that students were to not engage in, the new document goes far beyond the gentle almost hand-holding tone of the previous document by reminding students that “Trinity is not a place to simply ‘do your own thing,’” (perhaps suggesting that that was precisely what some students were doing), but instead a place to be accountable to one another.²² The 1970s marked a seismic change in how people began to relate to one another; moving from community-based goals to individualism, this “we to me” mindset meant that many were now looking at how things impacted individual freedoms instead of communal well-being. Trinity’s new document made clear that as a community, individual freedoms that did not benefit the whole would not be tolerated:

²² Trinity Western College, “Responsibilities of Membership in Trinity Western College,” 1975.

...growth needs to be guided by mutual respect and concern of the individual members of the community for one another and for the betterment of the Community as a whole. This may require relinquishing certain “rights.”²³

With this iteration, Trinity began listing the rights that they felt students should “relinquish.” Instead of relying a student’s ability to be led by their “mature judgement,” the 1975 document now provided its members with both a prescriptive and proscriptive list of behaviors including “refraining from the use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and hallucinatory drugs or narcotics.” While 1960s media bombarded its audience with the dangers of LSD, many young people were experimenting with it and other hallucinatory substances. Musicians, artists, activists, writers and others were lauding the mind-opening effects of LSD—permission was everywhere—and yet Trinity opted to wait until the mid-1970s to even mention the use of drugs. Why wait, and why now?

When comparing the 1972 document to the 1975 one, the changes are startling. As mentioned in Chapter One, the earlier document reads as prescriptive—do this, do that—the 1975 document is largely proscriptive, telling students what *not* to do, although the language is sometimes, perhaps intentionally, vague. In addition to the prohibition of tobacco and alcohol, students are also told to exercise “careful judgement in the choice of entertainment including television and movie theatres.” By 1975, television programming was no longer based solely on traditional family values and westerns, but instead was beginning to incorporate contemporary issues such as divorce, feminism, racism, homosexuality and working women. Movies were moving in a similar path as indicated by some of the top movies of the year including *The Rocky Horror*

²³ Ibid, 2.

Picture Show, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo Nest*, and *Dog Day Afternoon*.²⁴ While asking students to “exercise careful judgement” seems to allow for individual decision making, the non-specific language also allows for Trinity’s administrative body to decide what consisted of appropriate viewing. While a student may see *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* as reasonable viewing material, an administrator may see it as glorifying a life where women work and remain unmarried.²⁵ Allowing students to make their own choices based on what they deemed appropriate feels, perhaps, like a test.

Students are also reminded that they must “Make attendance at a church of their choice a normal part of each Sunday’s activities.” One would think that students choosing to attend a Christian college would not need to be reminded to attend church, but by the mid-1970s, church attendance in Canada more generally had significantly waned. In fact, the percentage of people attending church regularly had been steadily decreasing since the 1940s. In 1965, when the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion posed the question, “*Did you yourself happen to go to church or synagogue in the last seven days?*” only 55 percent answered yes. Ten years later, that number dropped to 41 percent. Among those identifying as Protestant, those numbers are even lower at 32 and 25 percent respectively.²⁶

²⁴ These movies all include, to various degrees, issues such as sex, homosexuality, and violence. For those unfamiliar with these movies, a quick Google search will provide a synopsis.

²⁵ The Mary Tyler Moore Show, which ran from 1970-1977, featured Moore as the independent Mary Richards, who was focused on her career (in a male dominated newsroom) and who remained unmarried. This was groundbreaking as television rarely focused on female characters that were independent of a husband.

²⁶ Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, as cited in Reginald Bibby’s *Fragmented Gods, The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987), 17. It should be noted that while the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion no longer exists, other sources such as Angus Reid, the Globe and Mail, and several other sources show the same numbers.

The reasons for such significant changes to the Code of Conduct are most certainly connected to these changes that were happening more broadly within Canada. I argued here that when Canada began to shift, the Code of Conduct responded in kind. Still, what is hard to know is why Trinity waited so long to respond to these changes. It is perhaps likely that Trinity felt they could no longer assume their students would not succumb to these broader changes, and that clear proscriptive language was becoming necessary. Trinity newspapers around this time also speak to transgressions in behavior with some students complaining about things such as inappropriate clothing, short skirts, the use of alcohol off campus, and public displays of affection being exercised by some students.²⁷ As Gidney points out, other universities also responded with changes to their Code of Conducts when mishaps occurred:

Indeed, the expectations of the time can generally be gleaned only from the transgressions that occurred, because campus rules did not usually specify anything more than an expectation of decent or proper behavior and what such behaviour might consist of, of course, changed over time. Thus, as specific transgressions occurred or fears about morality arose, administrators' or students' *expectations became more explicit*.²⁸
[Emphasis mine.]

An example of this is the University of British Columbia's (UBC) ban on alcohol. Student handbooks throughout most of the 1920s make no mention of the consumption of alcohol until 1929, when the rules change to include a ban on the use of "liquor" on campus or at any campus function.²⁹ It was also forbidden for students to show up on campus "showing any trace of

²⁷ Recall from the Introduction, that both student newspapers and handbooks are a good indicators of change over time.

²⁸ Gidney, 31.

²⁹ Recall from my introduction, that student handbooks are separate from the Codes of Conduct. Handbooks provide students with a multitude of information such as on campus resources and a calendar of events. For more information, refer to *Introduction Chapter*, 24.

intoxicating liquors.”³⁰ One can assume that the addition of a ban on the use of alcohol was in response to incidents of alcohol use. The same can likely be assumed of Trinity. The difference between UBC and Trinity, however, is that when Trinity was introducing its ban on alcohol consumption, other universities were eliminating theirs.³¹ By the mid-1970s, few people in the broader public would have seen alcohol use as a transgression. As public universities became more permissive, Trinity’s sense that they were doing something unique would have been enforced. In this way, Trinity may have been responding to both internal and external transgressions. (Indeed, most of the people I interviewed said that alcohol use among students and faculty has always been present.)³²

There was another significant shift happening within Trinity at this time. After 12 years as Trinity Junior College’s president (1962-1974) Dr. Calvin Hanson resigned his post. Dr. R. Neil Snider was named as his successor and remained president until 2006. By all accounts, Trinity Western achieved many milestones while under Dr. Snider’s tutelage, including leading Trinity to become a four-year degree granting institution in 1979. While there is an expectation that shifts will happen with a change in administration, according to some, not all of the shifts were welcome. Some interviewees talked of a different atmosphere under Dr. Snider, one that was more conservative and far stricter. One interviewee said that “there was a sense that you were

³⁰ *University of B.C. Student Handbook*, ed. Bessie T. Robertson (Vancouver: Student Publications Board, 1929). <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubcpublishations/ubcstuhhan/items/1.0118739#p0z-3r0f>: (Accessed September 25, 2019)

³¹ UBC student handbooks throughout the 1950s and 1960s show a shift from a complete ban on alcohol to a ban on alcohol at functions “without permission,” to no mention of alcohol with the exception of an article entitled, “Live it up?” where someone quips, “...alcohol [in the dorms] is forbidden but which everybody drinks and nobody gets caught except for those who like to get a lot of attention by being loudly drunk.” *Tuum Est: A New Student Guide to the University of B.C.* “Live it up!”, 42.

³² This will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

being watched” in a way that you weren’t before. As already discussed, this sense of being watched can be effective in helping people to control their behavior. Much like Foucault’s *panopticon*, those being watched are never sure when the watching is happening.³³ It could be never, or it could be always, encouraging individuals to be on their best behavior at all times. Again, I want to be clear that I am not comparing Trinity Western to a prison, but I also want to be clear that some interviewees did describe the time under Dr. Snider as being more controlled.

By 1976, yet another Code of Conduct was written for Trinity. This one, entitled, “Responsibilities of Membership in the Academic Community of Trinity Western College,” is significantly different than its predecessor. As discussed in the previous chapter, this iteration is the first to require a signature from its members, thereby transforming a guide into a contract. Whereas the previous iteration states that Trinity “assumes” that students will abide by its rules, one year later it seems clear that assumption is not enough—a signature, of course, creates commitment and greater accountability. A look at both UBC and Simon Fraser University (SFU) at this time shows student guidelines that are moving in the opposite direction from Trinity. Whereas UBC began prohibiting certain behaviors earlier in the century—such as drinking in 1929, and gambling in the mid-1930s—by the mid-1970s the code simply states that it is the “policy of the university to rely on the good sense and on the home training of students for the preservation of good moral standards...”³⁴ SFU says also states that it does not “assume parental obligations or responsibilities” and also relies on “good sense and home training” of its students

³³ In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault writes about the invention of the panopticon as a way for guards to see inmates without the inmates being able to see the guard. As Foucault says, “He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.” *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 200.

³⁴UBC, “The University of British Columbia 64th Session 1978/1979 Calendar” <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubcpublications/calendars/items/1.0169868#p12z-3r0f:student%20conduct> (Accessed September 26, 2019)

“in matters of personal conduct.”³⁵ Perhaps most significant is that a look at other Canadian public university policies at this time could not find any school that required students to *sign* a Code of Conduct.³⁶ Where most schools were swimming with the stream, Trinity was now swimming against it.

Outside of Trinity at this time, Canada continued to push religion towards the margins. Women’s equality was being fought for in areas such as employment, marriage, and education. This move was antithetical to the values of many evangelical groups, who continued to divide roles down a gendered line. A look at Trinity Western newspapers throughout the 1970s, and even into the early 1980s, shows a student body that believed in traditional roles. Comments on women’s appearance as well as their role as wife and mother were commonplace. In the larger society, divorce, if not quite commonplace, certainly no longer carried the stigma it once did, nor did things such as pre-marital sex and recreational drug use. Yet, Trinity speaks out against all of these behaviours. Other significant changes such as Quebec adding protection for homosexuals in its Human Rights Code, and the push for the Immigration Act to remove “homosexuality” from its list of “inadmissible classes” was certainly indicative, for many conservative Christians, that Canada was moving away from God.

As discussed, the 1976 code also contains Trinity’s first inclusion of “Biblically condemned practices,” including its first mention of sex related sins including pre-marital sex, adultery, and homosexuality. Certainly, attitudes around sexual activity differed greatly between 1962—

³⁵ SFU, “Simon Fraser University Calendar 1977-78.” https://cottonwood.archives.sfu.ca/uploads/r/simon-fraser-university-archives/6/3/7/6370656dd00d2d2cdc158f77d32e549c4f705df10c3de2121ecf41db721e102f/20f2c246-0ca9-4aa1-92bb-fe1f377653b0-Calendar_1977-1978.pdf (Accessed September 26, 2019) Both schools did have rules regarding academic matters such as plagiarism.

³⁶ I searched the archives of University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University.

Trinity’s inaugural year—and 1976 when Trinity finally decided to make mention of sexual “sins” in their code. Whereas the previous iteration speaks of “using discretion in relationships with the opposite sex,” Trinity is much more direct now by telling students to not engage in sex outside of marriage as it is condemned by God. Trinity’s decision to add the words “biblically condemned” is perhaps an extension of the previous code’s reminder that students may be required to “relinquish certain ‘rights’.” Trinity seems to be differentiating between what the law allows and what God allows. Regardless of the decriminalization of homosexuality or the common occurrence of premarital sex, God dictates a different sort of behavior.

In the 1976 Code of Conduct, Trinity also makes mention of “involvement in the occult.” While the Bible does state that those participating in “idolatry and sorcery...will not inherit the kingdom of God,” the decision to talk about the occult in this document seems likely to be in response to the “Satanic Panic” of the 1970s and 1980s.³⁷ Aja Romano, in his article, “The History of Satanic Panic in the US—and why it’s not over yet” says that the 1969 publication of *The Satanic Bible* as well as movies such as *The Exorcist*,

profoundly impacted America’s collective psyche regarding the existence of demons, and single-handedly transformed the popular Ouija board from a fun, harmless parlor game into a malevolent device capable of inducing spirit possession, demonic infestation, or other paranormal activity.³⁸

In spite of this heightened fear of the occult, I could find no other Canadian university that warned students away from such involvement.

³⁷ Gal. 5, 20-21.

³⁸ Aja Romano. “The History of Satanic Panic in the US—and why it’s not over yet.” *Vox.com*. October 30, 2016. <https://www.vox.com/2016/10/30/13413864/satanic-panic-ritual-abuse-history-explained> (Accessed September 27, 2019).

In addition to biblically condemned practices, Trinity student handbooks around this time also prohibited practices that were not included in the Codes of Conduct. The 1978/79 handbook gives this advice to students: “The College recognizes that scripture does not include direct teaching for every social practice or situation. However, the College does believe that it is in the best interest of every member to insist upon community standards.”³⁹ Community standards beyond what was listed as biblically condemned included rules around appearance (stating that “those around us ascribe certain character traits to us simply on the basis of our physical appearance”) and a prohibition on dancing.⁴⁰ Many conservative Christian groups have had rules prohibiting dancing. Trinity’s own particular defence of the prohibition stems from its belief that “dancing is often associated with practices which the college does not allow and occurs in locations which promote other disallowed behavior.”⁴¹ Undoubtedly, Trinity is suggesting that dancing leads to sexual activity (see footnote 35), and that dancing often occurs in places where alcohol is consumed. As we will see in later codes, the prohibition on dancing, as well as alcohol, is later lifted.

While the 1960s and 1970s is widely viewed as a time of significant religious and political landscape change within Canada, resulting in a succession of changes to Trinity’s Code of Conduct, these shifts did not cease once the 1970s were complete, nor did Canada start to make

³⁹ Trinity Western College. Student Handbook (1978-1979), 27.

⁴⁰ Some Christian groups use the Bible as evidence that dancing is sinful. Some passages include Exodus 32:6, 19-25 where idol worshippers begin dancing while worshipping the idol. As Moses was on Mount Sinai talking directly to God, the dancers were out of control and dancing allegedly led to sexual activity. There is still a belief among some Christian groups that dancing leads to sex.

⁴¹ Trinity Western College. Student Handbook (1978-1979), 27.

its way back towards greater religiosity. Once Canada began edging towards secularization, there appeared to be no turning back.⁴²

So how does one explain that such a significant move away from religion's influence within the Canadian public sphere led to three different iterations of the code (each more proscriptive than the last) between 1972 and 1976, and then nothing again until 1995. Again, the student handbooks show slight, but regular changes in TWU's expectations of its students. It is uncertain whether or not student handbooks informally added additional requirements—made more formal by the 1995 document—or if there were formal ongoing changes, and thus several more documents between 1976 and 1995 that cannot at present be located in the archives.⁴³

While student handbooks from 1981 through to 1984 show no changes to the 1980 document, the 1985 handbook added one very significant change to the guidelines. In addition to the biblically condemned practices of premarital sex, adultery, and involvement in the occult, the handbook now added abortion to its list of sins. This addition happens a full 10 years prior to the next iteration of Trinity's Code of Conduct. This addition is not surprising given what was happening in Canada at the time. As mentioned in Chapter One, Trinity student newspapers show a flurry of articles throughout the 1980s condemning abortion. Articles such as "Pro-lifers save Lives—Please! Our Babies are Being Killed!", "Abortion—Natural Justice?", and "Pro-Life Lifestyle Needed," along with a call for (and subsequent establishment) of an on-campus Pro-Life group, show just how significant the issue was for many Christians inside and outside of

⁴² Steve Bruce and others have argued that while secularization was not necessarily inevitable, it does appear to be irreversible.

⁴³ Given the ongoing changes throughout the 1970s, as well as the continual move away from religion that Canada was experiencing, the latter seems far more likely. Moreover, time spent in TWU's archives shows a lot of work to be done to properly date, categorize, and digitize its archives. With the lack of certainty, however, I have opted to discuss both the ongoing changes evident in the handbooks as well as an analysis of the 1995 document.

Trinity.⁴⁴ By the mid-1980s, “abortion was the most controversial issue in the country.”⁴⁵ While one could argue that students during Trinity’s early years may have been isolated by the world around them, by the mid-1980s this was certainly no longer the case. Mainstream media by this time had made Dr. Henry Morgentaler a familiar name, even inside the walls of Trinity. Articles in the student newspaper openly criticize Morgentaler, and in one newspaper a crudely drawn cartoon depicts a “Dr. Henry Morganclucker” throwing eggs at himself.⁴⁶ In addition to students’ familiarity with Dr. Morgentaler, students also criticize the NDP party for its Pro-Choice stance, and show support for a conservative government, indicating a student body that was becoming increasingly politically savvy.

In fact, when asking why Trinity may have waited until 1995 to pen a new Code of Conduct, the political landscape of the time may provide the answer. While neither the Catholic nor the Protestant exodus from the churches showed any sign of slowing down throughout the 1980s—in fact, the number of religiously unaffiliated continued to rise, and church attendance continued its decline—conservatism was also on the rise.⁴⁷ On both sides of the border, conservative governments held court throughout most of the 1980s (Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservatives (PC) in Canada [along with the growing popularity of the Reform Party], and the

⁴⁴ Trinity Western University, *Trinity Western Today*. November 28, 1986; November 22, 1985; and February 12, 1988, respectively.

⁴⁵ “The Morgentaler Decision: A 25 Year Celebration.” <http://www.morgentaler25years.ca/about-henry-morgentaler/>

⁴⁶ If you are asking yourself, “What on earth is that supposed to mean?” you are not alone. I showed this cartoon to several people and no one could come up with a feasible explanation. It is possible that there was something anti-Semitic in this—drawings of immigrants and Jews as animals has long been used in propaganda. It is more likely that the illustrator was leaning on the idiom of having “egg on one’s face.” The only certainty is that students were aware of the significance of Dr. Morgentaler to the provision of abortion services, and the cartoon was not meant to be complimentary.

⁴⁷ According to both the Canadian Census and the National Household Survey.

Republications under Ronald Reagan in the US), and Trinity newspapers show a student body that appears to be comforted by this fact.⁴⁸ While newspapers throughout the 1960s and 1970s show little-to-no mention of politics, the 1980s show a student body now very much interested in what was occurring in government.⁴⁹ In fact, by 1982 Trinity has its own Trinity Western Progressive Conservative Club on campus touting itself as (and the PCs in general) as a “political organization that provides a Christian perspective.”⁵⁰ Students praised Reagan for his “devotion to God,” and called for “all good Christians to vote for Reagan” due to his pro-life rhetoric.⁵¹ With regards to the PC party, students saw this as an opportunity for “our Christian voices (to) be heard in Ottawa.”⁵² The 1980s also saw the rise of Televangelism, the establishment of the Moral Majority and the presence of conservative Christian rhetoric in American politics.⁵³ It is possible that Trinity felt secure that the world was turning in their

⁴⁸ The Reform Party, established in 1987 and led by Preston Manning, was right-wing socially conservative federal party. Intended to be a voice for Western Canadian interests, the Reform Party is mostly remembered for its staunch opposition to the Bloc Quebecois, as well as its fiscally and socially conservative mandate. The party was strongly opposed to marriage equality as well as immigration. In spite of its members being accused of racism, homophobia, and sexism, it did manage to become the Official Opposition in 1997. The Reform Party disbanded in 2000 and was succeeded by the Canadian Alliance, which eventually merged with the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, to become the current Conservative Party of Canada.

⁴⁹ Even student newspapers from the end of 1963 make no mention of the assassination of JFK.

⁵⁰ Dan Gordica. “P.C.Y.A are Active on Campus.” *Trinity Today*, November 23, 1983, 7
http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1980s/19831123.pdf

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, September 26, 1984. Throughout the 1980s, several articles featured students praising Regan—one article even asks students to pray for him and his continued leadership. By the 1980s, numerous Americans were enrolled at Trinity, which may account for the amount of pro-Reagan propaganda.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Coined in 1958, the word “televangelism” rose to popularity in the 1980s in response to the growing number of both official and self-proclaimed Christian ministers (largely evangelical), using the medium of television to preach to a wide audience. So popular was televangelism that several preachers achieved fame (and fortune) through this medium. While originally an American phenomenon, televangelism has an almost global presence, having spread to South and Central America, parts of Europe, Africa, and East Asia.

favour. After two decades of social revolution in the shape of Free Love and the Second Wave of Feminism, the now constant media and political presence of conservative Christianity— particularly in the US—surely provided solace to many evangelical Christians. It seems safe to at least hypothesize that while the strong presence of right-wing governments in Canada and in the US may not have solely contributed to the lack of new codes for 15 years, it may have been a factor.

By 1995, Canadian politics shifted again with the Liberals now back in power (with the Democrats governing in the US). Now led by Jean Chretien, the Liberals refused to reopen the abortion debate, allowing the 1988 Supreme Court ruling⁵⁴ to stand. In addition to the abortion debate, Chretien and his government began drafting legislation that would lead to marriage equality. At the same time, however, the Reform Party of Canada was becoming ever more influential, and evangelicalism in the Pacific Northwest was on the rise.⁵⁵

In the midst of these changes, Canada continued along the path of secularization. In defiance of the increasing presence of right-leaning political parties and evangelicalism in places like British Columbia, “major churches continue(d) to confront a decades-old crisis of declining membership.”⁵⁶ By this time, even the Catholic church, which was faring better than both the

Founded in 1979 by Baptist minister Jerry Falwell, The Moral Majority was an influential American religious and political organization associated with conservative Christianity and the Republican Party. So influential was the group, that it mobilized the Christian right and influenced political platforms such as Reagan’s pro-life stance. While the group formally dissolved in 1989, its influence in American politics has continued, with the right often pandering to the wants of conservative Christians.

⁵⁴ In *R v Morgentaler*, [1988] the SCC held that the Criminal Code prohibiting abortion was unconstitutional as it violated women’s rights under section 7 of the Charter. This opened access to safe and legal abortion for women across the country.

⁵⁵ In the 1993 Federal Election, The Reform Party finished second in the popular vote. As well, the 1996 Canadian Census shows a drop in mainstream Protestant denomination but an increase in evangelical Christian groups such as Pentecostal. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-125-g/html/4064716-eng.htm>

⁵⁶ D’Arcy Jenish, “Empty Pews, Angry Members: Churches Confront the Decline,” *Macleans*, April 12, 1993, 48.

Anglican and United churches, was seeing only 39 per cent of its members “attending church services on a weekly or monthly basis.”⁵⁷ By comparison, however, “two-thirds of those who belong to conservative Christian denominations, such as Baptist or Pentecostal churches, do attend services regularly.”⁵⁸

It is against this backdrop that Trinity released its “Community Standards: Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Students.” Released in 1995, this Code of Conduct is much more heavy-handed than its predecessors, and according to some of my interviewees, read “like a legal document.”

While continuing to invoke the importance of “community,” this document does indeed feel like a charter of some kind, the “laws” of TWU. And while it explicitly states that “the application of Community Standards is not offered as a *legalistic* [emphasis added] definition of right and wrong,” it is meant to provide “concrete examples of a commitment to the mission of Trinity Western University and a commitment to fellow members.”⁵⁹ While not “legalistic” in the conventional sense, the document makes it clear that its members follow a different, higher spiritual law.⁶⁰ The requirements it places on students, including “working in the best interests of the whole community,” “obeying the law,” and developing “spiritual maturity,” is justified by

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Trinity Western University, *Community Standards: Responsibilities of Membership in the Community of Trinity Western University and Application to Students*, 1995.

⁶⁰ The 1995 iteration reads like a legal document, including beginning the Community Standards with a “preamble” (a “preliminary clause in a treaty, constitution, statute, or other legal instrument that states the intent, purpose, or spirit of the instrument,” *Canadian Law Dictionary* (New York: Barron’s, 2013), 255. Other words and phrases such as “compliance,” “including but not limited to,” and “uphold,” while not strictly legal terms, add to the legal tone of the document. I have not been able to gather specific information on who was involved in the writing of this document.

biblical references listed after each mandatory and/or prohibited behavior. Everything from “avoiding drunkenness” to refraining from the “use of profane language,” is followed by the biblical location where such demands can be found. It is within these condemnations that the *Community Standards* encourages students to live, not as the rest of the world, but as God would have them live. In contrast to the Trinity’s earliest years, where most students were living not entirely different lives from most Canadians—attending church regularly, avoiding divorce, condemning homosexuality—Trinity was now expecting its students to live *unlike* most Canadians. Where students may have been swimming against a current of change in the 1970s, Trinity was now asking them to swim against a tidal wave of legal and social permissiveness that allowed for everything from abortion to living with a partner before marriage to marching in a Pride Parade. While the expectations outlined in the 1995 document affected Trinity members only, with few people on the outside taking notice, this was about to change.

Trinity Western and the BC College of Teachers (BCCT)

While the focus of this paper is not Trinity’s Supreme Court of Canada cases, this paper would be missing something significant if they were to be ignored altogether.

By 1999, TWU, now a fully accredited four-year university, had added a number of professional training programs to its roster, including its well-respected school of nursing. Students could also complete some, but not all, of an education degree. TWU students interested in becoming teachers could complete the first four years of an education program at Trinity before transferring to Simon Fraser University (SFU) to complete the final year of an education degree. The agreement between TWU and SFU had been set up years prior, when TWU was lacking in the necessary resources needed to offer a full five-year education degree. By 1999, however, TWU’s resources as well as its student body had grown substantially, and its

administrators felt that they could take on the task of offering its students a whole degree instead of just part of one. In addition to this, TWU wished “to have the full program reflect its Christian world view.”⁶¹

Aside from the usual delays that an administrative body experiences when attempting to make significant changes that require government approval, the process was relatively smooth and after due process, Trinity was granted permission to begin offering its education degree. This initial success, however, was short lived.

Later that same year, the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) began questioning the merit of TWU’s application due to the school’s stance on homosexuality, referring to it as a “biblically condemned practice,” and prohibiting any student, faculty or staff from engaging in same-sex intimacy.⁶² The BCCT’s concern was that such a school would likely produce teachers that would discriminate against their future LGTB students.⁶³ To have a Teacher’s College that exercised discrimination, “was not in the public interest.”⁶⁴

While many human rights groups agreed with the BCCT, the Supreme Court of Canada did not. In an eight to one decision, the SCC held that the BCCT did not take “into account the impact of its decision on the right to freedom of religion of the members of TWU,” and that a

⁶¹ *Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers* [2001] 1 S.C.R. 772 at para. 2, 2000 SCC 31. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1867/index.do>

⁶² TWU has long maintained that LGTB students are welcome to study but are expected to abide by their covenant in the same manner as all other students. The Code of Conduct at the time of the BCCT’s concerns did not include a definition of marriage as Canada was still several years away from the Marriage Equality Act. In this way, Trinity could maintain their stance that all students, regardless of sexual orientation, were treated in the same way with regards to the Code of Conduct. As we will see in Chapter Three, not all LGTB students experienced this sense of “sameness.”

⁶³ I am using the now dated “LGTB” abbreviation, over the more current LGTBQ (or sometimes LGTBQ2S), as this is the language that was widely used at the time.

⁶⁴ This is the language that was used by the BCCT.

“religious institution is not considered to breach BC human rights legislation where it prefers adherents of its religious constituency.”⁶⁵ The SCC decision speaks at length, not only about TWU itself, but of the necessity to balance two rights that are, seemingly, at odds with one another.

I discuss this not because the case itself is central to my thesis, but because the contradiction between what happened in this case, and what happened 15 years later when TWU once again found itself before the SCC, speaks precisely to significant changes in Canada. Although the arguments in each case differed slightly (the BCCT argued that TWU *may* produce discriminatory teachers, while the law societies argued that a school that contravenes the Charter should not be allowed to confer a law degree), in both cases discrimination towards LGBTQ people was central to the matter. It is important to understand that when the BCCT first raised concerns in 1996, Canada was still 10 years away from marriage equality. While it was relatively “safe” to be an openly gay person in Canada in 2001, all provinces were ruling against marriage equality and a “significant number of Liberal MPs say they do not support same-sex unions.”⁶⁶ By the time the SCC ruled against Trinity in the law school case, Canada had become an increasingly safe place for LGBTQ2S people, with two-thirds of the population in support of same sex marriage.⁶⁷ For the SCC to have ruled in favour of Trinity this time around, would

⁶⁵ *Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers* [2001] 1 S.C.R. 772, 2000 SCC 31. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1867/index.do>

⁶⁶ Note: I say “safe” because safe is a relative term. While Toronto may have been a safe place for an out person in 2001, many other small towns in Canada may not have been. Many factors contribute to LGBTQ safety such as gender, location, family of origin, and of course, religion.

CBC, “Timeline: Same-sex rights in Canada.” (Last updated May 25, 2015) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/timeline-same-sex-rights-in-canada-1.1147516>

⁶⁷ According to the Research Co. Poll, conducted in 2019, only 10 percent of respondents opposed any legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Percentages fluctuated based on respondents’ age, gender, and country of origin. https://researchco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Tables_LGBTQCAN2_01Aug2019.pdf

have been seen by many (if not the majority) as homophobic. A homophobic person is unfortunate. A homophobic court, on the other hand, is unacceptable. In one of my interviews, I posed the question: “Do you think TWU would have won this case if it had been heard 10 or 15 years ago?” The response was an unwavering, “Yes.”⁶⁸ For Trinity, and other religious groups, to know that the courts will no longer automatically rule on the side of religious freedom (or perhaps more significantly, *Christianity*) is a startling revelation. However, when the 2001 ruling came down in favour of Trinity, many of its members credited God with this win. In his memoir, Dr. Neil Snider recalls asking its members to “pray for the hearts and minds of the nine justices of the Supreme Court of Canada (so that) God would give them a clear vision of justice...”⁶⁹

When summarizing Trinity’s success at the SCC, Dr. Guy Saffold (TWU’s Executive Vice President and Legal Challenge spokesperson) stated that “the case had been won through the consistent effort of God’s people to pray through the lengthy process... We had been enabled by God to carry the cause...”⁷⁰ If God was to be credited with this win, then who was to be held responsible for their subsequent loss? This is something that will be discussed in Chapter Three.

In the years immediately following Trinity’s win at the SCC, Trinity continued to go through significant changes, including the opening of its School of Education as well as accreditation of its Counselling Psychology program (the accrediting body for the latter—the Council for

⁶⁸ While the identity of all interviewees remain anonymous, I think it is important to add here that this particular interviewee possesses enough knowledge to have answered this question with confidence. While no one can know for certain if the outcome would have been different, I felt confident that this person’s response was, at the least, a very educated guess.

⁶⁹ Neil Snider, *Against All Odds...Trinity Western University: 1974-2006—to the Praise of His Glory* (Langley, Trinity Western University, 2016), 260.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 270.

Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP]—raised no concerns in accrediting a Christian university), as well as several more undergraduate majors.

Canada, too, continued to shift both religiously and socially in the years after the first SCC decision. The Christian-identified population has continued to decrease and now accounts for approximately fifty-five percent of the population.⁷¹ Other numbers have shifted as well. The numbers of people identifying as members of other religions such as Sikh, Hindu and Muslim continued to rise with immigration coming mostly from the Middle East and India.⁷² On the West Coast, Vancouver Island became one of the most irreligious areas in Canada.⁷³

Even more significantly, same-sex marriage was legalized in 2005, and, in 2008, Dr. Henry Morgentaler, once a polarizing figure throughout the country, was awarded the Order of Canada.⁷⁴

Perhaps the most significant change to Trinity's immediate world came with the retirement of Dr. Snider in 2006 and the subsequent naming of Dr. Jonathon Raymond as Trinity's third president.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *Pew Research Centre*, "5 facts about religion in Canada." (July 1, 2019.) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/01/5-facts-about-religion-in-canada/>

⁷² *Ibid.* This survey shows that the collective number of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus now make up 14% of Canadians. This is up from 11% in 2011 (National Household Survey).

⁷³ According to Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, not only does British Columbia have the highest rates of religious nones in Canada, but that "those living on Vancouver Island...are both less likely to consider their religious or spiritual beliefs important in their life and more likely to not have any religious or spiritual beliefs." *The Religious, Spiritual, Secular and Social Landscapes of the Pacific Northwest—Part 2*. UW Space: <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/13406>

⁷⁴ The Order of Canada is a National award that recognizes Canadians who "have enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country." (<https://www.gg.ca/en/honours/canadian-honours/order-canada>) The Order of Canada is presented to individuals by the Governor General during a yearly ceremony.

⁷⁵ Whereas Dr. Snider and his predecessor, Dr. Hanson, both came from the Evangelical Free Church, Dr. Raymond is a member of the Salvation Army, an evangelical Protestant church with an emphasis on charitable works.

In 2008, shortly after taking on this position, Dr. Raymond “charged the TWU community and more directly, the Provost, with the task of facilitating a year long process by which a recommendation would be made by the Provost to the President on a new or Revised Community Covenant Agreement.” According to TWU’s website, the request came after a “series of internal consultations, including a research project/report on student awareness, observance and support of TWU’s existing Responsibilities of Membership Agreement” and various conversations with TWU members.⁷⁶ Some interviewees suggested that the purpose of the new Covenant was to be more community-centered and less punitive, stating that the previous “Responsibilities of Membership Agreement” read “too much like a legal document” and not a Christian-centered one. Another interviewee stated that research showed that many students were not abiding by the agreement, particularly in areas such as the ban on alcohol. Indeed, TWU’s website states that the goal of revisiting the “Responsibilities of Membership Agreement” was, in part, to “strengthen” its “formal written statement of covenant.”⁷⁷ There is something worth questioning about the use of the word “strengthen.” Does something require strengthening if it is already functioning as it should? The other reasons for rewriting the Responsibilities of Membership—updating, revising, renewing—all make sense given the social and legal changes that occurred between the previous document and the Covenant. Whatever the reason, the new *Community Covenant Agreement: Our Commitment to One Another*, was

⁷⁶ Trinity Western University Community Covenant Agreement: Frequently Asked Questions. <https://www8.twu.ca/governance/presidents-office/frequently-asked-questions.pdf> Accessed October 14, 2019. Despite several requests, I was unable to obtain the report on student awareness/observance of the “Responsibilities of Membership.” However, I was able to access a survey that *Mars Hill* conducted in February of 2005. The survey, called “The Mars Hill Community Standards Survey,” asked students questions such as “Have you viewed pornography?” “Have you had sex outside of marriage?” and “Do you respect the ‘Biblical’ definition of marriage as between one man and one woman?” The survey did not indicate how the information would be used. While I am unable to confirm this, it is likely that survey results helped shape the “internal consultations” that were occurring. http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/2000s/20050223.pdf

⁷⁷ TWU Community Covenant Agreement. <https://www8.twu.ca/governance/presidents-office/community-covenant.html>

introduced on September 2, 2009. Much like the previous agreement, all members of TWU were required to sign this document. And as planned, this agreement looked very different than previous iterations. As already discussed in the first chapter, this document, in addition to being much more lengthy than previous documents, does have a greater community-centred focus which stands in stark contrast to previous codes of conduct. In spite of this, this document has been the cause of much critique and concern. While I will later speak to the critiques, what is important here is understanding the changes outside of TWU that may have contributed, once again, to changes inside the university.

Again, student handbooks show slight, but ongoing, changes to the Code of Conduct throughout the 1980s and 1990s. While wording appeared to stay relatively unchanged between 1995 and 2002, there are no readily available handbooks between 2002 and 2007, and so it is impossible to determine whether any changes occurred in those years. The 2007 handbook, however, shows a significant addition to the agreement. In it, the “Responsibilities of Membership Agreement” includes an extra bullet asking students to “observe biblical principles for marriage and sexual relationships.” This addition reminds students that marriage is between a “husband and wife.” This undoubtedly is in response to Canada’s 2005 Civil Marriage Act, which legalized same-sex marriage. Whereas previous iterations spoke about sex outside of marriage, 2005 would have been the first occasion for TWU to define marriage in opposition to the law. While I do not have handbooks for either the year 2005 or 2006, it is likely that Trinity, along with many other conservative religious groups, wasted little time incorporating their traditional definition of marriage into its student guidelines.

Although TWU’s definition of marriage has been the most controversial aspect of the Covenant, the document employs significant changes that deserve analysis. While the 2009

Community Covenant is traditional in its expectations regarding intimate relationships, unlike other iterations it does not address consequences for failing to abide by the rules stated within. Whereas in earlier years Trinity's *Committee on Student Personal Behaviour* decided whether or not rules had been disobeyed, as already mentioned TWU now encouraged a watchful environment where all members are encouraged to hold one another accountable. While it is hard to know with certainty why this change occurred, it was likely prompted—at least in part—by numbers. Trinity began its inaugural year with 17 students. By the time the Covenant was written, the student body had grown to 4000, making it impossible to monitor the actions of all. However, Trinity explains this change in other ways. According to Trinity's Student Accountability Process, “once invited to become members, students become “co-owners” of Trinity's mission to create “godly Christian leaders” and are accountable to every other member of the community to contribute to a positive and rewarding learning environment.”⁷⁸ In other words, the actions of one impact the well-being of all. Says the Student Accountability Policy:

Disregard for community responsibility and accountability is considered inappropriate behaviour, viewed as jeopardizing the effectiveness of the learning environment and mission of the University. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their own goals and values to ensure that they are not in conflict with the educational environment in which they have chosen to learn.⁷⁹

While this wording emphasizes the importance of accountability, both to one's self as well as to others, it also speaks, perhaps more so, to the importance of community and commitment, not to faith of one's own design, but to something that everyone agrees on. If evangelicalism is, at least in part, about “the promise of moral and spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ... (as well

⁷⁸ TWU, “Student Accountability Process” in TWU's *Student Handbook*. <https://www.twu.ca/student-handbook/university-policies/student-accountability-process>

⁷⁹ Ibid.

as) persuading lost persons to trust in Christ,” then to “mind one’s own business,” is to ignore the spiritual needs of a person in peril.⁸⁰ An “accountability process exists that is structured around the goal of bringing the student back into relationship with the community while contributing to the student’s personal and spiritual growth.”⁸¹ In this way, to report on your fellow classmate is to help bring them back into the fold in a way that “demonstrates care and acceptance for the individual involved.”⁸² While referring to this environment as “watchful,” may sound heavy-handed, several interviewees did describe their time at TWU as such. One interviewee explained that when he and his friends would see someone going astray, it was up to them to take that person aside and let them know that they were concerned and that his or her actions were harmful to both the individual and the TWU community. They would do this until the person either agreed and changed their behavior or the until concerned party was forced to report the actions of the student to the school’s administration. According to my interviewee, this was not an environment where you felt spied upon, but instead one where you would encourage a stray back into flock without punishment.⁸³ As we will see in Chapter Three, however, the person being watched might have experienced this quite differently.

While the Covenant justifies this approach to accountability in Christian terms, it is likely that there were more pragmatic reasons for this addition. Trinity’s early years saw a student body of less than a hundred student. By 2009, however, Trinity had an enrollment of 4000 students. It

⁸⁰ Timothy L. Smith, “A Shared Evangelical Heritage,” as quoted in Stackhouse, 7.

⁸¹ TWU, “Student Accountability Process.”

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ This, of course, is still Foucauldian in that it creates an atmosphere of control and discipline. For those that were not easily swayed back into the fold, punishment was the likely outcome.

would not be possible for a university to monitor the actions of 4000 individuals and so with the implementation of “Community and Accountability,” every individual becomes tasked with taking responsibility for their actions *and* the actions of those around them. As we will see in Chapter Three, Trinity’s expectation that its members be both supervisor and supervisee has caused friction for some, while others have taken this role seriously.

While both the expectation to hold others accountable as well as Trinity’s traditional definition of marriage feels like a response in defiance of the modern world, other external changes also appear to have influenced the Covenant. While many of the prohibitions are what one would expect to find in any post-secondary institution such as the prohibition on plagiarism or other forms of cheating, hazing, the underage use of alcohol and the possession of illegal substances, one prohibited behavior, “the use of materials that are degrading, dehumanizing, exploitive, hateful or gratuitously violent, including but not limited to pornography,” is undoubtedly a response to the contemporary world.⁸⁴ Over the last several years, regular stories of cyber-bullying via the sharing of sexually explicit photos of young women (often teenagers), have been discussed in the media. As well, the availability and consumption of pornography has far surpassed anything that previous administrations would have had to tackle.⁸⁵ So prolific is the porn industry that The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has published a guide entitled, “Battling Pornography: A Guide for Canadians.”⁸⁶ Many groups, including anti-trafficking, anti-violence and other human rights organization have spoken to the damage done to women both

⁸⁴ TWU, Community Covenant, 3.

⁸⁵ Currently, 4.2 million websites are devoted to pornography. As well, studies show that “sex” is the number one search on the internet. For more statistics on internet pornography see, “Enough is Enough: Making the Internet Safe for Children.” https://enough.org/stats_porn_industry

⁸⁶ Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, “Battling Porn: A Guide for Canadians.” <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/battlingpornography>

inside and outside of the porn industry. The difference here, of course, is that Trinity's opposition to degrading or dehumanizing materials, does not appear to be a human rights or feminist argument (although the language used in the Covenant would fit neatly into both of these camps), but again, a Christian one. TWU provides no scriptural reference for this prohibition but asks its members "in keeping with biblical ideals...to voluntarily abstain" from such activities. (The use of the word "voluntarily" seems misplaced as abiding by the Covenant is mandatory.)

What stands out here, is that while the earliest code was largely prescriptive, followed by several iterations that were strongly proscriptive, this Community Covenant combines both in a way that covers all possible contraventions. This combination of proscriptive and prescriptive is sometimes present in a single sentence. Take this sentence for example: "Members of the TWU community...commit themselves to treat all persons with dignity and respect and uphold their God-given worth *from conception to death*."⁸⁷ (Emphasis added.) Following this would automatically rule out abortion as an option regardless of the circumstances. Instead of appearing to violate a woman's right to reproductive freedom, it now reads as caring and compassionate.⁸⁸ So, while the 1995 document clearly prohibits abortion, this document need not mention the word. It prohibits one action, by prescribing another. Interestingly, in the mid-2000s, several Conservative politicians, instead of trying to overturn abortion laws, brought forth bills that

⁸⁷ Community Covenant, 2.

⁸⁸ In TWU's 2017 SCC case, of the 12 special interest groups intervening on behalf the law societies, only one—Westcoast LEAF—mentioned TWU's stance on women's reproductive freedom, suggesting perhaps, that the Covenant's more compassionate language left this issue unnoticed.

attempted to grant legal personhood to a fetus.⁸⁹ While none were successful, TWU follows suit by requiring its members to see personhood as beginning “from conception.” In 2008, the same year that the president of TWU called for a revision to the “Responsibilities of Membership,” Dr. Henry Morgentaler received the Order of Canada. Pro-Life Canadians, in particular evangelical Christians and Catholics, expressed opposition to this honour. At the same time, however, an Angus Reid poll showed that “only 29 per cent opposed the award in the online survey.”⁹⁰ If TWU’s administration was aware of these sentiments, they certainly would have seen the need for a covenant that addressed these changes.

What these changes show us, of course, is that TWU, instead of being ignorant of a changing world, was in fact, acutely aware of what was happening outside (and inside) its walls. However, while aware of the changes that were occurring, it seems that perhaps Trinity had underestimated the significance of those changes, particularly where LGTBQ rights were concerned. This seemed to leave Trinity wholly unprepared for the challenge that lay ahead.

*Trinity Western University and the Law Society of British Columbia and the Law Society of Upper Canada*⁹¹

In 2012 TWU began moving ahead with their plans to open a law school. In December of the following year, both the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Federation of Law Societies of

⁸⁹ In 2004, Conservative Health Critic states that “women considering abortion should receive third party counselling.” In 2007, Conservative MP, Ken Epp, brings to the House of Commons, The Unborn Victims of Crime Act, which passes in the House but is never made into law. “Abortion Rights: Significant Moments in Canadian History.” <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/abortion-rights-significant-moments-in-canadian-history-1.787212>

⁹⁰ “Former lieutenant-governor returns Order of Canada,” *CTV News*, (July 9, 2008). <http://www.ctvnews.ca/former-lieutenant-governor-returns-order-of-canada-1.307538> Accessed October 2, 2017.

⁹¹ Two things of note: The Law Society of Upper Canada is now known as the Law Society of Ontario; the Nova Scotia Barrister’s Society (NSBS) also refused to accredit any future TWU law students. However, losses at the both the Nova Scotia Provincial Court as well as the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, prompted the NSBS to drop the fight.

Canada (FLSC) approved TWU's application. One month later, deans of various law schools, the Canadian Bar Association and others begin voicing their opposition to Trinity's proposed school of law. In spite of this, all law societies, with the exception of Ontario and Nova Scotia, approve the FLSC's decision. However, under public and professional pressure from LGTBQ rights organizations, various media stories, as well as lawyers, both BC's Ministry of Advanced Education as well as the Law Society of BC revoked their consent. Trinity responded by taking the law societies to court. Trinity won its case in both the Nova Scotia and BC Supreme Courts. When both legal societies appealed the decisions, Trinity won again. The opposite happened in Ontario where Trinity lost at both the Ontario Divisional Court and the Court of Appeal. At this point, the Nova Scotia Barrister's Society decided to not appeal to the SCC. However, Trinity would head to the SCC to appeal the decisions in the Ontario courts, while the Law Society of BC would appeal its loss.

Again, while TWU's legal cases are not the focus of this paper, what is important here is the external change in attitudes towards LGTBQ rights and the not-unrelated changes in attitudes towards the religious rights of conservative Christian institutions. As stated at the start of this chapter, Trinity began at a time when most people would have agreed that homosexuals were a danger to Canadian society, evidenced by the fact that homosexuality was illegal. When the fight for marriage equality began in earnest in the 1990s, Trinity could still expect the courts to be on their side. What is surprising, however, is that they expected the same more than 12 years after the passing of the Civil Marriage Act. While I have argued that changes to the codes of conduct is indicative of an administrative body aware of changing societal norms, this legal fight seems to indicate the opposite. It appeared to be, at least in part, Trinity's win in 2001, that led

them to believe that they would win again in 2017.⁹² While precedent is an important legal concept, Trinity appeared to believe that their 2001 win was a more significant consideration than it turned out to be. On the question of precedent, Chief Justice, Beverley McLachlin says that, “The legal significance of the concept of precedent demonstrates that the law also claims authority through the operation of history, finding historical reasons for asserting influence over the modern lives of citizens.”⁹³ In other words, legal precedents such as the 2001 SCC decision, is not the only historical fact that is taken into consideration. A court of law will also consider other historical events such as changes in attitudes and values. Ms. McLachlin goes on to discuss the importance of the “Canadian legal commitment to religious freedom within the rule of law” and states that the law assumes the “central role of reconciling the *overarching need for adherence to the rule of law* [emphasis added] with respect for religious commitments to systems of beliefs and authority, some of which are extra-legal in nature...”⁹⁴ So, while she recognizes the importance of legal precedence, as well as the importance of religious beliefs, she also holds that the commitment to religious authority must comply with the rule of law, and that the court looks at historical changes (both legal and not), when making its decisions. While my previously quoted interviewee was likely correct when he assumed that Trinity would have won this case had it been heard 10 years earlier, they seemed unable to understand that they could not have won it in 2017. While Trinity was undoubtedly aware of societal and legal changes, it seems that in the case of secularization and its impact on changing attitudes (particularly towards LGBTQ

⁹² During the SCC hearing, lawyers for TWU repeatedly refer back to their 2001 win, recognizing the importance of precedent but not recognizing the changes that had happened within Canada in the 15 years since.

⁹³ Beverley McLachlin, “Freedom of Religion and the Rule of Law: A Canadian Perspective,” in *Recognizing Religion in a Secular Society*, ed. Douglas Farrow. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 14.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-21

people) they underestimated its significance. Having said this, it is important to highlight that even if Trinity had not underestimated the significant influence of decades of secularization—if they had known that they were likely to lose—it seems likely that they would have still opted to take their fight to the Supreme Court. Since its early years, Trinity has striven to be a faith-centred place of learning and has been willing to take a definitive stand for what they, as an institution, believe in. Accepting the decisions of the provincial courts would have been akin to saying that their faith was no longer worth the effort, or perhaps worse, that they were just going to be like every university in Canada, religious in its history only.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which societal, legal, and religious changes in Canada may have influenced Trinity's codes of conduct. As we have seen, many changes in Canada such as the legalization of abortion, changes in popular culture (such as music and television), and the social acceptance of divorce, led Trinity to respond with increasingly clear expectations of its students, staff, and faculty, expectations that ran contrary to what was happening outside its walls.

From its beginning, Trinity and its members have operated “in this world, but not of this world.” In fact, the desire to be separate from the world in which they find themselves is the very reason they exist. Trinity has continued to push back against the larger changes that have caused religion to be pushed to the margins. It seems naïve to think that Trinity would suddenly stop battling the liberalization that was associated with secularization, and yet, many that I spoke to (outside of Trinity) seemed genuinely baffled that Trinity would fight a battle that they could not win. For Trinity, the answer to why they would go to court, was simple: to defend their faith and their way of practicing it, a right that many believe to be guaranteed by the Charter. Whether

they would win, seemed almost secondary. As some interviewees stated, “For Trinity, this was the hill worth dying on.”⁹⁵ For those in favour of the Covenant, they expected that Trinity would continue to take an unpopular stand on contemporary issues as they always had; for those opposed, they knew that for Trinity to stop now would mean “game over” — an admission of loss as well as, perhaps, an admission that the opposing side had been right all along.

After Trinity’s loss, spokespersons for the school spoke not only of the disappointment of its legal team but of the collective disappointment felt by its members. After the SCC’s decision, Earl Phillips, Executive Director of the proposed law school said that “without question, the Trinity Western Community is disappointed by this ruling.”⁹⁶ Trinity may have been unaware of the significance and influence of the changes in values happening within Canada (particularly with regards to LGTBQ people), but as we will see, it is also true that Trinity’s administrative body was unaware of the changes in the attitudes of its own members. Quotes like the one at the start of this chapter, show a membership in which at least some have chosen to welcome and adapt to the social changes at work in the broader society. The next chapter will delve deeper into those interviews, showing that the divide between liberal and conservative Christianity does not exist only between Trinity and the outside world, but within its own walls.

⁹⁵ Several interviews said this or words similar to it such as “This was the battle worth dying for.”

⁹⁶ “Trinity Western University Disappointed with Supreme Court Decision Signalling Loss of Support for Diversity in Canada.” <https://www.twu.ca/news-events/news/trinity-western-university-disappointed-supreme-court-decision-signalling-loss>

Chapter Three

“We’re not the same community as we were in 1970 or even in 2000. We would be dead if we were the same community. All institutions have to be fluid and responsive...People are ready for a new conversation.”¹

~TWU faculty member

Introduction

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Trinity Western University and its members have experienced significant backlash over the last several years. This backlash is the result of not only its unsuccessful attempt at establishing a law school, but also the effect of national media coverage that focused almost exclusively on TWU’s traditional definition of marriage. Media, as well as several legal bodies, have portrayed TWU—and anyone associated with it—as homophobic, out of touch, even hateful. What has been less well known, is that many of its own members agree. The pushback experienced by Trinity’s administrative and academic leadership has come not only from hegemonically secular liberal outsiders, but increasingly from within its own walls.

When Trinity was founded in 1962, its goal was to create a school that resisted “the tide of secularization [that] inundated so many of our formally Christian educational institutions”— the

¹ Anonymous, Interview No. 14, August 9, 2018.

founders wanted something that was in this world, but not of it.² Trinity was to be not only a college, but a place where Christians could openly worship without fear of being swept away by the rising tide of secularization. Located a safe distance from the urban centre of Vancouver, Trinity would be a unique oasis away from a Canada that was beginning to turn its back on religion. As already evidenced, however, Trinity is now struggling to remain a godly island distinct from the rest of Canada. Shifts within societal norms and values, changes within Canadian law, and the 2018 SCC decision, show the immense influence secularization has had on virtually every aspect of Canadian life. While these shifts have long impacted life outside of Trinity, the 2018 removal of the mandatory signature on the Community Covenant shows that changes are now taking place within the very walls created to protect its members from secularization. Conversations with Trinity's own people show not a safe haven where everyone is living according to one united worldview, but a community with opinions and beliefs (if not faith) as diverse as any other.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview 22 members of TWU—both past and present—including faculty, students, and staff. My final chapter will focus on these interviews in order to show the impact that secularization has had within Trinity. While it is not unreasonable to assume that Trinity may have had at least some left-leaning faculty and students since its early days, something has happened within Trinity over the last five years that has brought this progressiveness out into the open. Interview material proves not just the existence of a “liberal ideology” among its members but shows peoples’ willingness to discuss and acknowledge its existence. Even more significant are members’ comfort with categorizing themselves as

² Ian S. Rennie, in the “Forward” to *On the Raw Edge of Faith*.

“liberal,” “feminist,” and even “queer” while also identifying as Christian, even evangelical.³

While we have already seen that Trinity has changed steadily since its beginning, this significant and transparent move towards progressiveness is unprecedented among its members. Historical changes within Canada regarding things such as LGBTQ rights, gender equality, and the role of religion within both the private and public sector, has led to corresponding historical changes within Trinity. Where conservative Christians would have been TWU’s norm just ten years ago, Liberal Christians—those for whom gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and inclusivity are part of their Christianity—are taking up greater space at Trinity. My conversations with TWU’s members is proof of this.

While it is hard to know for certain what exactly has prompted Trinity’s members to talk openly about identities and beliefs not historically welcome at TWU, it seems likely that the university’s plan for a law school, their subsequent journey to the Supreme Court of Canada, and the media coverage surrounding this issue, paved the way for greater conversation. As mentioned above, various media sources were increasingly portraying Trinity as an institution that openly practiced discrimination.⁴ The very public nature of this portrayal prompted many of its members to align themselves with a position that was not in keeping with Trinity’s values. Regardless of which position an interviewee was aligned with, virtually all shared stories of being treated with suspicion and even hostility as a result of being associated with TWU.

In conversations with people associated with the school, no one was lacking an opinion on

³ The liberal evangelicals that I spoke with seem to interpret the Bible from a Social Gospel perspective.

⁴ The portrayal of discrimination is by legal definition, correct. TWU Community Covenant does, in fact, allow for discrimination against a protected group (in this case, LGBTQ people). TWU’s defence was that according to Section 2 of the Charter (which allows for (a) freedom of conscience and religion and (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression), their discrimination was justified.

what was happening inside and outside its walls. Interviewees describe an institution where more than half of the student population wants to see the Community Covenant eliminated for all its members, and the faculty that I spoke with estimated that 70-80% of their colleagues feel the same.⁵ Moreover, the school's determination to hang on to a Covenant that many considered discriminatory, coupled with Trinity's ultimate loss at the SCC, seemed to embolden some members to openly criticize both TWU's policies and the administration's refusal to change its thoughts on things such as marriage equality. At the same time, however, for TWU's conservative Christian members, Trinity's determination to fight for their beliefs increased their pride in TWU, while the school's losses prompted them to openly and fervently defend conservative Christian beliefs.⁶ This latter group has been left with a sense of loss as they watch their world slip even further away.⁷

While my overarching goal at the start of these interviews was to determine how Trinity's own members were responding to current discussions regarding the Covenant and its predecessors, conversations soon became much more than that. These interviews allowed me to see how members (both past and present) are responding, or have responded, to broader societal changes and how those changes have impacted Trinity as well as their own lives. Most significantly, I began to see that there are two different TWUs—a public Trinity that consistently aligns itself with traditional Christian beliefs, and a private reality where a singular voice does

⁵ I offer these numbers with a certain amount of skepticism, as this is a small number of people speaking on behalf of a much larger group. However, faculty and students representing both sides of this argument, offered up the same percentages.

⁶ Recall that won its cases in both BC and Nova Scotia's courts, but lost in Ontario, and ultimately in the Supreme Court of Canada.

⁷ Recall from my introductory chapter that I use that words "conservative" and "liberal" as catch-all's to describe where on the Christian continuum one sits, and not necessarily as a reflection of how interviewees described themselves.

not exist. Information and opinions gathered from interviewees point to the existence of an ideological split, with liberal members on one side pushing Trinity towards greater inclusivity, and those on the conservative side that want Trinity to stay true to its traditional Christian values, and who feel that the school is being pushed around by the outside world. While most interviewees did fit neatly into one side or the other, there was a broad continuum within this binary.

I should say here that while the framing of these interviews may seem more sociological than historical, it is important to remember that people were interviewed about their current feelings regarding historical change at TWU as well as broader shifts regarding attitudes towards Christianity within the Canadian context. While there is certainly a sociological flavour to these interviews, they are, ultimately, about change over time.

This is, perhaps, a good time for me to discuss the interview process in more depth. Interviewees were recruited through various means including posters placed around campus and posted on the Graduate Student Association website, and a recruitment letter included in a TWU newsletter that is emailed out weekly to all members of TWU, both past and present. It was Trinity's willingness to include my recruitment letter in their weekly newsletter that garnered the most response.⁸ Prospective participants were invited to "participate in a study called *Arc of the Covenant: The Evolution of Trinity Western University's Community Covenant as a Response to Secularization*" where they would be able to share their thoughts and concerns on both the Covenant and its predecessors as well as the impact that secularization has had on religious

⁸ In addition to these recruitment methods, I approached three people with whom I have a professional relationship and asked them to participate in this project. All said yes. On two separate occasions, I reached out to a senior administrative member to request an interview. These requests went unanswered. Note: posters and recruitment letter can be found in appendixes.

freedom in Canada. Interest came from TWU students, faculty, and staff—both past and present—and included eight men and eighteen women.⁹ Of those that expressed interest, six men and sixteen women were interviewed. All interviewees were asked to sign consent forms which gave them the option of having their full interviews transcribed (with identifiers removed) and donated to TWU and UVic archives after a ten-year period.¹⁰ Most opted in, with only five people requesting to not have their full transcripts shared. Interviewees were also given the option of opting out of having any or all parts of their interview included in this thesis.¹¹ One interviewee decided shortly after her interview that she did not want her words included. Upon her request, her interview was destroyed. All interviews were conducted by me, in a space of the interviewee's choice, and all interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee's consent. At the start of each interview, I was sure to let the interviewee know of my own personal politics, which sit firmly on the left. For the sake of transparency, I also let interviewees know that I am an openly gay woman, and do not identify as Christian. I also informed interviewees that this project was not about whether the Covenant, or Trinity as a whole, was right or wrong, but rather an exploration of secularization and its historical impact on Trinity, its Code of Conduct, and its members.¹² Interviewees were encouraged to be honest, to not worry about my feelings, and were told that I would not be offended by their own personal beliefs.

⁹ All interviewees identified with the gender they had been assigned at birth.

¹⁰ Identifiers include the participants' position (faculty, student, administrative staff), the specific years in which one attended, area of study, and, in one case, gender. Where possible, I have provided some general timeframes for when participants attended TWU. See Appendix 3 for Consent Forms

¹¹ Participants have been notified as to which part of their interview will be included. All interviewees gave their final approval.

¹² Recall, once again, that I refer to the five documents explored collectively as TWU's Codes of Conduct.

The majority of the interviews were conducted after the Supreme Court decision but before Trinity announced that students would no longer be required to sign the Covenant.¹³ Interviews that happened after the SCC decision certainly altered the trajectory of the interviews, and at least some of each post-SCC decision interview was spent gathering interviewees' feelings regarding the outcome of the court case. In fact, some interviewees contacted me after the decision had come down from the courts because they wanted space to talk about it. In addition to initial interviews, I was able to have follow-up interviews with six participants after both decisions were announced.¹⁴ Follow-up interviews allowed members to talk about their reaction to these decisions.¹⁵

Factual information such as which years a person was present (and consequently which Code of Conduct they were following), how long they were, or have been, associated with Trinity, and their role there, impacted interviewees' answers. The experience of graduate students was also quite different from that of undergraduates, as many of the latter live on campus, and are more aware of the on-campus controversy surrounding the Covenant. Not surprisingly, gender also played a role in the interviewees' stories. Many of the women I interviewed expressed a frustration with what they see as discrimination based on gender. This was particularly true for

¹³ As stated in previous chapters, the SCC decision was announced on June 17, 2018. On August 9 of that same year, the board met to review the Covenant and passed a motion that the "Community Covenant will no longer be mandatory as of the 2018-2019 Academic year with respect to admission of students to, or continuation of students at, the University." <https://www.twu.ca/twu-reviews-community-covenant>

¹⁴ More specifically, six interviews were conducted just prior to the SCC decision and ten interviews were conducted post-SCC decision but prior to Trinity's decision to remove the mandatory element of the Community Covenant. Of those 16 people, six were interviewed a second time after the change to the Community Covenant. Another five people were interviewed after both the SCC decision and the decision to remove the mandatory signature from the Community Covenant.

¹⁵ Unfortunately, time did not allow for follow-up interviews with all participants. As well, space did not allow me to include excerpts from all interviews. Instead, I tried to use interviews that spoke to overall themes that were present in the interviews.

female participants who have divorced or are separated. This will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

While there were slight alterations to questions based on whether an interviewee was a student, faculty, or staff, as well the years a person was present at TWU, the questions for all groups were quite similar. The following is the list of questions that was used for current TWU students:¹⁶

1. What is your name? Age? Marital Status?
2. What are you studying here at TWU? What year are you in?
3. What was your religious upbringing?
4. Why did you choose to study at TWU?
5. When you applied, were you aware of the Community Covenant? If not, what was your reaction to it?
6. Do you feel that the Covenant is an important part of TWU? Why?/Why not? Should it remain mandatory for students to sign?
7. Did you feel comfortable signing it? Was there any part of the Covenant that you were not comfortable with? Can you elaborate?
8. In your experience, what is the general attitude towards the Covenant from the student body? From your friends?
9. Has the Covenant had an impact on your life as a student? How so?
10. Are you aware of what is happening at the SCC regarding TWU's application for a law school? What do you think about this?
11. How have other students responded to this case?
12. The world, or at least our corner of it, seems to be moving away from religion and/or faith. How has this impacted TWU?
13. How has your own religious freedom has been impacted by a world that seems to increasingly respect secular values over Christian ones? Have you been discriminated against because of your religious identity and/or attendance at TWU?

While my goal was to get answers to the above questions, my hope was that each question might act as a catalyst and that the interviews would be more organic than simple questions and answers. In most cases, interviewees found themselves answering the above questions without having been asked, and instead of feeling like formal interviews, they were much more

¹⁶ For the full list of questions, see Appendixes 4-8

conversational in nature. I also asked interviewees what prompted them to respond to my request for participants. This often elicited rich dialogue. People talked about “wanting to feel heard,” something that they weren’t experiencing at Trinity, or hadn’t experienced during their time there.

In addition to information gathered from interviewees, TWU’s student newspaper, *Mars Hill*, also provides significant evidence of shifting attitudes. Recall from Chapter Two, *Mars Hill* articles from the 1970s and 1980s show a conservative mindset, largely concerned with ethical issues such as abortion and pre-marital sex, and a student body that actively supported the Progressive Conservative party of the 1980s. Published articles featured little-to-no dissent, with a voice united on the right. It is likely that the student body had at least some diversity of opinion, but that voice was rarely being represented within the pages of *Mars Hill*.¹⁷ It would take more than 50 years for liberal opinions to start appearing regularly within the paper, but as we will see later, the liberal voice now has a firm place within its pages.

I will also explore TWU student handbooks.¹⁸ These handbooks also indicate a change in attitudes and expectations. The student handbooks have historically included its religious-based Code of Conduct as well as lengthy lists of prescribed and proscribed behaviors over and above what was included in Code.¹⁹ Handbooks seemed to mirror the conservative Christian

¹⁷ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, *Mars Hill* would occasionally publish an article that presented an opposing opinion on specific (often “moral”) issue. This was often a part of an editorial which would feature two different writers chiming in on the same issue. Often the more liberal opinion would receive pushback in following issues. It should be noted, that more controversial issues such as abortion, was never written about from a pro-choice—or even constructively critical perspective.

¹⁸ Handbooks for all years were not available. All surviving issues can be found on TWU’s archival site, <https://archivesearch.twu.ca/student-handbooks>

¹⁹ Handbooks included rules on everything from clothing to “wall hangings” in dorm rooms.

expectations of the school's administration and, until recently, the Community Covenant was included in the student handbook. This is no longer the case.

My assumption going into the interviews was that as members of TWU, the vast majority of respondents would be in full support of the Covenant and would feel as though their religious freedom was being infringed upon by a country that appeared to be turning its back on Christianity. With few exceptions, however, the exact opposite was true. While Trinity was responding to external changes by resisting them, many of its members were responding to those same changes by embracing them. On the topic of the SCC decision, the majority of those I interviewed were actually pleased that Trinity lost, again pointing to the existence of an ideological split within Trinity.

Conversations with faculty proved particularly interesting. Instead of “toeing the company line,” those I interviewed expressed frustration with the administration.²⁰ Faculty said that the members of the administration “weren’t listening,” that they “have their own agenda,” and that “there’s no openness for conversation.”²¹ It is important to note that only five faculty—out of a possible 300—participated in interviews; and while most of them estimated that somewhere between 70-80% of all faculty would be in favour of changing the Covenant to make it more inclusive of LGTBQ people, five opinions is in no way representative of the group.²²

²⁰ Only two administrative members were interviewed, and both were in favour of the Covenant remaining unchanged.

²¹ Other than very short snippets of dialogue, interviews with faculty members will not be identified as such. Faculty members were more concerned about being identified than either current or past students. In addition to faculty, administrative staff will not be identified as such.

²² All faculty participants are currently employed by TWU, and all have been associated with the university for a minimum of 20 years.

I was also expecting interviewees — at least those currently enrolled at TWU — to be well-versed in the contents of the Community Covenant. While Trinity has gone to great lengths to not only protect the Covenant, but to speak of its importance to their community, many people I interviewed—including those who support the Covenant—either could not remember signing it or could not recall the specifics contained within it. Most were familiar with its definition of marriage—largely because it has been so frequently talked about—but could remember little else. Some likened it to the “agree” button that you have to hit before purchasing an app or downloading music: you scroll to the bottom without reading the agreement and click “yes” so that you can get to your end goal. Several people acknowledged that it is not possible for a Covenant to be followed if not everyone is reading it or if signatories are interpreting it in different ways. I was surprised to find out that once a person starts at Trinity, student orientation contains little-to-no formal dialogue regarding the Covenant. One interviewee had this to say:

I don't have any recollection of signing it, or faculty talking to me or my interviewers talking to me about the Community Covenant or why they have it, and I think that is what is missing...It seems to me that nobody actually really reads it...There's not an intentional focus of “let's work together to abide by this.”

I feel like students—maybe this is just my opinion—students may be like, “Oh, we're forced to sign this Covenant. We don't care; it's just paperwork.” But if they [the school] actually talked about it and said, “This is why we believe what we believe and this is why we do it and this is why we want you to sign it, because we want to be a light in the world.” That's what they're trying to do, but it's not working because there is no conversation happening...You know, the more I talk to you the more I feel like, “You know what? Maybe we shouldn't have this mandatory signature but let's still create that same community conversation to talk about it.”²³

Another interviewee told me that there was some dialogue in his residence, where they were required to sit as a group and discuss it, but he also recalled that at least one person spent that

²³ Anonymous. “Interview no. 2” May 31, 2018.

time disengaged from the conversation and “playing on his phone.” Others, however, could not recall any formal dialogue during or after their orientation. While TWU has spent much time emphasizing the importance of the Covenant to its members, the reality appears to suggest otherwise.²⁴

Ultimately, what the content of these interviews show is that many of its members are now swimming in the same waters as most Canadians, and that the walls that Trinity built in order to protect their students from secularization, are no longer impenetrable.

Regardless of the ideological split happening within the school, however, most people that I spoke with did value Trinity for the one thing that public institutions could not provide them; that is, a faith-based place of learning where publicly stating one’s Christianity is not something to fear. While identifying as Christian to people outside of Trinity during the school’s early years would not have been met with suspicion, the response from many today (particularly within the Pacific Northwest—and certainly within the academy) is quite different. Indeed, several interviewees talked about a general reservation when identifying themselves as Christians to people (outside of TWU) they do not know well. One interviewee said that he “avoids the topic,” and if anyone happens to ask about his beliefs, he “thinks carefully about answering.”²⁵ When asked why, he said that people respond to Christianity—particularly conservative Christianity—with suspicion.²⁶ He went on to say,

²⁴It should be noted that while the school appears to offer students little-to-no formal dialogue regarding the Covenant, there is plenty of dialogue happening among the students themselves. As well, among faculty it seems that the Covenant is regularly discussed.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Certainly, I have experienced this suspicion when telling people about my research. The automatic question from people is most often, “Oh, did you go to Trinity?” While this appears to be a harmless question, the tone with which it is usually asked is one of disapproval. When I tell people that I neither went to Trinity nor would be able to abide

I feel cautious because I know that everybody has some preconceived idea about what those words [evangelical Christian] means, which often does not match what I understand those words to mean. It's much more complicated now to engage in dialogue with a secular culture that makes certain assumptions about who you are. If the topic comes up, I often ask myself, "Do I have time for this conversation? Will I have time to explain what these words mean to me?"²⁷

Another interviewee went so far as to say that "Christians have become the laughingstocks of the world."²⁸ While this might seem overstated, it does describe the feeling of frustration expressed by several other interviewees. Yet another expressed a similar sentiment when he explained that he will not tell people that he is an evangelical Christian "without making sure that we've got a good 15 minutes to unpack what we're talking about...people's assumptions are wrong and it leads to hostility."²⁹ Virtually all of the interviewees, whether liberal or conservative, view this suspicion as something that has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. The "hostility" experienced by some was even greater for those that identify as evangelical, even for those who also identified as liberal. On the question of evangelical Christianity, several interviewees felt that many people confuse evangelical with fundamentalist. When this came up, interviewees were eager to set the record straight:

Interviewer: So, you said that you identify as an evangelical Christian. What does that mean for you?

Interviewee: ...I'm better to talk about what evangelicalism is not. I want to make sure that when people hear evangelical, they don't hear fundamentalist. It is not that at all. It is

by the *Covenant*, they often follow up with an assumption that I am writing a scathing expose of Trinity, or they make a blanket statement about Trinity's supposed rampant homophobia.

²⁷ Interview no. 4.

²⁸ Anonymous. Interview no. 3. May 31, 2018. This interviewee did not specify what she meant by "Christian." When asked, she said that while she identifies as an evangelical Protestant, she was using the term "Christian" very broadly. She went on to explain that while she views Catholics and other Christian groups such as Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses as very different from herself, she does not believe that most people make those distinctions. In essence, she believes that most people are "laughing at" a collective group of Christians that the outside world lumps together.

²⁹ Anonymous. "Interview no. 7." June 28, 2018.

certainly a very high view of scripture and the importance of scripture...but it's not a "you're going to hell if you don't claim faith in Christ." Trinity is very much in the middle of that, people making those assumptions about us.

Interviewer: How are you defining fundamentalism and why do you think people hear evangelical and think fundamentalist?

Interviewee: It's because they don't take the time to ask about it and think about it. They just jump on that. Whereas evangelicals have a very high view of scripture, fundamentalism generally has a literal view of scripture.³⁰

Most interviewees wanted to clarify that they are not fundamentalists and blamed current media for the confusion surrounding evangelicalism and Trinity. Many also pointed to the US media and American politics for confusing the two and for pandering to fundamentalists. Some said that just telling someone that you are a Christian, let alone an evangelical Christian, was enough to arouse suspicion. Interestingly, however, none could really tell me how they were defining fundamentalism versus how they were defining evangelicalism.³¹ Some said that fundamentalists are about fire and brimstone, whereas evangelicals want to bring the love of Christ to the world. Some indicated that fundamentalists are far more conservative in their beliefs, and more judgemental in their attitudes toward others. These distinctions were not always helpful, as the range of conservatism amongst those I spoke to varied widely and some evangelical interviewees did, in fact, appear to be fundamentalists. In spite of this, no one wanted to be associated with fundamentalism, and many associated it with an American way of practicing conservative Christianity, or at least how American conservative Christianity has been portrayed: bigoted, anti-immigrant, and even—according to one interviewee—ignorant. Even those interviewees who spoke out against marriage equality, attend very conservative churches,

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Refer back to the Introduction (7-8) for my working definitions of evangelicals and fundamentalists.

and have a fairly literal interpretation of scripture, refused to refer to themselves as fundamentalists.

In addition to the discrimination most interviewees have experienced by virtue of identifying as Christian, most of the people I spoke with are also experiencing discrimination as a result of being affiliated with TWU. One interviewee told me that when attending conferences, she feels uneasy about having her name tag state that she's from TWU because she knows that people are now wary of anyone associated with the university. Another interviewee had this to say:

Interviewee: I was invited to a conference at _____ University and at the end of it a PhD student said to me, “Did you hear what happened? There was this big kerfuffle among the faculty about why you were included in this conference if you came from that university.” Some people said that I should be disinvited. And when I gave a public lecture at (university), it was shared with me that some people complained, “How could we have someone from Trinity Western speak here?”³²

A third interviewee—a TWU alumni—shared an uncomfortable incident at the start of grad school:

Interviewee: So, I went to _____ for my MA, and in one of my first classes, we were all introducing ourselves, and there was another TWU alumni among the students. He introduced himself before me. He said something disparaging about Trinity and then kind of apologized for going there, and everyone laughed...And so it comes to me and I say that I'm also from Trinity Western and that Trinity is still a part of who I am, and there was this awkward silence. I think in recent years, you feel like you almost have to apologize for being from Trinity.³³

Some interviewees blamed Trinity's application for a law school and its subsequent refusal to change the Covenant, saying that the administration's actions have “damaged (Trinity's) reputation”³⁴ and tarnished the good work of its many scholars.

³² Anonymous. “Interview no. 10.” July 5, 2018.

³³ Anonymous. “Interview no. 19.” August 24, 2018

³⁴ Ibid.

While the “othering” of people of faith is not a new thing (although an increasingly significant reality in a more secular Canada), the ideological split occurring within Trinity has created a sense of “othering” among Trinity’s own. While identifying as Christian within Trinity is welcome, identifying as a *conservative* Christian is not always met with acceptance. For those organizing their lives in ways not according to a conservative interpretation of scripture, no longer having to abide by the Covenant has meant that Trinity might become a place where they feel more comfortable. However, for those who have chosen to live a conservative Christian life—the minority of my interview subjects—they now feel like something sacred is slipping away from them, not only within Canada, but within Trinity itself. One interviewee explained that she chose TWU specifically because it is a Christian university, one that she believed would allow her not only to be open and honest about her conservative Christianity, but where she would be met by like-minded people. As of late, however, the space afforded to conservative or traditional voices within Trinity has shrunk to the point where some interviewees no longer feel comfortable sharing their beliefs with other classmates. In one interview, a young conservative woman currently attending TWU expressed feeling more unheard by her classmates at Trinity than she did during her time at a public university:

Interviewer: So, you had said that the beliefs that you hold dear are sometimes an issue even at Trinity Western? Do you think that’s connected to this move towards secularization or the move towards irreligiosity that we spoke of earlier?

Interviewee: I think that Christianity itself is getting a lot more liberal as the years go on. Being in a conservative church, as I am, and deciding to *stay* in a conservative church is not common, especially for people my age. A lot of people my age are leaving the United Reform Church, the Canadian Reform Church, because it's too conservative...

Interviewer: And so even within the Trinity Western community, you see that happening?

Interviewee: Yes. There are a lot of different beliefs in general. There is not a cohesive community at Trinity. It's almost more difficult to talk about it in a faith-based

community because there's the assumption that everyone believes the same thing. Whereas, at (my previous university) there's the assumption that everyone has different religious values and beliefs and there was an openness in talking about them. At Trinity, it's just assumed that everyone believes the same thing and there's no openness to discussing differences.

Interviewer: So, did you choose Trinity Western with the assumption that it would be a safe place to be a person of faith, to express that faith?

Interviewee: Yes. I was like, I want this, I want this faith-based perspective. I know Trinity has this Covenant, it aligns well with my beliefs and that's why I came here, and it's not been what I expected. It's been frustrating. I still stand by Trinity, look up to their values and what they believe as an institution, but I feel like there's division (and) disagreement almost within themselves as an institution.³⁵

She went on to explain that she often has to defend her beliefs among her classmates, particularly on issues such as gay marriage (which she is against). She, and others that I interviewed felt as though the student body is moving away from conservative Christianity, and thus away from the teachings of the Bible. One interviewee (interviewed after both the SCC decision and Trinity's subsequent announcement regarding the Covenant), when asked why he responded to my call for participants, had this to say:

As you probably know, over the summer the decision was made that the Covenant is no longer mandatory for students to sign, and I was really disappointed with that decision. I felt kind of bitter about that and I wanted an outlet to talk about it.³⁶ You would think that this would have been a very unpopular decision, but I've talked to my friends and everyone is either in support of the decision or just mild about it. So, when I saw your request for interviewees, I thought, "Well, here's an anonymous person that I can share my feelings and opinions with." It's becoming harder to do this.³⁷

Another interviewee expressed a similar sentiment. When asked why she wanted to participate in this project, she said that she does not always feel like she can be candid about her beliefs. She

³⁵ Anonymous. "Interview no. 2." May 31, 2018.

³⁶ Signing the Community Covenant remains mandatory for faculty and staff.

³⁷ Anonymous. "Interview no. 27." November 3, 2018.

believed that at Trinity, she would be afforded the space to speak openly about her faith, and to be separated from those things that conflict with her beliefs. She went on to say,

If I'm going to a Christian school, and we're following biblical principles, it's not that I have to be sheltered from it [referring to the gay straight alliance, One TWU], but I should have the opportunity to be separated from it, and I'm not getting that opportunity. To me, that was kind of a disappointment. And I feel like TWU allowed this group because it gives them some fighting power [in the court case]. They can now say, "Oh no, we don't discriminate. Look, we've got this group. It feels almost artificial or false."³⁸

While this quote can certainly be categorized as homophobic, this person's disappointment was largely about her right to attend a school in which she believed everyone would be adhering to biblical principles, and where she would be able to speak her truth without being punished for it. Certainly, until fairly recently, Trinity would have provided students such a place. Students from the 1990s and early 2000s recall Trinity to be a conservative place where guest speakers were invited to speak on the ills of abortion, divorce, pre-marital sex, and the success of "conversion therapy."³⁹ Interviewees that are currently attending or employed by TWU did not think that such guest speakers would be welcome by the majority of its members today. The interviewee just quoted, continued on to say that she is disappointed by Trinity and that and "as Christians, we can't do what you're trying to do." When I asked for clarification, she explained that conservative Christians are "persecuted" and "face a lot of opposition" for expressing unpopular

³⁸ Interview no. 3

³⁹ Conversion therapy is the organized practice of trying to alter one sexual identity from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual, usually through religious or spiritual means. In March of 2020, Canada has introduced legislation to criminalize Conversion therapy.

beliefs within TWU.⁴⁰ Her hope was that I would be able to provide space for dialogue and that because I am neither conservative nor Christian, people might listen to what I have to say.⁴¹

This divide between TWU's liberal and conservative Christians is reflective of what is happening in the broader west coast Christian context. In his book, *Evangelical vs. Liberal: The Clash of Christian Cultures in the Pacific Northwest*, James Wellman speaks of the two groups as opposing forces, worshipping the same God but in very different ways.⁴² Wellman also speaks of each groups' attitude towards the other, with "evangelicals accusing liberals of 'intolerance' toward them," by "not allowing them to speak their mind in the public discourse." Evangelicals view this as a form of hypocrisy as liberals tout a "moral worldview of tolerance."⁴³ On this, one conservative interviewee said,

There is not a doubt in my mind that I feel like I can't speak what I believe about my faith...I can't speak because the oppression [experienced by marginalized groups] has now gone exactly the opposite way...there's something that says we have freedom of speech, but we don't. We don't have the right to say what we believe because as soon as I voice what I believe, I can get into trouble. I could be arrested or lose my job for protesting because I have spoken out against something, spoken out for my beliefs.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ "Interview no. 3." See p. 13 note 27 of this chapter for an explanation of how this interviewee is defining "Christian."

⁴¹ Interestingly, when applying for conferences or funding, I have been advised to find a way of letting the reader know that my politics are firmly on the left, or risk being denied opportunities if those vetting applications assume that I am aligned with conservative ideology.

⁴² It should be noted that when Wellman uses the word liberal, he is referring to liberal Protestants, characterized by "a set of ideological characteristics" which include "hospitality to those marginalized in society" and advocating for the "concerns and rights of homosexuals" (5). When using the word evangelical, he is referring to evangelical protestants, also characterized by a set of ideological characteristics such as a stricter adherence to scripture, attention to church growth, and an emphasis on conversion and missionary activity (11). He also uses evangelical as an "umbrella term for conservative Christians within American culture" (11). This is similar to how I characterize liberal and evangelical Christians, extending this to include Canadian culture.

⁴³ Wellman, 37.

⁴⁴ "Interview no. 3."

The collective feeling among my conservative interviewees was that, “Christians are being left out of the conversation.”⁴⁵

Liberal Christians, on the other hand, view themselves as “*not* fundamentalists; *not* homophobic; *not* patriarchal” implying that these are the characteristics of their conservative counterparts.⁴⁶ And while liberals allow people to determine their own individualized moral worldview, this allowance does not seem to extend to those for whom their moral worldview is decidedly conservative. Within Trinity, this has contributed to a less-than-unified front and has resulted in Trinity moving further away from the “godly island” it was intended to be.

For almost all that I interviewed, these various dimensions of discrimination (both internally and externally) caused substantial internal conflict for them: they chose Trinity because of its faith-based approach to learning, but it was this same faith-based identity that was now making them the targets of discrimination. At the same time, the administration was using this faith-based identity as its reason for hanging on to a document that many of its own members now viewed as discriminatory.⁴⁷ While all interviewees wanted Trinity to maintain its Christian identity, many felt that the *Covenant* was not necessary to do so. One interviewee even felt that Trinity could be “even more [Christian] *without* the *Covenant*. I think that when we try to narrow in on a few ‘moral’ things we lose the essence of Christianity. When you denounce certain groups, well, you can dress that up as Christianity, but it’s not Christian in any way.” And while most interviewees did fit neatly into one side or the other with conservative Christians wanting

⁴⁵ This sentiment was expressed by several of my interviewees, including those on the more liberal side.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁷ All that I interviewed, regardless of their position on the *Covenant* (for or against), have experienced some level of discrimination based on their affiliation with TWU. This is why some are pre-empting their introductions by apologising for having attended Trinity.

things to remain status quo, and liberal Christians pushing for Trinity to become progressive, even some of those on the conservative side, are now asking whether the *Covenant* is necessary to their faith community. Of the more conservative interviewees that I spoke with, in a follow up interview, one student said this:

Where before I thought that it [the Community Covenant] was something sacred and special to the community, now I think that you can still stand for something as a community and have people alongside of you that may or may not feel the same way...we can still be a part of the same community.⁴⁸

When asked why her opinion had changed so significantly, she said that after our initial interview, she sought out opportunities to speak with several people—all TWU alumni—who explained that they hadn't been comfortable with the Covenant for a long time, either because it did not accurately reflect scripture or because the Covenant was not in touch with reality. This had given her time to reflect on her own relationship with the Code of Conduct during her years at Trinity (the mid-1990s) and realized that it was Jesus' teaching and not the Covenant that guided her actions.

Several others that I spoke to also agreed that the Covenant was not what brought them to Trinity nor is it the thing that makes the school special. Again, while some were eager to keep a religious-based code of conduct in place, others were demanding that Trinity let go of the very thing that the administration fought so hard to protect. As already mentioned, many are now concerned about their association with Trinity and the impact that it may have on their future. Students, in particular, expressed concern that their future employability may now be compromised. So strong was this feeling among many that immediately after TWU's loss at the SCC, a group of students (with the support of some faculty), sent a letter to TWU's Board of

⁴⁸ Anonymous. "Interview no. 23." September 25, 2018. This person attended TWU in the mid-1990s and had to sign the 1995 "Responsibilities of Membership," which she also supported at the time.

Governors, cc'd to TWU President Bob Kuhn; Special Assistant to the President, Carson Pue; and other members of the executive leadership, demanding that TWU either “make the Community Covenant voluntary, or remove it entirely.” This six-point letter, signed by 106 students, covered everything from their fear that TWU’s actions meant that their future “participation in public spaces and marketplaces (would) be in jeopardy,” that they are now facing increased “scrutiny from our peers, patients/clients, colleagues, and our own family and friends,” and while they continue to be “proud to be associated with our respective programs, we are no longer proud to be associated with the university as a whole.”⁴⁹ The letter also states that they “did *not* chose TWU because of its Covenant” [emphasis in the original].⁵⁰ This point goes on to say,

Rather, we chose TWU because of: (a) the ethos of the program and their emphasis on the thoughtful integration of faith and professional vocation and values; (b) our programs’ promotion of rigorous research and participation in the broader and academic world... We are proud to study alongside our colleagues who come from diverse backgrounds. Our learning at TWU is enriched by the sharing of various perspectives, beliefs, and experiences, and our education would not be the same without this space for robust and compassionate disagreement, hospitality to varying views, and thorough engagement with the ‘tough questions’ of life. Our learning and our professional preparation for leadership in public spheres of life require that these varying voices *not be silenced or excluded from the classroom* [emphasis added].⁵¹

This last sentence seems to suggest that, at least from the perspective of the petitioners, some voices *are* being silenced and/or excluded from the classroom. Indeed, the young conservative

⁴⁹ This letter was sent to me with the agreement that I would not disclose from whom the letter was sent. I heard from one source that there were significantly more students that were in support of the letter, but for various reasons, were not comfortable having their names included.

⁵⁰ This is interesting given that while none chose TWU because of the Covenant, and yet all were willing to sign it. This reiterates what some interviews told me: many sign the Covenant without thought simply so that they can complete their application.

⁵¹ Petition from members of Trinity Western University to TWU Board of Governors and Executive Leadership, June 26, 2018.

woman quoted earlier expressed feeling silenced by her peers. However, the person that passed along this letter to me, said that the signatories feel that it is the voices of those speaking out against the Covenant that need to be protected most. The letter also refers to TWU's loss at the SCC, saying that "Our professions aim to seek justice for all, particularly the most vulnerable in society. Given the SCC decision, we...cannot in good conscience lay down these professional values in order to attend TWU, or represent it."⁵² When I asked interviewees, if so many TWU members opposed the Covenant, why does the administration insist upon hanging on to it, several people guessed that Trinity was worried about losing their funders (most of whom, I have been told, are elderly and decidedly conservative). Several others said that for Trinity, this was "the battle worth dying for," "the hill that they chose to die on," and that the Covenant is not there for anyone other than a select few. Said one interviewee:

I believe that just as when a prime minister or president appoints supreme court justices that support the perspectives [of the appointer], so do university presidents appoint board members that support a particular perspective. The Covenant, then, is really just for the board, the funders, and a select few.⁵³

Included among this "select few" are those TWU members who are adamant that Trinity stay true to its conservative Christian roots. When a group of Trinity alumni felt that the school was moving in a different direction, they "wrote [a letter to the board] to say that they were very displeased with what they saw happening at Trinity."⁵⁴ This letter came from "group of very active alumni—with Bob leading the charge; he's an alumni from a very particular [conservative] era." When asked to elaborate, she explained that the group felt that Trinity was

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Anonymous. "Interview no. 9." July 3, 2018.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Bob Kuhn was the TWU president at the time of our interview. This letter was sent before Kuhn was elected president.

becoming “more secular, more liberal.” She went on to say that “the university [administrative staff and board] has created its own paradigm which is ‘we are terribly concerned about the direction that the university is going. We must make sure that it remains Christian.’” She went on to say that as the Trinity of old has changed, “it feels like we are building the walls higher and the messaging has been, ‘We are going to be the last bastion of pure Christianity in Canada.’”⁵⁵

Other interviewees echoed this sentiment by saying that “Trinity feels like they have to batten down the hatches” in order to resist change.⁵⁶ Yet another interviewee said that Trinity is responding to secularization by saying, “we have to do everything we can to hold on to our territory, and our boundaries, and determine what’s okay and what’s not okay. We cannot compromise our faith.”⁵⁷ As it has since its beginning, Trinity has worked hard at resisting the broader societal changes happening outside its doors.

Regardless of Trinity’s determination to “batten down the hatches,” two months after the SCC’s decision, TWU opted to remove the mandatory signature from its Community Covenant. Interviewees who believed that Trinity was never going to compromise its beliefs, nor alter the Covenant in any way, expressed shock at the announcement and left both sides reeling—either from giddiness or from immense disappointment. When Trinity announced its decision to remove the mandatory signature, all that I spoke to expressed surprised, and for many, delight. Said one interviewee, “How do I feel about the change? Fantastic. I love it. I never thought the change would happen so quickly.” When asked why she thought the change happened, she

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ This sentiment, or something like it, was expressed by several interviews. It was offered, not as a justification for TWU’s stance on things such as marriage equality, but as a critique.

⁵⁷ Anonymous. “Interview no. 14.” August 9, 2018.

replied, “My hope would be that they listened to the student voice.”⁵⁸ But the reality is that it probably also had something to do with other accrediting bodies raising concerns.”⁵⁹ While it’s difficult to know exactly why Trinity made the decision to remove the required signature, another interviewee, when asked if she thought that the Covenant would change as a result of the SCC decision said, “Yes, but not because of the reasons that I wish it were, but because unless the university wants to lose its nursing program and the school of education, they will have to change the Covenant.”⁶⁰ Those are both externally accredited programs, and their accrediting bodies are also pushing for a change. *Everyone* has spoken loud and clear.”⁶¹ [Emphasis mine.] The concept of “listening to the student voice,” is an interesting one. For those disappointed with TWU’s decision to remove the mandatory signature, they also hoped that Trinity would listen to their voice. While it may be true that “everyone (or at least the majority) has spoken loud and clear” there was no collective voice that was unanimous in its feelings, all cheering or all heckling the SCC’s decision and its subsequent impact on the Covenant. This lack of a unanimous voice continues to leave many feeling unheard and, for conservative Christians, furthers their reality that TWU is becoming unmoored from its conservative Christian roots.

While TWU’s decision came as a surprise for everyone, those on the liberal side also experienced a sense of joy as the university appeared to be catching up to where much of the

⁵⁸ By using the phrase “the student voice,” she seems to be saying that there is one united voice, which is not the case.

⁵⁹ Anonymous. “Follow-up interview No. 17.” Interviewed by Paige Thombs, August 21, 2018.

⁶⁰ After the SCC’s decision, both the Ministry of Education and College of Registered Nurses said that they plan to “consider the judgement.” See Glenda Luymes, “Court Ruling puts pressure on Trinity Western University to change its Community Covenant,” in *The Vancouver Sun*. June 15, 2018.

⁶¹ Interview no. 9.

student body already was; that is, inclusive of a liberal voice.⁶² This is particularly evident in TWU's student newspaper, *Mars Hill*.

Mars Hill, once a bastion of Christian conservatism, has evolved into a paper that affords space for a wide variety of opinions. *Mars Hill* now engages in dialogue that both supports and challenges conservative Christian notions of things such as conventional gender roles and bans on pre-marital sex and marriage equality, while also affording space to those who maintain a more traditional belief system.

A look at the last five years' worth of papers found articles on LGBTQ rights, recreational drug use, and articles on abortion that, while not exactly pro-choice, are engaging in the issue in a more open-minded and critical way. This year's paper even features a recurring column called "Feminist News," which highlights topics such as sexual assault, and women achieving success in less "traditional" roles such as policing. A bi-weekly feature from 2018-2019 school year, called "The SHEvangelist," highlights a different female-identified student in each issue, using an informal question-and-answer format. What is interesting in both cases is the representation of women as something other than a future wife and mother. Even the word "SHEvangelist," speaks to a woman's importance in the evangelical movement. And while one of the questions posed in this feature is "[What is your] Best domestic talent?" another *Mars Hill* feature, called "The HIMnal," asks male interviewees the same thing. A reading of both show that the women are just as likely to respond with "fix a roof," as the men are to say, "mop the floors." While these responses may feel rather tepid in 2020, the idea of "male authority and female submission," still

⁶² I say "openly" because it is almost certain that liberal voices have been present at Trinity since its early years. However, historically those voices were given little space to express itself.

exists in many conservative Christian homes.⁶³ Many mainstream news sources were writing about gender equality by the late 1960s.⁶⁴ In spite of this, a *Mars Hill* article from March of 1998, quotes then TWU President, Neil Snider, saying, “I don’t agree with affirmative action, that is I don’t believe you have to hire a woman to have balance...not many evangelical women are going into the evangelical Christian careers.”⁶⁵ The article, which focuses on the lack of female presidents within the Christian Coalition of Colleges and Universities (CCCU), quotes an unnamed source saying, “There are very few women in Presidential jobs because of the demands of the position involves long hours, travelling and in short you eat, sleep and breathe the job. The women in these jobs are generally childless as well as husbandless.”⁶⁶ This seems to suggest that demanding, high-profile jobs are impossible once a woman gets married—an idea that has been disregarded for the last 30+ years in secular mainstream Canadian society. With current *Mars Hill* articles such as “My Queerness is not up for Debate: Irresponsibility in Academic Discourse,” it is profoundly clear that the dialogue within Trinity has shifted.⁶⁷ For those hoping to find a conservative Christian environment that reflects their way of being, reading an issue of *Mars Hill* (promoted as being “By Students, For Students”) would force one to realize that the

⁶³ Fran Porter. *Changing Women, Changing World: Evangelical Women in Church, Community and Politics*. (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Limited, 2002), 125.

⁶⁴ See Stephanie Harrington’s “You’ve come a long way, baby,” *New York Times*. August 5, 1970. <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/04/05/archives/youve-come-a-long-way-baby-everyone-was-brave.html> Also, *Time* magazine’s “Who’s Come a Long Way, Baby?” (author unknown) August 31, 1970. <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,876783-1,00.html>

⁶⁵ Cricket Testawich. “TWU Gender Equality,” *Mars Hill*, vol. 2, 11 (March 24, 1998), 4. http://archives.twu.ca/assets/newspaper_assets/pdfs/1990s/19980324.pdf

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Note: In 1998, only two members of the CCCU (out of a possible 91) had female presidents. That number is slightly higher now, with nine female presidents. At the same time, however, the number of institutions has risen to 150. In the last 22 years, the percentage of female presidents at CCCU institutions has risen from 2% to 9%.

⁶⁷ Lis Browning. “My Queerness is not up for Debate: Irresponsibility in Academic Dialogue.” *Mars Hill*, vol. 24, 8 (February 12, 2020), 15. https://issuu.com/marshillonline/docs/mars_hill_volume_24_issue_8

public face of Trinity as “an arm of the Church,” [caps in the original] is very different than its internal student reality.⁶⁸ While recent issues of *Mars Hill* contain articles on mission trips, spiritual leadership in sports, and decidedly conservative articles such as “The Beauty of God as ‘Father,’” and “A Proud Trump Supporter in 2018,” it is clear that the paper now seems to be a liberal one that makes some space for conservative views instead of the other way around.⁶⁹ Said one interviewee, “*Mars Hill* is at the centre of anti-Covenant sentiment on campus. They are writing about how aggressive the Covenant is and making a secular argument. And it frustrates me because they’re not really aware that there is a push from the outside to change Trinity Western. Conservative Christians like me are being left out.”⁷⁰ In the “Declassified” section of one issue, one person wrote in to say, “The *Mars Hill* has become a pit of biased, liberal trash where orthodoxy goes to die.”⁷¹ Regardless of whether *Mars Hill* has become “liberal trash” or perhaps just more moderate than previous years, it is clear that a push to include a variety of opinions is no longer from the outside only; there is also a significant push coming from the inside.⁷²

⁶⁸ Recall from previous chapters that Trinity considers itself to be an extension of evangelical churches (originally the Evangelical Free Church of Canada) and as such, wants to “connect with churches in a meaningful way to partner in our shared vision of growing disciples in Christ.” <https://www.twu.ca/community-life/church-engagement>

⁶⁹ Articles are printed in *Mars Hill* Volume 24, 4 (November 6, 2019). https://issuu.com/marshillonline/docs/mars_hill_volume_24_issue_4, and Volume 22, 7 (January 24, 2018), 5 https://issuu.com/marshillonline/docs/issue7_final, respectively.

⁷⁰ Anonymous. “Interview No. 27.” November 3, 2018.”

⁷¹ “De-Classifieds,” in *Mars Hill*. Vol. 21, 3. October 19, 2016. Note: *Mars Hill* describes their “De-Classifieds” section this way: “Decide what you want to say, send it to us, and we’ll print it in our next issue. That’s right. Ask her out. Post a personal ad. Or maybe just your favorite joke. The De-Classifieds are your social diary. Each issue, *Mars Hill* will print your submissions in the De-Classifieds section of the newspaper.” <https://www.marshillnewspaper.com/declassifieds>

⁷² Several interviewees suggested that the current editorial staff of *Mars Hill* is composed of liberal-minded students, and that they choose what to publish based on their own political leanings. As I did not interview any *Mars*

TWU Student Handbooks are also indicative of changes happening within TWU.⁷³ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, student handbooks included the Codes of Conduct in the form of the 1976 “Responsibilities of Membership,” the 1995 “Community Standards,” or whatever document was in place for that academic year. The 2016-2017 handbook, for example, includes the Community Covenant as its code of conduct. The Covenant acted as the guideline for all student behavior. However, in the 2018-2019 academic year, the Covenant was removed from the student handbook and replaced with a separate Student Code of Conduct.⁷⁴ While current handbooks still inform students that they are to “abstain from sexual intimacy outside of marriage,” no definition of marriage is provided. The Code goes one step further by saying that “As a matter of respect and consideration for TWU’s Christian beliefs and values, students are expected to refrain from...sexually intimacy outside of marriage *on campus*.”⁷⁵ [Emphasis added.] Prior to this change, codes of conduct clearly stated that rules were to be obeyed both on and off campus, and indeed interviewees and student newspaper articles talked about students being reprimanded for actions that happened off-campus including intoxication and dancing.

Hill editorial staff, I am unable to confirm the personal/political leanings of its staff. The question of whether or not the personal politics of the editorial staff is driving the direction of the paper, seems almost irrelevant as the same could be said of the *Mars Hill* of the 1980s, or any other media source.

⁷³ Despite numerous inquiries, I was unable to determine who is exactly is responsible for the Student Handbook. On TWU’s website, handbooks are listed under “Student Life” but make no mention of who contributes to the handbook’s publication. For those that I spoke to, no one knew for certain who puts together the handbook. As for the Code of Conduct, there seems to be a committee that contributes to it, but I could get no answer more specific than that.

⁷⁴ Trinity Western University, *Student Handbook 2019-2020*, “Student Code of Conduct,” 31-40. The “Student Code of Conduct” is part of the University Policies which includes TWU’s “Sexualized Violence Policy,” “Bullying and Harassment Policy,” and “Communicable Disease Policy.” I was unable to determine who is responsible for the writing of the Student Code of Conduct, but it seems likely that this is undertaken by executive members of the university. https://www.twu.ca/sites/default/files/twu_student_handbook_2019-2020_.pdf Note: I was unable to locate a student handbook for the 2017-2018 academic year.

⁷⁵ TWU, “University Policies, 4. Prohibited Conduct,” *Student Handbook-2019-2020*. <https://www.twu.ca/student-handbook/university-policies/4-prohibited-conduct>

This new wording seems to suggest that sex outside of marriage *off-campus is* allowable, or at least not punishable.⁷⁶ Further to this, students are now to abide by this rule, not because of any biblical direction, but instead out of respect for “TWU’s beliefs and values.” This reads as a kind of parental “my house, my rules” set of guidelines and not the words of God. One cannot emphasize enough the significance of this change. Trinity, as an institution, has not approved changes to the wording of the Covenant—the Covenant is still present on the TWU website—yet those responsible for the Student Handbook have opted to not only remove the Covenant from its pages, but also to exclude any definition of marriage. In addition to these changes, the current Student Code of Conduct also prohibits “vexatious or malicious conduct directed at one of more specific individuals” that is based on both gender and sexual orientation.⁷⁷ This prohibition has been in place since the 2018-2019 school year, which, interestingly, came on the heels of TWU’s loss at the Supreme Court. While these changes are interesting in and of themselves, what is particularly important to recognize is that while many of Trinity’s revisions over the last almost 60 years were implemented in order to *resist* a changing world, adjustments are now taking place to *accommodate* change.

Perhaps the most significant change is in the ways that many of TWU’s members now respond to LGBTQ students. *Mars Hill*, recent student handbooks, and the convictions of many of my interviewees show that attitudes within TWU towards LGBTQ people are changing to become more inclusive. While some of my more conservative interviewees, even those still

⁷⁶ Of the numerous prohibited activities, only the consumption of legal substances (alcohol, cannabis, tobacco) and sexual activity state that they are prohibited “on campus.”

⁷⁷ The full list of prohibited grounds of discrimination now reflects those in the BC Human Rights Code and includes race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, creed, age, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance, or record of offence.

studying at Trinity, were clear that they did not support same-sex marriage and felt that Trinity was justified in its stand against marriage equality, others are working hard at making TWU a safe space for all. Said one interviewee:

No student should feel unwelcomed at the university...I read the Covenant and I think, “This isn’t who we are.” So, I say to new students, to gay students, “There’s oxygen in this place. You can breathe. It’s okay. You’re going to get through this—we’re going to help you get through this, and we’re going to help you flourish. You’re going to thrive on all accounts.” We have to create space for this.⁷⁸

Students have also established a gay-straight alliance group. This group—called *One TWU*—was established in 2014 with the goal of offering support and a safe space for LGTBQ people and their allies. While not everyone has been supportive of this group—one interviewee stated that she does not support this group and complained that TWU money was currently being used to fund this group and said that she should have a say in where her money goes (in actuality, the group receives no monetary support from TWU), the general response has been positive. This was evident when One TWU launched its, “We went here, too” project, which consisted of posters with the faces of LGTBQ TWU alumni.⁷⁹ An interviewee talked about the project’s initial reception as such:

We put out these posters which featured pictures of LGTBQ alumni, and the very first day they were taken down because they hadn’t been stamped by the student association. So, we got the poster stamped and students still continued to rip them down and tear them up. It was likely just a handful of students—there was a particular group that were speaking out against the posters. It was such a problem that student government actually had to send out a message to say, “Please stop tearing down approved posters.”

This actually led to some good steps—our group became more recognized and we started getting support from other students. Students would take pictures of the ripped-up posters, and then tape them back together, and then photograph the repaired posters. It

⁷⁸ Anonymous. “Interview no. 1.” May 17, 2018.

⁷⁹ For a picture of the “We went here, too” project, as well as TWU One’s “We Believe” statement, go to: <https://www.onetwu.com/about>

really showed us that we had allies. We were even able to create subsequent posters of current students holding hands, with the caption, “We go here, too.”⁸⁰

TWU and its administration has spent a considerable amount of time repeating the message that LGBTQ students have always been welcome at TWU, and that they will be treated like any other student. After the decision was made to remove the mandatory signature, President Bob Kuhn said “There is no restriction. We welcome, and have for decades, individuals who wish to study in a Christian environment. We desired to clarify that point to people who may have misunderstood...”

In spite of this promise, two interviewees shared the difficulties they faced as LGBTQ students at TWU. In the case of one interviewee—a former “Mission Kid” (often referred to as an “MK”) who attended TWU a few years prior to the 2009 creation of the Community Covenant—they chose TWU, in part, because they did not know anything else.⁸¹ But it was also more genuine than that; as a young person they simply felt that they could not “live without God.”⁸² After coming out to a friend on campus (who then outed them to the school), TWU responded by prohibiting them from being in the same space as that friend (including common areas such as the cafeteria), relegated them to a single-bed dorm room, and even prohibited them from leaving their dorm room open as a way to discourage other residents from visiting.⁸³

⁸⁰ Anonymous. “Interview no. 11.” August 2, 2018.

⁸¹ The term “Mission Kid” is one that is regularly used at TWU. It refers to children who grew up with missionary parents. For these kids, moving from country to country, living in countries very different in culture, language, and customs to North America, is very common. These families often lived with other missionary families and were schooled with other Mission Kids.

⁸² Anonymous. “Interview No. 15.” August 10, 2018.

⁸³ This interviewee does use a gendered pronoun. However, to further protect their anonymity, I have chosen to use “they/them/their” instead of male or female pronouns.

While this coming-out also included admitting to having a crush on said friend, TWU's response left them feeling guilty, isolated, and unsafe. They had this to say,

They [TWU] would say things like “If you care for [this person] you need to make [this person] feel safe if you don't want to leave TWU.” And they would say things like, “these are the guidelines—we're appealing to your Christian side—if you actually care about this person, if you're not actually someone who is going to assault ...” And it wasn't just that they were saying, “Well, if you're a good person...” because I *was* a good person. But it was more like, “Well, if you don't want to be seen as...” I want to say rapist. That was the feeling I got, like I was being treated as a rapist.⁸⁴

This interviewee also explained how other students who were known to be having heterosexual sex outside of marriage (including students who were in leadership roles) were overlooked when it came to those same set of guidelines that were used to punish this interviewee. This felt particularly hypocritical to this person who, at the time, had had no sexual experiences with anyone. For them, it became clear that Trinity was “picking and choosing on which issues to hold people accountable.”⁸⁵

Another interviewee recalled a guest speaker at Trinity, invited in the early 2000s to talk to students about his success with Conversion Therapy, and how painful it was for her to listen to his story. Although such a guest speaker would likely not be welcome at Trinity today, and students no longer have to sign the Covenant, the document along with its definition of marriage, and its proscription against sex outside of the framework of heterosexual marriage, remains on Trinity's website. Several people, including faculty, told me stories of out (or *outed*) LGTBQ people having scholarships taken away (both academic and athletic), and other punitive measures.⁸⁶ These stories are not intended to point fingers at TWU, or to further upset those

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See Bethany Lindsay's article, “A university's queer covenant: Is TWU a controlling culture of shame?” in the *Vancouver Sun*, November 27, 2016. <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/queer-at-twu>

already angry with Trinity, but to establish that it has not, as Kuhn said, “been welcoming (of LGBTQ students) for decades.” Still, what is extraordinary here is that Trinity is starting to become a place that is trying to be safe for LGBTQ students. For the two members quoted above, this change is almost unbelievable.

While Trinity has become notorious for its stance against marriage equality, this is not the only moral issue for which students have been reprimanded. Several interviewees shared stories of being scolded and even punished for being separated or divorced from a spouse. TWU’s stand on divorce is not only about upholding “the sacredness of marriage,”⁸⁷ but also carries with it, a gendered response. In at least two of the cases, the women I spoke with shared the myriad of ways they tried—and the number of years they spent—trying to make their relationship to an abusive husband work, before leaving the marriage. As already mentioned, Trinity’s Community Covenant as well as its 1995 predecessor, Community Standards, asks that its members “take every reasonable step to resolve conflict and avoid divorce.”⁸⁸ Female interviewees talked about being scolded by the board, their churches, and other members of Trinity for leaving their relationships.⁸⁹ In the case of one woman, she was confronted by a staff member during a meeting:

So, during the meeting, one person did say that she was glad that I had left (my marriage) and had people to support me. But then an older man spoke up and said, “You know, the Bible does say that you shouldn’t get divorced.” In that moment, the division [within Trinity] was very evident to me. Also, my husband had a leadership role in church, so everyone sided with him. Only the secular people in my life had been okay with it.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Community Covenant, 3.

⁸⁸ *Community Covent*, 2 (the wording in the 1995 document is only slightly different asking that its members “maintain the sanctity of marriage and take every positive step possible to avoid divorce,” 1).

⁸⁹ Female interviewees currently connected to Trinity stated that this attitude toward female divorcees still exists not only within Trinity but also within their conservative churches.

⁹⁰ Anonymous. “Interview no. 12.” August 2, 2018.

This interviewee went on to talk about Trinity's role in promoting and protecting the institution, and that divorced women did not project the kind of image that Trinity wants. This was reiterated by another interviewee who talked about a female relative's experience with Trinity after her separation;

_____ was actually working at Trinity at the time of her separation. So, when she separated, her group leader thought he was supporting and disciplining her by going to the leadership of Trinity Western and letting them know that she was living outside of the bounds of the Community Covenant and she lost her job.

The board evaluated her and decided that she was not fit to work there because she separated from her husband. Interestingly, one of the board members that sat in judgement of her was divorced.

While this interviewee did not know for certain if the divorced board member was male, she suspected this was the case. Others also talked about gender discrepancy when it came to the issue of divorce. Even though these cases all involved women leaving abusive husbands, the attitude appeared to be one of blame towards the women for leaving their relationships, with Trinity requesting little-to-no accountability from the women's spouses. While members are asked to avoid divorce, the Covenant also requires that everyone be treated "with charity...respect and dignity," and be able to "observe and experience truth, compassion, reconciliation and hope." For those interviewees that are members of the LGTBQ community, or for women who went through a divorce, this was certainly not their experience, showing that the core ethical and religious principles articulated by the school's leaders seems to be at odds with at least some members of its community.⁹¹ Virtually all interviewees suggested that a conservative interpretation of scripture as well as the religious principles of Trinity's

⁹¹ Once again, I am speaking only to the experiences of those that I interviewed. While they are not representative of the entire student body (either past or present), I have accepted their stories as true. Other TWU students have shared similar experiences via mainstream media interviews, as well as articles written for *Mars Hill*.

administrative body will never allow them to fully embrace LGBTQ people or divorced women, regardless of what the Covenant or any of its predecessors say about compassion.⁹² However, while some remain sceptical of Trinity's willingness or ability to become more inclusive, this does seem to be exactly what is happening.

It is worth mentioning that for the gay student who experienced a forced segregation, as well as the woman who lost her job, these punishments arose, in part, because of another member reporting these "transgressions" to Trinity's leadership.⁹³ Recall that for the gay student, their coming out was shared with school administrators out of "concern," and the group leader of the divorced woman went to the board to both "support and discipline" her. They and other interviewees felt like there was/is an expectation of its members to hold not only themselves, but all others, accountable for their actions. As already discussed in Chapter One and Two, the Community Covenant reminds its members that all share in this responsibility. A few interviewees spoke to the importance of watching out for one another, and justified interventions as being in the other's best interest. One person who was present at Trinity during the creation of the Covenant, told me that the accountability-for-others section was put in place in order to keep people out of trouble with the administration and avoid any unnecessary embarrassment, the assumption being that early intervention from peers would put a person on the straight-and-narrow. This approach to controlling behavior within evangelical Christian communities is neither new nor unique to Trinity. In "Railing, Tattling, and General Rumour: Gossip, Gender, and Church Regulation in Upper Canada," Lynne Marks talks about the ways in which "gossip

⁹² The Covenant cites several biblical passages that TWU interprets as meaning that divorce is forbidden.

⁹³ As both of these interviewees were particularly concerned about having their identity protected, I cannot be specific about when this occurred. I will just say that both of these events occurred in between the 1995 *Community Standards*, and the 2007 Community Covenant.

and rumour were a means of regulating the behavior of church members” in early nineteenth century Ontario.⁹⁴ As evangelical communities (both in the early 19th century and continuing to today) view themselves as separate from the secular world, discipline was required for members who did not live up to their Christian values. As members were expected to live according to church regulations, by “subjecting each other to ‘fraternal’ correction, church members believed they were adhering to the rules of the early church.”⁹⁵ One interviewee who attended Trinity in the mid-2000s had this to say:

Interviewee: I think that the goal was to try and get away from tattle-taling and to try and capture the scriptures when Jesus in Matthew 18 says, “When you have an offence against somebody—the person offended has a community responsibility...Jesus gives these stages: first go and talk with him privately. If they don’t listen to you, go with a couple of friends or a couple of people that they respect, that kind of thing. If they don’t listen to you, bring them to the church elders or bring their case to the elders...

This is just normal Christian community that I’m concerned for others’ wellbeing. That’s just normal taking care of each other. I know this seems counter-cultural because culturally the practice is “This is your business, and my business is my business.” But when we’re all trying to walk the path of Jesus, we all make this commitment to each other that if I see you driving off the cliff, I’m going to help you grab the wheel before you do.”⁹⁶

While it was clear for this person that a scripture-inspired accountability policy allowed students to express care and concern for their colleagues, several others, however, said that it created a Big Brother atmosphere where you knew you were being watched. For gay students, this was particularly disconcerting. One interviewee still connected to Trinity brushed this off by saying,

⁹⁴ Lynne Marks, “Railing, Tattling, and General Rumour: Gossip, Gender, and Church Regulation in Upper Canada,” in *The Canadian Historical Review* 81, 3 (September 2000), 380.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 381.

⁹⁶ Anonymous. “Interview no. 4.” June 4th, 2018.

“Rules need to be in place and when you break those rules, you have to expect consequences.”⁹⁷

Some interviewees did speak to “minding their own business,” while others said that what one person views as requiring intervention, might seem inconsequential to someone else. While the need to hold one another accountable has been taken seriously by some, today the practice of taking one to task is not consistently practiced by all, and, according to most interviewees, is now a practice that few take seriously.

For people on both sides of the divide, the inconsistency with which the Covenant is obeyed and/or applied, is cause for frustration. As mentioned earlier, there is little formal dialogue regarding the Covenant either during the application process, or during orientation. How does one abide by a document that they have not read, nor had explained to them? Many I interviewed agreed that this has led not to one Covenant that is understood in one way, but one Covenant that is understood in many different ways. Interestingly, however, in several media interviews, spokespersons for Trinity talked about the school as one cohesive body. Earl Philips, Executive Director of TWU School of Law said that, “We believe the Community Covenant reflects *our* understanding of Christian principles” [emphasis added].⁹⁸ It is difficult to know whose “our” is being referred to here. As stated previously, Trinity Western University does not speak with a single voice. And while I spoke earlier of both an external and an internal Trinity, it is perhaps more accurate to acknowledge that today there is a public Trinity that defends its conservative Christianity at all costs (supposedly on behalf of its members), and a private TWU, made up of a

⁹⁷ Anonymous. “Interview no. 3.” May 31, 2018.

⁹⁸ Camille Bains, “Supreme Court to rule on accreditation of Trinity Western University’s law school,” *Globe and Mail*, June 14, 2018.

wide variety of people with a wide variety of beliefs. Many that I spoke with are ready for Trinity to start weaving a new story.

For those on the conservative side of the spectrum, however, there *is* no other story to tell. Trinity's story is God's story, and His rules are reflected in the *Covenant*. "God is still the creator of and most potent force in the universe" and no "degree of intimacy [between God and His follower] can entirely mitigate" this fact.⁹⁹ For Trinity to make changes to the Covenant or embrace marriage equality would be akin to challenging God's will.¹⁰⁰ Trinity has defended the Covenant by saying that it was not the school that decided that marriage is between one man and one woman; instead, says Bob Kuhn, the Covenant merely "reflects biblical values."¹⁰¹ Without the reflection of these values, many fear that Trinity will become just one more university that has lost the fight against secularization.

Conclusion

No longer requiring students to sign the Community Covenant has been cause for celebration for some people. At the same time, however, this change has left some conservative Christians feeling that the community that TWU fought so hard to protect is being destroyed. For them, the administration's choice to remove the mandatory signature from the Covenant erodes Trinity's distinctiveness. Most of the conservative Christians that I spoke to cannot understand why Trinity "continued to stand firm throughout the whole court battle, but then as soon as they lost,"

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Bramadat. *The Church on the World's Turf: An Evangelical Christian Group at a Secular University*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113.

¹⁰¹ Sandiya Ansari. "Trinity Western University makes promise not to have sex outside heterosexual marriage optional," *Macleans*. August 14, 2018. <https://www.macleans.ca/education/trinity-western-university-makes-optional-promise-not-to-have-sex-outside-heterosexual-marriage/>

opted to “scrap the whole thing.”¹⁰² For this person and others like her, they chose to believe the message that Trinity was projecting—that is, of a school united in its beliefs, determined to not compromise its role as “an arm of the Church” or its mission to “develop godly Christian leaders.”¹⁰³ So, while those on the more liberal side of the continuum finally feel like they now have a voice, those on the conservative side feel increasingly silenced in their classrooms, by friends and classmates, and shut out of the public discourse. For the conservative Christians that I interviewed, the feeling of being shut out has increased dramatically over the last five years. They point to things such as *Mars Hill*, student handbooks, classroom discussions, and our legal system as evidence.¹⁰⁴ While the discrepancy between these two very different worlds within Trinity has grown considerably over the last five years, some clearly wanted to believe that Trinity would be able to resist any further pressure to embrace secular values.

For students mourning the loss of something many consider to be sacred—traditional marriage, a Christian patriarchal system, etc.—the speed at which their world is changing is dizzying. My first interviewee said it best:

Trinity Western is asked to respond to social change on a timeline that is not their own. And this isn't just what Trinity Western sees as massive change—this is massive social change not only here but around the world. This is problematic when social change is happening faster than many groups are able to keep up with. This is something that many just can't get over. At the same time, we have no choice but to change if we want to continue to be relevant as an institution.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Interview No. 3

¹⁰³ Recall that TWU was once an extension of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC). It now considers itself as an extension of the broader “Christian Church,” not referring to a specific denomination, but rather a group of believers. Interestingly, however, TWU’s Statement of Faith matches that of the EFCC.

TWU Mission Statement, <https://www.twu.ca/mission-statement-statement-faith-community-covenant>

¹⁰⁴ Again, in places such as *Mars Hill* and within the classroom, space has been made available for a variety of perspectives, not only a conservative Christian one. It is important to note, however, that for some conservative Christians, they do not experience this as a space for inclusivity, but instead feel completely isolated.

¹⁰⁵ Interview no. 1

While it may be true that to be a relevant *academic* institution in the Pacific Northwest does require the adoption of at least some secular values, a relatively united, homogeneous worldview is appealing to many evangelicals. Many “individuals prefer a stable moral worldview and to associate in groups with homogenous values.”¹⁰⁶ Certainly, some of my interviewees spoke about the comfort that comes with following scripture, and the desire to be with those who share their worldview. While past students could have expected to be sheltered from liberal ideology, this is no longer the case. For those interviewees who lean toward a conservative Christianity, trying to follow an “ultimate truth” in a country that has moved far away from its Christian roots, is increasingly difficult.¹⁰⁷ Many believed that Trinity would help mitigate this difficulty. They chose Trinity because it provided them with something different than, not just other universities, but from much of the Canada. The school was to be their godly island and the *Covenant* their talisman against the outside world. One of my earliest interviewees helped me to understand its importance:

I think that the students who choose to attend Trinity are looking for a community that has a set of shared values that they can build on without having to negotiate those values with others. The *Covenant* creates a kind of membrane that separates them from the outside world. It helps create an identity within which people can recognize themselves...if you allow that membrane to become too porous, then you risk losing everything that you’ve created. Then you have nothing left that makes you distinctive.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Wellman, 115.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous. “Interview no. 5.” June 7, 2018

Conclusion

Trinity Western University, along with its members—both past and present—have been witness to significant change regarding attitudes towards the role of religion in the public sphere. Further than this, Trinity has witnessed a shift among its own members. It can no longer be assumed that students and staff are uniformly conservative in their religious practices and beliefs. In spite of this, Trinity has worked hard at staying true to its evangelical—and conservative—roots by not only offering students and faculty a space where they can openly declare their Christianity, and apply that identity to their work, but also by taking an increasingly controversial stand on issues such as abortion and homosexuality. As the world outside of Trinity continued to embrace liberal attitudes, the school’s administrative body worked hard at protecting its students from societal norms that conflicted with the school’s faith-based ethics. While Trinity has several things in place to keep students removed from the outside world—opportunities for mission work, mandatory on-campus residence, and the requirement to attend chapel—nothing has acted as a barrier between its members and liberalism as much as its Codes of Conduct. As I’ve argued throughout this paper, the Codes have become seemingly more rigid as the world has become more flexible. This gave Trinity the appearance of becoming more demanding as time went on, and increasingly unaware of societal norms. What was actually happening, however, was that Trinity was aware of historical changes as they were happening

and responded by placing a unique barrier between the world and its members. The sense of uniqueness that the Community Covenant and its predecessors helped to create was one of the few things that separated conservative evangelical students from a world that does not reflect their values. As secularization has grown in breadth and strength, so too has the Covenant. As mentioned earlier, the Covenant works as a kind of talisman against the dangers of secularization. This talisman has been treated as sacred by many of its members, likening it to the Word of God. When asked if Trinity would be willing to change the Covenant in order to get a school of law, Earl Phillips, executive director of TWU Law, replied by saying that the Covenant is based on what God asks of us, and so changing those words would be to change one's beliefs.¹⁰⁹ In this way, the Covenant has become what Durkheim would have labelled a totem or symbol of the sacred. While the Covenant is not actually God speaking, it has become the "outward and visible form of the totemic principle or god."¹¹⁰ So, while many have argued against changing the Covenant in any way, it is not necessarily the Covenant that they are worshipping, but what it has come to represent: the words of God, a symbol of faith, a particular brand of Christianity practiced by ever-decreasing numbers, perhaps even a symbol of a Charter right being exercised in the face of disapproval.

Interestingly, while many have resisted changing the Covenant because of what it represents, it has, in fact, changed many times over. In 1972, Trinity Junior College's *Some Basic Principles* acted as a very gentle reminder of how students should behave, while subsequent codes began to dictate how students would live most aspects of their lives. As already shown, most student

¹⁰⁹ Earl Phillips, guest lecturer in Religion and Law class, University of Victoria, DATE?

¹¹⁰ Émile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Collier, 1961), 236.

interviewees are unaware of the exact wording of the Covenant (or any of its predecessors) regardless of their position on it, and yet all had strong opinions about it. Perhaps this is because the symbol itself is more important than what is written in it. For at least some that I spoke with, the Covenant is the thing that keeps its members safe and unites them as a community. Over the last few years, however, this unity has begun to show signs of fragmentation. While conversations with students from previous eras, as well as *Mars Hill* articles throughout the late 1970s straight through to the early 2000s, show that previous Codes of Conduct were largely representative of the “insider consciousness of the group,” over the last five years this unified insider consciousness has begun to fragment in a much more open way.¹¹¹ While many believed the Covenant to be an impenetrable membrane (and certainly Trinity promoted it as such), the last few years has caused it to tear and become permeable in a way previously unimaginable.¹¹² While many students and faculty that were associated with the school throughout the 1970s and especially into the 1980s and 1990s, were consistently resisting change from the external world, many of its members are now embracing social norms such as gender and marriage equality. While few institutions are ever entirely closed off from the outside world, Trinity was able to create a seemingly cohesive godly world within its walls. Outside its walls, however, an ungodly world that no longer embraced conservative Christianity, or traditional ideas of marriage and family, was being forged. In that world, many conservative Christians now experience a sense of otherness. Within Trinity one could at least expect, at one time, to be “othered” together—this is

¹¹¹ Paul Bramadat, personal communication, June 2, 2020. It should be said here that Trinity has had small fragments—or at least tensions—since its early years. What is happening now, however, is that the fragmentations are happening more visibly and those that are pushing against the norm (Trinity’s norm) are doing so openly.

¹¹² As I have argued throughout, Trinity’s Codes of Conduct have never been impermeable. They have changed steadily since Trinity’s inception and are reflective of the current time. Still, the school has portrayed the Covenant as impermeable and many have believed this to be the case.

no longer the case. Conservative students are now experiencing a feeling of isolation within the very walls they expected would keep them safe and they are understandably angry about this. No longer attacked from the outside only (via media, politics, changing social norms) many are now feeling attacked from within. For some, ungodliness has suddenly entered into Trinity's world and it is no longer the place it was intended to be. For those that lean left, most feel that Trinity has long-ignored a changing world to the detriment of many, and recent changes such as the removal of the mandatory signature from the Community Covenant has been met by progressive students and faculty with enthusiasm.¹¹³ For those happy with this decision, Trinity is moving closer to their idea of Christianity, where everyone is embraced as equals. For others, however, TWU has allowed itself to succumb to changes that do not reflect its role as an extension of evangelical Christianity. As is often the case, the truth lies somewhere in between. Trinity has managed to create space for openly Christian students and faculty—something not regularly found in academia. As an institution, it has been willing to take an unpopular stand on controversial issues and continues to do so. While signing the Covenant is no longer mandatory, its existence remains on TWU's website and its words are unchanged. At the same time, parts of Trinity—such as *Mars Hill* and One TWU—have created safer spaces for more open and diverse dialogue. In other words, Trinity is responding to a shifting world as it always has—not by ignoring change but with a heightened awareness of the outside world.

While both conservative and liberal students view recent changes as both significant and unprecedented, a move towards progressiveness is not entirely new for TWU—the shift in

¹¹³ As already demonstrated, there has long been internal tensions between what less conservative students want and what the school has been willing to change. This is not new. What changes its members have wanted to see, however, has evolved. While students in the 1990s wanted to see the ban and dancing and drinking lifted, this has now morphed into more current demands such as gender equality.

attitude towards things such as the role of women, dancing and alcohol consumption at TWU has not happened through a sudden metamorphosis, but rather, a slow and steady evolution. TWU is not the same institution it was in its early years; in addition to the elimination of the mandatory signature, other things have also shifted. Trinity has created prayer space for Muslim students and brings in Halal food to accommodate dietary needs. TWU's Student Union Association executive is made up of more than half women (including all three VP positions), and meaningful discussions about sexualized violence appear regularly within the pages of *Mars Hill*.¹¹⁴ So, while the changes that have occurred over the last few years are significant, changes within Trinity have happened steadily since its inception. This is something that has been largely unrecognized by both outsiders as well as students.

Although there is no consensus on the importance of the Community Covenant, the uniqueness of being both "Christian and college," remains valuable to all that I spoke with, both liberal and conservative. Most liberals who attend Trinity still feel that their Christianity marks them as "other" in the outside world. While Trinity is no longer the conservative Christian haven it was intended to be, it still provides its members with a place where they can approach their studies and work through a Christian lens. For most that I spoke with, this is the reason for having chosen Trinity for either their studies or their employment. Having to imagine a Trinity without that distinction is something that many of its members hope to never face.

Afterword

Imagining a Trinity Western University of the Future

¹¹⁴ A TWU student newspaper article from November 14, 1986, claimed that when talking about alcohol and rape, Trinity, unlike other universities, "was proud to be able to say that as far as we know, TWU has no real problems in either of these areas." While it is likely that on-campus assault was happening at rates comparable to other universities, TWU had no policy regarding sexualized violence and no mention of in its code of conduct.

So often during my research I have been asked whether I think Trinity will be successful in one day having a law school. This is not an easy question to answer nor is it necessarily the most interesting question to consider. From the beginning, Trinity's fight for a law school could have been immediately resolved had they been willing to eliminate the Covenant or make substantial changes to it. What is more interesting to examine is Trinity's ongoing success. Regardless of the decreasing number of people that both believe and belong, Trinity's enrollment has continued to rise almost every year of its almost 60-year existence, showing that religion—even a conservative one—remains important to many.¹¹⁵ Trinity may have its detractors, but it also has many supporters. Trinity has managed to hang on because its existence remains important—even necessary—to some. What is interesting to consider is what TWU may look like in 5, 10, or even 15 years from now. As we have seen, Trinity has gone through significant change over the last few years, most significantly the establishment of an on-campus LGBTQ support group, and no longer requiring students to sign the Covenant. And while the Covenant remains on their website, it appears to be no longer enforceable. While it is impossible to predict with 100% certainty what a Trinity Western University of the future will look like, we can say that if things continue to move in the direction that they are heading—students and faculty embracing liberalism; conservative Christianity and the people that adhere to it being pushed ever further into the margins—then Trinity will likely continue towards greater inclusivity and further away from its conservative roots. Trinity has long mourned the loss of religious roots for most post-secondary institutions, frequently mentioning the many universities that started off with a faith-

¹¹⁵ While there are many reasons for an increase in enrollment (population growth in the Fraser Valley, a greater need for higher education), almost all that I spoke with (both conservative and non-conservative members) stated that they chose Trinity because of its Christian identity. As well, Trinity is one of the most expensive universities in Canada—my sense is that students do not generally choose Trinity simply because they want to stay close to home or because they want a degree.

based foundation only to be sucked into the mire of secularization. This is something that Trinity has vowed to not let happen, and yet chinks in their armour are now readily visible. Whether Trinity will be able to resist further change has yet to be determined.

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Appendix 1: Introductory/Recruitment Letter to be send via Email, Facebook and Third-Party Referrals

Arc of the Covenant: The Evolution of Trinity Western University's Community Covenant as a Response to Secularization.

My name is Paige Thombs and I am a graduate student in History with a concentration in Culture, Social and Political Thought, at the University of Victoria and I would like to invite you to participate in a study called *Arc of the Covenant: The Evolution of Trinity Western University's Community Covenant as a Response to Secularization*.

Over the last 50 years, Canada has gone from a largely Christian identified nation, where the values of Government and other public bodies reflected that Christian identity, to one that identifies as secular and where secular values have taken precedence over religious ones. This has left many Christian groups feeling as though their values have been placed at the back of the line.

At the same time, Trinity Western University's own guidelines (now referred to as the Community Covenant) has undergone many changes over the years. My project will be looking at the practice of religious faith within an increasingly secular society and the evolution of TWU's Community Covenant as a response to secularization. Essentially, I hope to look at three things: changes to the Covenant over time; reasons for said changes; and internal responses to those changes.

I am inviting you, as a member of TWU (including students, faculty, staff, Board of Governors [both past and present]), to participate in this project. Students, faculty and staff are at the heart of the TWU Community, and as such, can offer valuable input into this project by sharing their feelings, observations and relationship to the Community Covenant and/or its previous iterations.

Participants are invited to meet with me for a one-to-one conversation to discuss the areas described above. Information will be kept confidential (this will be discussed in more depth upon meeting) and participants are welcome to answer as many or as few questions as each person sees fit. You are also free to ask to have any or all of your answers removed from the data and are free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation, apology or consequence.

Interviews will take approximately 90 minutes to complete and will happen at a time and place convenient to you.

Thank you for considering participating in this project. If you know of any TWU members, both past and present, that you think would be interested in participating in this project, please do not hesitate to forward this document to them.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact me directly. If you have received this document via a listserv, please be sure to reply only to me and not to the entire listserv, to maintain confidentiality.

If you receive this letter via a third-party referral and wish me to contact you using contact information that is not publicly available, please be sure that you give the third-party permission to share your private contact information with me.

Thank you for your consideration,

Paige Thombs

Appendix 2: TWU Poster



Hello TWU Community Members (both past and present)!

My name is Paige Thombs and I am a graduate student at the University of Victoria. I am currently doing research on the evolution of Trinity Western University's Community Covenant over the last 40 years as well as the impact of secularization on religious freedom.

This project is part of my thesis requirement for my MA in History. My thesis title is *Arc of the Covenant: The Evolution of TWU's Community Covenant as a Response to Secularization*.

I would like to invite you, as a member of TWU, to participate in a short interview regarding freedom of religion as well as the Community Covenant and responses to it. All information gathered will be kept in strict confidence.

If you are interested, or have more questions, I can be reached at _____. I would be happy to answer any questions you have as well as send you a formal recruitment letter which contains more information about this project.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Paige

Appendix 3: Consent Form



Humanities | History
Clearihue B245 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
T 250-721-7383 | F 250-721-8772 | clio@uvic.ca | uvic.ca/history

Participant Consent Form

Arc of the Covenant

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Arc of the Covenant* that is being conducted by Paige Thombs.

Paige Thombs is a graduate student in the department of History at the University of Victoria. You may contact her if you have further questions by emailing _____ or calling her directly at _____.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in History. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lynne Marks. You may contact Dr. Marks at _____ or _____.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to examine the impact of secularization on the exercise and expression of religious belief in Canada and specifically the impact on Trinity Western University's student guidelines (now known as the Community Covenant).

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because while many scholars have written extensively the evolution of, and changes due to secularization in Canada, no one has yet explored the impact on, and response of, Christian groups to such changes.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a member of the Trinity Western University community (including students, staff, faculty and Board of Governors, both past and present).

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a 60-90-minute interview where we will discuss faith in an increasingly secular Canada. A follow up interview *may* take place if further information/clarification is needed.

Written notes will be taken. Audio recording will happen only with your permission. (Audio recordings are only for the purpose of recalling information. They will not be shared in anyway).

Data Collection

In addition to interviews, students may share other personal materials with me as they see fit. This may include artwork, essays, journal entries, etc. These items must belong to/have been created by the interviewee. Materials will be used for analysis in line with the main goal of this thesis (analyzing various Community Covenants and determining reasons for change). Personal items belonging to someone other than the interviewee will not be accepted. All materials will be accepted on a loaner basis and will be returned to the owner once the project is complete.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the use of your time and the sharing of information that may be considered personal (regarding religious belief).

Risks

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include sharing potentially personal information which could lead to feeling emotionally or psychologically uncomfortable. To prevent or to deal with these risks, participants will not be required to answer any questions that may cause discomfort. In case of extreme discomfort, researcher will provide a list of free counsellors available in the area. For anyone that may express thoughts or opinions that are contrary to TWU's beliefs and/or mission statement (including the Community Covenant), there may be a risk of social or economic consequences. However, all information will be kept confidential, identifying information will be removed, and raw data will not be shared. All risks are considered minimal.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity for you to share your experience and /or opinion on religious belief and secularization, and your relationship to Trinity Western University. As well, your participation will benefit the state of knowledge regarding secularization's impact on religion and faith.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used only if you give permission to do so.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will review the parameters of consent ask for your signature each time we meet. This is only an issue if we are required to meet more than once, or if I intend to use this research in a future project.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, no names will be used in my notes, on audio-recordings or in the final project. As well, any identifiers (faculty position, area of study, etc.) will be removed from final project.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. When not in use, all written notes will be kept locked up in a cabinet within my private office. Electronic notes will be password protected. As aforementioned, notes will not contain names or identifying information.

While confidentiality is of the utmost importance, there are certain legal restrictions to the concept of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be honoured within legal limits according to the BC Privacy Act. Confidentiality cannot not be maintained under the following circumstances:

- **Harm to a child:** interviewee shares information that indicates that harm is being done to a child or there is a likelihood of harm occurring
- **Harm to self:** interviewee shares information that indicates that he or she is planning to harm him/herself
- **Harm to others:** interviewee shares information that indicates that he or she is planning to harm another
- **Harm to vulnerable adult:** interviewee shares information that indicates that harm is being done to a vulnerable adult or there is a likelihood of harm occurring
- **Court Subpoena:** notes or other data is subpoenaed by a court of law (in this case, as data will have no names and no identifying information, subpoenaed information will not risk pose a risk to anonymity)

In addition, as Trinity Western University is a small institution, the possibility of identifying participants is higher than it would be in a larger university. The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn may make it possible to identify individual participants. This pertains mostly to faculty, administration and board members as those groups are significantly smaller than the student body. However, every precaution will be taken to remove identifying information such as position, department, etc.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: thesis, presentation hosted by the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, potential presentation at conferences, potential published article.

Data Storage

Data will remain in my possession, stored on a password protected external storage device for a period of 10 years. At the end of that time, data will be donated to the TWU Archives and/or UVic Archives. (Identifiers will be removed.) However, participants have the option of having their data destroyed at the end of this project (approximately December 2018). Data will be stored only with the consent of each participant.

Yes, I give permission to have my contribution stored for a period of 10 years and then donated to BC Archives and/or UVic Archives.

Appendix 4: Proposed Questions for Past TWU Students

1. During which years were you a student at TWU?

For students that attended TWU during the transition to the Community Covenant:

2. From the perspective of the students, what was the discussion/response to the Community Covenant?
3. What was your own response to the Covenant?
4. What was the response of your friends/other members of the student body?
5. Do you recall the reasons given by TWU for the change?
6. Why do you suppose the change occurred?
7. Did the Covenant enrich the school/student body? If so, how?
8. Did the Covenant have an impact on your life as a student? How you conducted yourself? If yes, how so?

For students that attended the school prior to the implementation of the Covenant:

1. During which years did you attend TWU?
2. Do you recall whether or not (X document) was part of the application process?
3. Was a formal agreement (via signature) required for the document?
4. Was there a general understand that students would behave in a certain (Christian) way? Was that behavior reflected in larger society?
5. What was the religious environment like both inside and outside of TWU like when you were a student? (Was the country already moving towards secularization? Etc.)
6. What are your thoughts, if any, about the current Covenant?

Appendix 5: Proposed questions for current TWU students:

1. What is your name? Age? Marital Status?
2. What are you studying here at TWU? What year are you in?
3. What was your religious upbringing?
4. Why did you choose to study at TWU?
5. When you applied, were you aware of the Community Covenant? If not, what was your reaction to it?
6. Do you feel that the covenant is an important part of TWU? Why?/Why not? Should it remain mandatory for students to sign or become optional?
7. Did you feel comfortable signing it? Was there any part of it that you were not comfortable with? Can you elaborate?
8. In your experience, what is the general attitude towards the Covenant from the student body? From your friends?
9. Has the Covenant had an impact on your life as a student? How so?
10. Are you aware of what is happening at the SCC regarding TWU's application for a law school? What do you think about this?
11. How have other students responded to this case?
12. The world, or at least our corner of it, seems to be increasingly irreligious. Do you feel that that has impacted TWU?
13. Do you feel that your own religious freedom has been impacted by a world that seems to increasingly respect secular values over Christian ones? In other words, do you feel in any way discriminated against because of your religious identity and/or attendance at TWU?

Appendix 6: Interview Questions for Current Faculty

1. What is your name?
2. What is your position and in which faculty do you teach?
3. How long have you been employed with TWU?
4. Have you held any other positions here at TWU?
5. What is your own religious background?
6. Why did you choose TWU as your place of employment?
7. Were you aware of the Community Covenant when you applied for a position here?
8. Is signing the Covenant mandatory for all faculty? Do you have the option of not signing the Covenant?
9. Has the Covenant impacted your life as a faculty member? How so?
10. Have you experienced any discrimination as the result of being a TWU faculty member?
11. The most recent Covenant (2009) is considerably longer and more directive than previous covenants. Why do you suppose that is?
12. Do you feel that your own religious freedom has been impacted by a world that seems to increasingly respect secular values over Christian ones? In other words, do you feel in any way discriminated against because of your religious identity and/or employment at TWU?

For faculty that was present during the creation and implementation of the Community Covenant:

1. From the perspective of the faculty, what was the discussion/response to the Community Covenant?
2. What was your own response to the Covenant?
3. Do you recall the reasons given by TWU for the change?
4. Why do you suppose the change occurred?
5. Is anything different for faculty now versus prior to the implementation of the Covenant? If so, what?

Appendix 7: Interview Questions for Administration and Board Members

For Current Members

1. What is your name?
2. What is your position here at TWU?
3. How long have you been a member of TWU?
4. Have you held other positions here at TWU/other universities?
5. Why TWU?
6. What is your own religious background?
7. What you started at TWU, were you aware of the Community Covenant or any controversy surrounding it?
8. What would you say has been the response of your colleagues to the Covenant?
9. What is the Covenant necessary?
10. Do you feel that your own religious freedom has been impacted by a world that seems to increasingly respect secular values over Christian ones? In other words, do you feel in any way discriminated against because of your religious identity and/or attendance at TWU?

For staff/board members that were present during the implementation of the covenant

1. Were you at all involved in the design of the most recent covenant?
2. What prompted the changes?
3. What was the response of your peers?
4. What was your own response?
5. Has the Covenant impacted you either personally or professionally? If so, how?
6. Have you experienced discrimination as the result of being affiliated with TWU?
7. Has the recent SCC affected how TWU operates? Has it changed your feelings about the Covenant or the legal system? If so, how?