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Mr. Martin H. Gerry, Director  
Office for Civil Rights  
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Gerry:

The purpose of this letter is to claim religious exemptions for certain provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. First, I wish to explain briefly the background for these claims.

Ohio Valley College is a liberal arts junior college operated as a Christian institution. It is independent of specific control by any church but is controlled and staffed by trustees and educators who are members of the churches of Christ. It is therefore very deliberately related to the churches of Christ and controlled by the tenets of that church insofar as religious matters are concerned.

The churches of Christ are a "fundamentalist" group which relies solely upon the Bible for its creed. Each congregation is fully autonomous under its own leadership and there is no central authority of any kind. Rather, the churches are bound by common respect for, and interpretation of, the Bible as well as mutual interest in missions activity. Other strong bonds include some widely circulated religious journals and support for several junior and senior colleges among this brotherhood. Financial support to this college, however, comes from individuals rather than congregations.

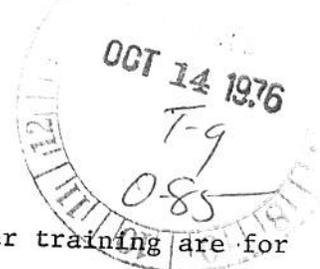
In view of the lack of central structure as cited above, there is to be found some variety in interpretations and opinions among churches of Christ. There is, however, strong agreement on basic principles of doctrine, including the respective roles of men and women.

Men and women are considered spiritual equals in the sight of God. Each has distinctive obligations in the home and church, and it is to honor our churches' concept of the Biblical sense of distinctiveness that I am submitting the following requests for religious exemption.

1. Section 86.51. There are many occasions for college personnel to speak in local congregations. Preaching and public teaching in churches of Christ are to be done by males. Our respect for these beliefs, men must fill the following positions:

- a. College President
- b. Bible Department Chairman
- c. Bible faculty
- d. Majority of admissions counselors

2. Section 86.34. Courses specifically designed for preacher training are for men only for the same reasons as mentioned in Paragraph 1.



3. Section 86.34. The college's course on marriage and family relations will be taught from the Biblical perspective emphasizing distinctive, complementary roles for men and women.
4. Section 86.31 (b) (5). We will maintain distinct dress codes for men and women, but the force and effect of the codes will be comparable. The codes stress modest dress and neat appearance.
5. Section 86.34. Swimming classes will be conducted separately in line with the requirement for modesty.
6. Section 86.31. Scholarship funds which have been designated for men in preacher training must be awarded as designated.
7. Section 86.21 (c) and 86.57. We must determine marital status and reserve the right for disciplinary measures for both men and women in cases of divorce and sexual immorality. Otherwise, we lose our force of example before our constituency.
8. Section 86.41. Because we are quite small (153 full time students in the Fall, 1976), we must yet give considerable evaluation to whether we can provide separate women's teams in contact sports or drop the program altogether. We must claim the right to demand modest athletic apparel relating to both Section 86.41 and 86.31.

We appreciate the fact that Title IX has provisions for latitude in regard to religious beliefs. Once again, it must be stressed that our philosophy on these matters is to esteem and preserve the uniqueness of men and women. Our view is that practice of Christian principles and ethics is the highest-guarantee of just, equitable, and appreciative treatment of any person. With the explanations noted above, we have long maintained equal opportunity for achievement while affording a climate for men and women to reach a self-image that is emotionally healthy and conducive to harmonious social relationships.

Thank you for your consideration in these matters.

Sincerely,



Justin B. Roberts  
President

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