



# CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT

*To assure that we are like-minded in the LRCA joint-venture approach to discipling LRCA students, our Christian community beliefs are set forth in this LRCA Christian Community Statement which is to be read together with the LRCA Doctrinal Statement, the LRCA Mission Statement, the LRCA Core Values Statement, the LRCA Educational Philosophy Statement, and any other policies or statements adopted or approved by the LRCA Board of Trust.*

***Originally adopted by the Little Rock Christian Academy Board of Trust on February 16, 2016  
Amended on January 1, 2017.***

LRCA admission is open for the student of any parent (or legal guardian) who agrees that:

- it is the responsibility of a parent to teach his or her child a biblical world view (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Psalm 78:5-6, Proverbs 22:6).
- the primary responsibility for discipling a child remains with the parents (Ephesians 6:4);
- the parent and LRCA should be teaching and modeling the same truth as co-disciplers of the child/student and is willing to allow his or her child to be educated and influenced in an intentionally Christian environment that presents biblical truth from LRCA's interpretation of the historical orthodox Christian teaching of the Bible regarding both faith and practice, all as set forth in the LRCA Christian Community Statement.

Continued enrollment at LRCA is contingent upon this same understanding and support.

### **The Mission Fit Decision**

Our Little Rock Christian Academy (LRCA) mission is to serve families, churches and the community by providing a PK 12th grade education, characterized by excellence in the pursuit of truth from a Christ centered worldview.

Philosophically, LRCA chooses to accomplish its mission by functioning as a discipling school. As a discipling school, LRCA "serves families" by partnering with parents to bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) and to train up the child in the way he or she should go (Proverbs 22:6)." This discipling is to be done in conjunction with the family's local church so that the discipling partnership between school and parents becomes what LRCA refers to as the discipling "Golden Triangle." As co-disciplers, the mutually agreed objective of both school and parents is to disciple from the biblical world view (BWV) perspective, which our mission statement refers to as "a Christ centered, biblical worldview."

There is not just one way for parents, even Christian parents, to "bring up" or "train up" their children. Many parents, including proactively Christian parents, rightly conclude that their child will be able to work out his or her faith more authentically in a secular educational environment. LRCA is available to those parents who are fully convinced in their own minds that the LRCA philosophy of Christian education matches their own philosophy as to how they want to disciple their children.

LRCA is a community of parents who have concluded that an intentionally Christian educational environment best fits their family's beliefs, values and parenting practices. Consequently, LRCA is looking in the admission process for mission fit, or alignment, between school and parents. This is the reason the LRCA admission policy states that it is LRCA's preference that at least one parent of each student is a devoted follower of Jesus Christ as demonstrated in life; is willing to adhere to the LRCA doctrinal statement and; is an active member of a local church congregation.

The role of LRCA is to help the family help the child/student become a disciple of Jesus Christ, but LRCA relies on the parent to take the lead in both the evangelizing and discipling his or her child. This is a process that takes approximately 18 years from birth. LRCA is not a Christian reform school; it is a school that desires to come alongside the family to help the family provide a vibrant, college preparatory, learning environment for the student who wants to learn and the family who wants their children practice the Christ-centered world view.

Whether to choose the distinct discipling philosophy espoused by LRCA is an important decision. And, we want parents to be able to make an informed choice. Thus, we are providing this very detailed explanation, which we call our Christian Community Statement. Please know that we prayerfully consider admission, continued enrollment, and re enrollment in light of our perception of mission alignment between parents and school as co-disciplers. Our prayer is that you discover God's perfect will for your family as you pursue this most critical parental duty.

## **The Consequential Faith Objective**

LRCA believes that authentic faith is consequential; it is the kind of faith that makes a difference in how a person chooses to live. According to empirical research on the faith lives of adolescents by the National Study of Youth and Religion [NSYR], a sizeable number of teenagers attend church but just 8% are “highly devoted” teenagers whose faith makes a significant difference in their actions, identities, and lives.

“Almost Christian” is shorthand term borrowed from the words of George Whitefield (1714 1770) and John Wesley (1703 1791) and used by Kenda Creasy Dean in her book, *Almost Christian*, to describe the circumstantial faith reported in the NSYR as the kind of self centered, circumstantial faith practiced by a majority of American teenagers who described themselves as “Christian.” LRCA is a distinctly Christian school. LRCA is not espousing a cultural almost-Christianity that causes teenagers to practice a positive disposition toward Christianity but makes little consequential difference in their personal lives.

LRCA is ever exploring what allows some teenagers to have a faith that makes a consequential difference in their lives. LRCA seeks to join parents in proactively discipling students who will have articulable beliefs about a God who is both personal and powerful; will have a community to belong to which has disciplers with whom they can speak frankly about issues of both faith and practice; will understand their lives have purpose as being divinely oriented on behalf of others rather than being oriented solely on pursuit of self; and will believe that their lives are caught up in a larger story that’s being guided by God.

Tackling the question of how LRCA and LRCA parents can help foster consequential faith is the heart of what LRCA does. Consequential faith cannot be ultimately secured by human effort. *“Cultural tools can provide support beams for, but not the content of, consequential faith. Christians believe that faith depends on the electrifying presence of the Holy Spirit, who gives cultural tools their holy momentum”* (Almost Christian, Kenda Creasy Dean, p. 62). *“Young people will not develop consequential faith simply by being absorbed into a so called ‘Christian’ culture (if such a thing is even possible)”* (Id., p. 84). Primarily, consequential faith is modeled rather than taught. *“Teenagers’ ability to imitate Christ depends, to a daunting degree, on whether we do”* (Id., p. 112). The task of parents who desire consequential faith for their kids is to introduce them to *“a way of life, not just a way of believing”* (Id., p. 118).

LRCA believes that parents and congregations get from their children the kind of faith they model as parents and congregations; teenagers imitate the kind of faith they see being lived by the disciplers in their lives. Disciples put into practice what is seen being taught. This places on disciplers the duty to model the beliefs and faith that the teachers and parents and congregations espouse as an authentic Christ centered world view.

Since it is LRCA’s belief that parents and churches and the school all play an integral role in preparing young people for a faith that matters in practice – for a faith that is consequential – LRCA is a school that is working proactively to build a “framework” upon which consequential faith can grow even while recognizing that faith is a unique gift of the Holy Spirit.

## **The LRCA “House” Metaphor**

For over 35 years we have labored to strengthen every dimension of our LRCA mission. We use the metaphor of a house to describe the values of our school. The foundation of our LRCA house is a Christ-centered, biblical world view (BWV). BWV is the perspective from which all subjects are taught and applied at LRCA. Believing all truth is God’s truth, LRCA intentionally teaches students to view life through the lens of truth revealed in the Bible. Christ, Himself, said in Matthew 7:24, *“Everyone ... who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”* The rock of our faith is Jesus Christ. He is our Lord. He is the author and finisher of our faith and of our school. No Jesus; no school. Period.

On the BWV foundation are erected three pillars: the LRCA core values of Truth, Excellence and Love. These three pillars correlate to three important theological and practical concepts known as orthodoxy (right beliefs), orthopathy (right attitudes), and orthopraxy (right practices). TRUTH, our first core value, is an orthodox truth; meaning that it is concrete and absolute. LOVE, our second core value, is the leading mark of a Christian; meaning that the attitude (orthopathy) with which we choose to interact with others, even those with whom we disagree, is love. EXCELLENCE, our third core value, characterizes the way in which we pursue all practices and actions (orthopraxy); meaning that we strive to do all "heartily, as to the Lord" Colossians 3:23. (A more detailed explanation of our three LRCA "orthos" is available on our webpage.)

Upon the three pillars is the roof of our LRCA house, our fourth core value: PARTNERSHIP. This is the partnership between school, home and church which we call the Golden Triangle. LRCA's role is to come alongside the parents to assist the parents in discharging their parental duty to disciple their own children. Working together in partnership, it is our hope that the children being disciplined will be brought up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) and trained up in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6), all while receiving an outstanding education. With over 100 churches in Central Arkansas being represented by our LRCA families, the Christ-centered, biblical world view taught at LRCA should be simply reinforcing what is being taught both in the home and in the churches of our LRCA parents.

Suspended over the roof of our LRCA house are the words: "Glory of God" for the reason that it is the desire of LRCA that all we do brings glory to our God – glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – as we prepare students who are, hopefully, grounded in an orthodox Christian faith as they relate to others with love while excelling in college and, ultimately, successfully engaging a skeptical world.

We cordially invite you to explore whether the mission of our school aligns with your mission for discipling your children.

### **The LRCA Christian Community**

In order to accomplish our mission, LRCA has chosen to structure itself as a Christian community. In other words, our LRCA house is a "household of faith." Galatians 6:10 says: "*As we have ... opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*" We believe a Christ-centered, biblical worldview is good for all persons; and, we believe that LRCA must function as a household of faith, a Christian community engaged in a joint venture, in order that LRCA and the parents of our LRCA students can disciple LRCA students, with like-mindedness.

As a private Christian school, LRCA exists as a means to exercise, express and sustain Christian beliefs and Christian mission held in common by like-minded persons who are, together, on a mission to serve families, churches and the community by providing a PK 12th grade education, characterized by excellence in the pursuit of truth from a Christ centered worldview.

*"How can two walk together unless they be agreed?"* (Amos 3:3). As a Christian community, LRCA strives to be and remain like-minded with respect to the manner in which LRCA discipled students. LRCA is more than a mere contractual relationship; it is a Christian community defined by Jesus (no Jesus; no LRCA) and by our commitment to one another as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Christian community is like-minded and on a joint venture in the desire and decision to work together to disciple our children/students. Thus, LRCA is for like-minded parents (or legal guardians) who agree to work jointly to achieve the shared purpose of discipling the children/students in a Christ-centered worldview.

## **Our LRCA Christian Community Expression**

Our LRCA Christian community exercises and expresses its Christian beliefs and mission and purposes in various ways, including: our status as a Christian community, our activities as a Christian community, and our standards as a Christian community.

We believe our decision to function as a LRCA Christian community is an exercise and expression of our Christian beliefs including, specifically, our beliefs regarding the duty of parents (or guardians) to disciple their children and in the manner in which parents (or guardians) are to disciple their children.

We believe our Christian community activities should express our Christian beliefs and be rendered in Christian service to God as a form of our worship of God. Thus, our LRCA Christian community activities are an expression of our Christian community beliefs, mission and purposes.

We believe character is shaped by behavior and behavior is shaped by belief. Since we want right character to be formed in our LRCA students, we want to not only teach right beliefs to our LRCA students but to also model those right beliefs before our LRCA students.

There can be no exhaustive list of what conduct and lifestyles the LRCA Christian community desires of LRCA Christian community representatives and participants, but the following is offered as a guideline:

Required by the Law: LRCA Christian community orthopraxy includes all conduct required by the law. In other words, all conduct prohibited by the law is outside the boundaries of LRCA Christian community orthopraxy. Examples are the illegal use of alcoholic beverages, drugs or other substances and furnishing of such to a minor.

Proscribed by the Bible: LRCA Christian community orthopraxy excludes all conduct proscribed by the historical orthodox Christian Church as unbiblical. This is the rule whether that conduct is or is not declared by the state to be unlawful. While some practices proscribed by the historical orthodox Christian church may actually be protected by the law as individual rights under the law, that conduct might still violate the biblical command for conduct acceptable for a follower of Christ. A declaration by the state that conduct is lawful or even constitutionally protected does not change the Bible and does not make that conduct consistent with the orthopraxy chosen by the LRCA Christian community. The biblical rules for sexual conduct and for marriage are an example. In that regard, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that homosexual marriage must be included in the definition of marriage that can be officially sanctioned by a state does not change the orthodox view of the historical Christian church that the Bible specifies that the only marriage that is permitted for Christians is a marriage between a man and a woman. In all matters of orthopraxy, the rule for the LRCA Christian community is the biblical view according to the interpretation of the historical orthodox Christian church.

## **The LRCA Christian Community "Religious Organization"**

Application of the Law: The laws regulating interstate commerce that prohibit arbitrary discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and disability apply generally to religious organizations, with a notable exception that is rooted in the constitutional right to free exercise of religion: Religious organizations, like the LRCA Christian community, are permitted to make choices on the basis of religious beliefs.

Little Rock Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. As a private school, LRCA considers academic performance in its admission and retention decisions; however, LRCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school administered programs.

**LRCA will, as a religious organization, exercise its prerogative to neither commence nor continue an appointment, employment, admission, enrollment, or other category of LRCA Christian community representation or participation if it is believed by LRCA that so doing will cause confusion about, conflict with, or compromise of the LRCA Christian community's mission to disciple LRCA students by providing a distinctly Christian education from a Christ centered worldview.** This policy will be applied to all LRCA affairs, including all LRCA contracts, programs, activities, facilities, publications, and events.

LRCA stands firmly upon the truth claims and moral foundations of Christianity, as expressed in the Bible as understood by the historical orthodox Christian church. This includes but is not limited to the biblical definition of marriage, the attendant boundaries of sexuality and moral conduct, and the clear biblical teaching that gender is both sacred and established by God's design.

Parents (or legal guardians) who choose to enroll their children at LRCA are choosing to participate in a Christian community as co-disciplers and are thereby agreeing to support the biblical values and the relevant Christian positions regarding faith and practice embraced by the historical orthodox Christian church as it has interpreted the Bible and the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Parents (or legal guardians) understand and agree that both LRCA and the parent (or legal guardian) will teach and model these principles and biblical values. The LRCA Christian community views conduct and lifestyle choices to be a reflection of religious beliefs and a reflection of actual commitment (or lack of commitment) to a Christ-centered worldview.

Any decision regarding the biblical values and the relevant Christian positions embraced by the historical orthodox Christian church of the Lord Jesus Christ will be based upon the teaching of the sixty six books of the Holy Bible, which the LRCA Christian community believes to be the Word of God and the infallible and authoritative rule for both faith and practice. Any such determination will be made by the Head of School, subject to review by the Board of Trust.

### **Roles and Expectations for LRCA Community Representatives**

Community representatives (LRCA trustees, the head of school, school employees and recruited volunteers) work separately and together in response to a calling from God to advance and accomplish the LRCA mission to serve families, churches and the community by providing a PK 12th grade education, characterized by excellence in the pursuit of truth from a Christ centered worldview. As such, LRCA Christian community representatives are persons responsible for defining, cultivating, leading and/or representing our LRCA Christian community, all as an expression and exercise of our agreed Christian community beliefs. Having a common mission, each LRCA representative is an integral part of the LRCA Christian community and LRCA expects each representative to comply with the following fundamental obligations:

Christian Beliefs. Each LRCA community representative shall affirm agreement with the beliefs of the LRCA Christian community as expressed in this LRCA Christian Community Statement and the LRCA Doctrinal Statement, the LRCA Mission Statement, the LRCA Core Values Statement, the LRCA Educational Philosophy Statement, and the policies or statements adopted by or approved by the LRCA Board of Trust. LRCA community representatives shall not subscribe to or promote any religious beliefs inconsistent with such beliefs. Each community representative must affirm that his or her calling to serve in the LRCA Christian community requires him or her to respect such beliefs and to abide by LRCA Christian community standards regarding the exercise or expression of such beliefs. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Amos 3:3.

Christian Conduct. Each LRCA community representative shall at all times (during working and non working hours) model the beliefs of the LRCA Christian community as expressed in this LRCA Christian Community Statement and the LRCA Doctrinal Statement, the LRCA Mission Statement, the LRCA Core Values Statement, the LRCA Educational Philosophy Statement, and the policies or statements adopted by or approved by the LRCA Board of Trust.

Distinctly Christian Activities. Each representative shall be ready, willing and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities of the LRCA Christian community such as devotional worship or prayer services.

### **Roles and Expectations for LRCA Community Participants**

Student and Parent (or Legal Guardian) Participants. LRCA asks that at least one parent (or legal guardian) of each student be a devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ as demonstrated in testimony, lifestyle choices and conduct, to adhere to the LRCA Doctrinal Statement, and to be an active member of a local denomination of the historical Christian church. Each participating parent or student or is either a co-discipler or the one being disciplined. As such, participating parents and students are required to abide by applicable LRCA Christian community standards, manifest respect for the beliefs shared in common by the LRCA Christian community, and be fully supportive of the LRCA Christian community mission in word and conduct.

Unrecruited Volunteer and Invited Guest Participants. Neither an unrecruited volunteer nor an invited guest serving as an LRCA participant in an LRCA ministry support role is required to overtly affirm the LRCA Christian Community statements of belief but, regardless of personal belief, each unrecruited volunteer or invited guest is required to respect our LRCA Christian community beliefs, support our mission, and comply with our applicable community standards in the course of participation in the LRCA Christian community. LRCA may give preference for volunteer positions to individuals who share our Christian beliefs.

Standards for Community Activities and Facility Use. LRCA engages in activities and uses LRCA facilities to exercise and express our LRCA Christian community beliefs and to further our LRCA Christian community mission or purposes. In furtherance of our purposes, we may provide services or goods to, and may allow use of our facilities by, other groups and persons who are not associated with LRCA but we may prohibit any activity or any use of LRCA facilities by another group or person if we determine that such activity or use either:

- expresses a message that appears to LRCA to be a message of support by LRCA for any view contrary to our LRCA Christian community beliefs or mission,
- is inconsistent with any applicable LRCA Christian community standard as may be adopted by LRCA from time to time, or
- undermines or interferes with LRCA's ability to accomplish its mission or to act in furtherance of its LRCA Christian community purposes.

### **Implementing LRCA Christian Community Standards**

Spiritual Discernment. The determination as to whether any particular activity or use of a LRCA facility complies with the applicable standards requires spiritual discernment applied to each particular circumstance and shall be made in the sole discretion of the LRCA Head of School. With respect to uses by other groups or persons, LRCA may consider without limitation both the content of the proposed activities and whether the group or person is generally perceived as advocating any view contrary to LRCA's Christian community beliefs.

Delegated Authority. To exercise or express our Christian community beliefs more fully, the Head of School may establish additional standards based on our Christian beliefs for the activities and facilities at LRCA or for LRCA community representatives or participants.

Scope. LRCA may amend this document at any time. This document does not create any express or implied contract of employment or alter the at will employment relationship between LRCA and its employees.

## **Particular LRCA Christian Community Standards**

In response to current cultural trends, LRCA articulates more specifically our LRCA Christian beliefs and associated LRCA Christian community standards on the following subjects.

### **Religious Activities**

We engage in LRCA Christian community activities that further our Christian community mission or purposes. Because we believe that all such activities are conducted in service to God as means for spiritual action or growth, we consider these activities to be a form of worship.

We distinguish between exclusively religious activities and integrated religious activities. Exclusively religious activities refer to activities that primarily further only religious purposes, such as devotional worship or chapel services. Integrated religious activities refer to activities that substantially further both religious and nonreligious purposes. Such activities are often similar to activities conducted by nonreligious organizations and may include certain educational programs, athletic, cultural, humanitarian and social service activities. We conduct such activities in response to God's calling and in furtherance of and in accordance with our Christian community beliefs. In addition, we present our Christian community viewpoints in such activities as applicable.

With respect to restrictions that may be imposed on the use of funds, facilities or other benefits, we shall not agree to any restriction that would preclude us from conducting our integrated religious activities in furtherance of our Christian mission and in accordance with our Christian beliefs. To the extent consistent with this commitment, we may agree not to use designated funds, facilities or benefits for exclusively religious activities.

### **Belief Systems outside the Circle of Orthodoxy Embraced by Historical Christian Church**

The doctrinal beliefs of the LRCA Christian community are those within the circle of orthodoxy embraced by the historical Christian church. Faith traditions such as the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses are considered by the LRCA Christian community to be outside the circle of orthodoxy embraced by the historical Christian church.

It is the belief of LRCA that the admission of a child of a parent who adheres to a faith tradition outside the circle of orthodoxy embraced by the historical Christian church would create confusion in LRCA's mission to teach LRCA students the truth as stated in our LRCA Doctrinal Statement. There are, for example, words used in the LRCA Doctrinal Statement that have a materially different meaning in the Mormon system of faith or in the Jehovah's Witnesses system of faith. The LRCA Board of Trust has decided that the introduction of doctrinal confusion would interfere with our LRCA mission and, consequently, admission will be denied when LRCA determines that the doctrine of another faith system (e.g., Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses) does not align with the doctrine of the LRCA Christian community.

## **Human Sexuality and Marriage**

We believe that God has created each of us to pursue intimacy with Him, and that He calls some to this pursuit through marriage and others through singleness. We believe that God (i) creates people in His image as two distinct genders, male and female, and that the intended gender of an individual is determined by such individual's biological sex at birth, (ii) has instituted the divine institution of marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman, and (iii) calls husbands and wives to exclusive sexual fidelity. We believe that sexual relations outside of marriage (whether involving individuals of the same or opposite sex) are inconsistent with God's call to intimacy in our lives, undermine the dignity and image of God in us, and alienate us from God and from each other. We further believe that pornographic materials undermine the dignity and image of God in individuals and promote sexual conduct contrary to our beliefs.

Our beliefs regarding human sexuality and marriage shall apply in all policies and programs in the LRCA Christian community. Among other things, in our policies and programs we will recognize only marriages consistent with our Christian beliefs about marriage. Any events in LRCA facilities pertaining to marriage (e.g., weddings, receptions, anniversary celebrations) must involve only marriages consistent with our Christian beliefs about marriage. Also, no pornographic materials may be present in any of our facilities or activities.

All LRCA Christian community representatives are required to affirm and live in accordance with our community beliefs regarding human sexuality and marriage. In connection with the use of LRCA facilities or participation in LRCA activities, both LRCA Christian community representatives and LRCA Christian community participants are required to not affirm or promote in word or deed either sexual relations or marriage that is contrary to our LRCA Christian community beliefs. Finally, all guest groups are required to act and speak in a manner respectful our Christian beliefs while participating in our activities or using our facilities. In that regard, the LRCA Christian community does not allow participation in our LRCA activities or use of our LRCA facilities by guest groups whose primary mission or objectives are to promote, encourage or support views in conflict with our community beliefs, even if that is not the intended purpose of their event. For example, we would not host a Christian group formed to affirm same sex relationships, even if the group's particular event objectives were consistent with our beliefs.

## **Social Media, Political Activity and Other Public Statements.**

In some situations, advocacy for certain political positions may reasonably be construed by others as support for certain religious beliefs contrary to those held by the LRCA Christian community. In such situations, we ask LRCA community representatives to refrain from publicly advocating for such political positions.

LRCA community representatives are to refrain from assuming leadership as public advocates or spokespersons regarding civil rights for same sex marriage or civil rights for sexual orientation contrary to our LRCA Christian community beliefs. In any public forum, including social media, we expect LRCA community representatives to respect our LRCA Christian community beliefs and to not challenge, disparage or undermine them. If an LRCA Christian community representative chooses to express his or her disagreement with a particular LRCA belief that he or she is not required to affirm, we expect such representative to do so in a manner that respects our belief and makes it clear he or she is not expressing the view of LRCA.