



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

JUL 24 1985

Dr. David L. Eubanks  
President  
Johnson Bible College  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37998

Dear President Eubanks:

The Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education (OCR/ED) has reviewed your response to our letter of March 25, 1985 requesting clarification of your request for a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

In your original request letter you describe certain policies practiced at Johnson Bible College as consistent with the tenets of the religious organizations that control the institution. These policies would violate certain sections of the regulation implementing Title IX absent a religious exemption. You have supplied information in your letter of April 12, 1985, that establishes that the institution is controlled by religious organizations and that tenets followed by these organizations conflict with specific sections of the Title IX regulation. Therefore, I am granting Johnson Bible College an exemption to those sections of the Title IX regulation specified in your request letter. The exemption is limited to the extent that compliance with the Title IX regulation conflicts with the religious tenets followed by the institution. Johnson Bible College is hereby exempted from the requirements of the following sections of the Title IX regulation: 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.21(c), 106.31(d), 106.40, 106.57 and 106.60(a). The basis for our decision to grant this exemption is discussed in further detail below.

Your letter indicates that Johnson Bible College is affiliated with the nondenominational fellowship of Christian Churches, also known as Churches of Christ. Much of the monetary support of Johnson Bible College is provided by these churches or their members, and all the trustees of the governing board of your college are members of Churches of Christ. This relationship between the Churches of Christ and Johnson Bible College adequately establishes that Johnson Bible College is controlled by a religious organization as is required for consideration for exemption under § 106.12 of the Title IX regulation.

In your letters you indicate that your religion views unmarried pregnancy as a sin. Sexual immorality is also condemned by your religion's interpretation of the scriptures.

Based on the above principles, Johnson Bible College has requested and is granted by this letter, exemption to:

1. 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c), admission of students regarding their parental, family, or marital status, including pregnancy.
2. 34 C.F.R. § 106.40, rules regarding a student's parental, family, or marital status, including pregnancy.
3. 34 C.F.R. § 106.57, policies regarding an applicant for employment or an employee's marital, parental, or family status, including pregnancy.
4. 34 C.F.R. § 106.60(a), pre-employment inquiries regarding marital status.

You also indicate that the Churches of Christ discriminate, based upon scripture, between the leadership roles of men and women in the church. This has an effect upon your preaching students who participate in summer internships.

Based on the above principle, Johnson Bible College has requested and is granted by this letter, exemption to:

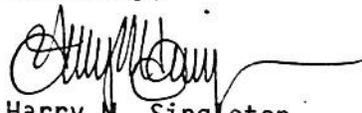
1. 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(d), programs not operated by recipient.

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 organizations, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organizations to verify those tenets. If the organizations provide an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organizations deny that they control the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

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

William H. Thomas  
Regional Civil Rights Director  
Office for Civil Rights, Region IV  
Department of Education  
101 Marietta Street, N.W., 27th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30323

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry M. Singleton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry M. Singleton  
Assistant Secretary  
for Civil Rights

cc: William H. Thomas, Regional Civil Rights Director, Region IV