

## **Our Christian Identity and Purposes**

The Cambridge School of Dallas

The Cambridge School of Dallas is a Christ-centered, classical, college preparatory school. From the school's founding, its identity has been aptly summarized by those three descriptors. We began, we are, and by God's grace will remain unapologetically and distinctively Christian. That is to say, we exist first and foremost for the purposes of Jesus Christ and His kingdom. We believe that classical pedagogy aimed at preparing students to enter college at a high level is central to our furtherance of those purposes, but aiming such pedagogy at such an end remains subsidiary to being Christ-centered.

We are a distinctly religious organization, generally speaking, but in a particular sense we are an orthodox Christian organization. The founding motto of the School is drawn from Psalm 115:1: "*Non nobis, Domine, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*" ("Not to us, O Lord, but to your name give glory"). Additionally, our Mission Statement is entitled "Academic Discipleship: Fostering a Love of Learning with a Passion for Jesus Christ." Early sections of both the Bylaws and the Policies and Procedures Manual make the Christian identity and purposes of the school unmistakable. While we are neither owned nor governed by a local church or denomination, we are nonetheless an ecclesial enterprise. In one sense we are independent, but in another and more important sense we are deeply dependant. In short, we function first and foremost as a Christian community, serving the cause of Jesus Christ and his church.

Our Bylaws affirm that the School's governance occurs "under the leadership of the Holy Spirit." Additionally, the School invests substantial and defining authority in its distinctively Christian Doctrinal Statement: "Each Trustee and each member of the administration and the faculty shall be in complete agreement with the Doctrinal Statement" (Bylaws; Article III: Government). Furthermore, the School requires that all faculty members are members "actively involved in a local orthodox, Christ-centered church" (Policies and Procedures Manual, p. 18), and strives to insure that each applicant and at least one parent maintain a Christian confession (Enrollment Application, p. 3).

In many of these ways, we are similar to a Catholic school, an Orthodox school, a Lutheran school, or any school explicitly established and governed by a local church or denomination. Although the School does not baptize, celebrate the Eucharist, have public absolution of sins, etc. (just as other Christian denominational-affiliated schools do not engage in such practices, either), the School regularly holds practice of guided worship services, complete with readings of Scripture, the singing of hymns and songs and the exposition of Scripture. While the Head of the School need not be an ordained Christian minister, the Board of Trustees acknowledges the ministerial nature of that individual's role.

All of this indicates that the School's independence is primarily, if not exclusively, organizational. Otherwise, we are partners with churches and Christians throughout the world, seeking to manifest Christ's kingdom. Moreover, we stand in continuity with Christians of past generations, beginning with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ himself, found preeminently in the Scriptures and confessed by his disciples throughout the last two millennia. Christian tradition plays an important part in our identity. As stated in one of the School's Distinctive, "The School is committed to scriptural orthodoxy reflected most succinctly in the Nicene Creed presented in Appendix F. The School welcomes all who seek education in an environment where these most basic of Christian commitments provide the foundation for a Christ-centered, classical, college preparatory education. At the School's core is zeal for education that is fundamentally Christian, biblical, and historically orthodox. The goal is to keep the authority of Scripture and the redemptive work of Christ central" (Policies and Procedures Manual, pp. 6).

The School's community regularly encounters Christian tradition in the reading of Scripture, the singing and reciting of hymns, and the memorizing and reciting of various Christian confessions—all of which activities are observed both publicly and privately, both corporately and individually. However, the School does *not* impose a particular liturgy in the narrower sense upon the members of the Cambridge community. An active liturgical context does not necessarily mean, or even imply, a prescribed liturgy over against other Christian liturgies. Instead, it means drawing from the history of the whole church, ante-Nicene, Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic.

Given the reality of sin and human depravity, being confronted regularly with the truth which God has revealed, specifically concerning himself in his triune fullness, is crucial. That is as true publicly and for the School as a whole as it is privately. Perhaps more so. Such confrontation occurs partly, though not exclusively, in an environment rich with traditional confession as described above. In this way, as in others, we partner with local churches and denominations throughout our city seeking to shape and prepare young men and women to follow Christ throughout their lives. In doing so, we embrace and proclaim our story, our heritage, our need, our hope, all defined in light of and found in Jesus Christ.

In short, The Cambridge School of Dallas is intentionally and distinctively Christian. In order to define and maintain that identity, the School looks to the Christian scriptures, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the traditions of the church, the body and bride of Jesus Christ. In keeping with our conviction that all learning ought to be doxological, we seek to teach and learn so that Jesus will be seen as preeminent (Colossians 1:18), the one “who is over all, God, blessed forever” (Romans 9:5).