



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

NOV 14 1986

Dr. J. Robertson McQuilkin  
President  
Columbia Bible College  
Columbia Graduate School  
of Bible and Missions  
P.O. Box 3122  
Columbia, South Carolina 29230-3122

Dear President McQuilkin:

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Education has reviewed your request for religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. In your request, you describe certain policies practiced at Columbia Bible College and Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions (CBC/CGS) as being consistent with the tenets of the religious organization that controls the institution. These policies would violate certain sections of the regulation implementing Title IX absent a religious exemption. You have supplied information in your request letter and the accompanying CBC/CGS catalogs that establishes that CBC/CGS is controlled by a religious organization and that tenets followed by this organization conflict with specific sections of the Title IX regulation. Therefore, I am granting CBC/CGS an exemption to those sections of the Title IX regulation specified in your request letter. CBC/CGS is hereby exempted from the requirements of the following sections of the Title IX regulation: 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.21(c), 106.31(b)(4), 106.40, 106.51(b)(6), 106.57, and 106.60(a). This exemption is limited to the extent that compliance with the Title IX regulation conflicts with the religious tenets followed by CBC/CGS. The basis for our decision to grant this exemption is discussed in further detail below.

Your letter states that "CBC/CGS is a private coeducational institution offering programs of professional training for Christian service[.]" The Doctrinal Standard in the CBC 1986-87 catalog states: "The teaching in Columbia Bible College is based on the great fundamentals of the Christian faith[.]" Furthermore, the catalogs state that the general purpose of the institution "is to serve the church in training . . . Christian men and women for Christian Service" (CBC catalog), "missionary, pastoral and other full-time, church-related vocations" (CGS catalog). This relationship between CBC/CGS and the Christian faith adequately establishes that CBC/CGS is controlled by a religious organization as is required for consideration for exemption under § 106.12 of the Title IX regulation.

Your letter indicates that CBC/CGS policies for students and employees follow an interpretation of the biblical standard for Christian living and morality which forbids sexual relations outside marriage; opposes termination of pregnancy by human intervention; and imposes certain limitations on the

admission, enrollment, and employment of divorced persons. Based on these principles, CBC/CGS has requested and is granted by this letter exemption to: 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c) (marital or parental status of applicants for admission); § 106.40 (marital or parental status of students); § 106.51(b)(6) (employment - leaves of absence for pregnancy and certain related conditions including termination of pregnancy); § 106.57 (marital or parental status of employees); and § 106.60(a) (pre-employment inquiries as to marital status).

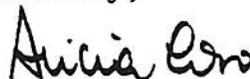
You also requested exemption to 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4), which prohibits an institution from subjecting "any person to separate or different rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment[.]" You indicated that CBC/CGS may apply different policies on the basis of sex based on biblical standards that differentiate between men and women as to appearance. The Title IX regulation specifically addressed nondiscrimination for rules of appearance at 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(5) until 1982 when this paragraph was rescinded from the regulation. Generally, an exemption for rules of appearance is unnecessary. However, to the extent that § 106.31(b)(4) may be construed to address rules of appearance, CBC/CGS is hereby exempted from § 106.31(b)(4).

This letter should not be construed to grant exemption from any section of the Title IX regulation not specifically mentioned. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption herein granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Atlanta Regional Office for Civil Rights. The address is:

Jesse L. High  
Acting Regional Civil Rights Director  
Office for Civil Rights, Region IV  
Department of Education  
101 Marietta Street, N.W., 27th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30323

Sincerely,



Alicia Coro  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
for Civil Rights

cc: Jesse L. High, Acting Regional Civil Rights Director, Region IV