

# LGBTQ ‘Holiness?’ School Patrons Say No

The people—and the people with the money—have made their case. A steep decline in funding from local churches has caused a Christian school in Missouri, one that provides tuition-free education, to announce that it will close its doors after this year’s spring semester.

The drop in financial support to Urban Christian Academy of Kansas City, a kindergarten through eighth-grade school that is only nine years old and located in a “neglected” neighborhood in the city, ensued after the school altered its mission statement, “The Kansas City Star” reported.

By the end of 2022, the school lost 80% of its funding, and school officials faced the reality that it could no longer keep the school open due to severe financial constraints.

Before its public support of the LGBTQ community, Urban Christian Academy raised nearly \$334,000 in December 2021. The “Star” reported that in December 2022, donations dropped to \$14,800.

Since opening in 2013, the school has maintained an “inclusive theology” and has supported LGBTQ students and staff. But, The Star reported, it did so “quietly.”

Last winter, however, executive director and co-founder Kalie Callaway-George felt the school “could no longer keep its LGBTQ support a secret.”

“I think our community members felt safe within our walls, but we wanted them to feel publicly protected as well,” Callaway-George said in an email to The Star. “Eventually, it felt like our silence was contributing to the hurt and pain our queer community members were experiencing. We deeply longed for all

people to feel welcomed, loved and celebrated not just secretly within our walls but very explicitly to the public as well."

The school updated its mission statement and website to state that it affirms LGBTQ rights, and it informed the school community of the change in a newsletter.

In the ensuing six months, Callaway-George said, the school lost 42% of its funding, which consisted of donations from churches and congregation members that kept the school running and paid for students' tuition.

"We find ourselves in a season where we are running on very few resources, and each time attention is brought to the issue we are bombarded by hate, which further distracts from our ability to care for the scholars we have in our care," Callaway-George told "The Star."

All eight churches that helped to fund the school withdrew their support, citing "a disagreement in the values based on the inclusion of the LGBTQ community," Callaway-George said.

 "The Star" reported that a patron who withdrew its support wrote to the school: "Although we love and admire you in many ways, for your hard work, compassion, commitment, strength, we draw the line at this issue. Christian compassion doesn't mean universalism. Jesus loved all, but told them, 'go and sin no more.' He died so we could be saved, healed, delivered, and set free."

In response, Callaway-George said, "As a Christian school, we believe that each of these beloved humans was made in the image of God."

Some families pulled their children out of the school of 100 students. And after two teachers resigned at Christmas break this school year, Urban Christian Academy closed its first-, second- and third-grade classrooms. {eo}

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