

The United States Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* reflected America's fast-shifting cultural views of sexuality and religious liberty. This seismic shift in the cultural landscape poses new challenges and opportunities for Christ-centered institutions that hold to a historical biblical interpretation of gender assignment and identity, the covenant of marriage, and the expression of human sexuality, requiring such institutions to examine and affirm their convictions and clearly communicate their positions to anyone who inquires about where they stand on these issues. Thus, the purpose of this statement is to reaffirm River City Believers Academy's alignment with the historical biblical interpretation of these matters, consistent with our affiliate church, River City Community Church, and to communicate its positions to anyone interested in the school's beliefs and teachings. River City Believers Academy bases its beliefs and teachings on Holy Scripture because we believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, serving as the source for faith and practice for all people. In all matters, we seek to point our students to God's Word as the source of truth. We believe that all truth is God's truth, and we endeavor to teach our students to understand the world, relationships, and issues based on God's Word, the Bible. Accordingly, we seek to provide the scriptural basis for which we form our foundational beliefs regarding gender identity, marriage and sexuality.

## **Admissions Policy**

According to policies and mission statement, River City Believers Academy is a school designed to partner with Christian families in the education of children. Our admission standards require that at least one parent profess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. However, we acknowledge that some professing Christians choose to live apart from God's will by adopting a lifestyle that is contrary to biblical standards. At the same time, we seek to provide clarity regarding RCBA's beliefs and teachings regarding gender identity, marriage, and sexuality. Therefore, all parents must support the school's position regarding gender assignment, identity, and expression, and all students must abide by the school's code of conduct as it relates to appropriate sexual expression and behavior. The school will explicitly teach these truths honestly, prayerfully, sensitively, respectfully, contextually, age-appropriately, and with the conviction that we all sin and are in need of God's grace.

## **Gender Assignment, Identity, and Expression**

It is God who assigns our fundamental human identity and gender. We believe that all humans, male and female, reflect the image of God. A person's gender is sacred and has a divine purpose. We also affirm that God loves all people, including those who struggle with their gender assignment, identity, and expression. Therefore, we are to love all people, regardless of their struggles. The Bible describes human gender in binary terms. Genesis 1:27 provides the definitive statement: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Regardless of one's anatomical parts or feelings about them, all humans have the same responsibility for stewarding physical attributes and abilities. Our bodies are God's dwelling place. In the context of discussing sexual identity and behavior, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore, River City Believers Academy will uphold the biblical view of gender and will adhere to its position on gender issues in its teachings, curriculum, and treatment of students.

### **Marriage**

Marriage is a covenantal relationship created and entered into by God and a man and a woman. We believe that God's perfect design for "marriage," as revealed in the creation order, has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). Furthermore, we believe that God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for his relationship with his covenant people and for revealing the truth that that relationship is of one God with one people. Examples of "marriage" as a metaphor of God's relationship with his covenant people: Jeremiah 2:2, 31:31-33; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:16, 19-20; Matthew 9:15, 25:1-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-3, 9

### **Sexuality**

We believe that sex is a gift from God that is to be enjoyed with fidelity in the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that we are called to chastity in singleness. We believe that sexual relations outside of the covenant of marriage are contrary to the will of God. We believe that the Bible is the final authority regarding sexual behavior. Examples of sexual behavior forbidden by Scripture may be found in the following passages: Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Hebrews 13:4; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:26-27

### **Employee Standards of Behavior**

We believe that all employees of River City Believers Academy are Christian leaders who have the obligation to model and exemplify Christ-likeness. Therefore, all school employees must uphold, in word and deed, the biblical standard of marriage and sexual behavior as delineated in this Position Statement.

### **Non-Harassment Policy**

We believe that all people are created in the image of God and, as such, have profound value (Genesis 1:27). Hateful or harassing behavior towards anyone who differs from us is wrong because it does not recognize another person's God-given worth and is an assault on a fellow image-bearer. River City Believers Academy is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals (staff, students, and parents) treat each other with dignity and respect, which includes freedom from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying via electronic or any other form of communication.