



Westminster Theological Seminary

Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19118
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August 9, 1977

In the document "Explanation of HEW Form 639A (3/77)" page 4 you state that an applicant will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization if it is a school or department of divinity. This is the case with Westminster Theological Seminary. Our educational programs are specifically to prepare students to become ministers of religion, to teach theological subjects or to enter other religious vocations. As stated in our charter and catalogue, Westminster Seminary is committed to the doctrines of the Presbyterian form of the Christian religion as summarized in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith. Westminster serves and is supported by a number of religious denominations, including the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, The Presbyterian Church in America, and the Christian Reformed Church, who hold to presbyterian and reformed ecclesiastical polity. These denominations do not ordain women to the pastoral ministry. They hold that the injunction of the Apostle Paul recorded in the New Testament continues to be authoritative for the Christian church: "I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (I Tim. 2:12). We recognize that this position, maintained through centuries of Christian tradition, is now challenged by some denominations of Christians. Yet we believe that it is grounded in profound Biblical teaching regarding role differentiation between the sexes. When this differentiation is perceived in the setting of God's law of love it is not oppressive but liberating.

Biblical limitations on the exercise of authority by women over men in the ecclesiastical setting do not, however, mean that the gifts of women are not to be recognized and gratefully received in the Christian community.

In our teaching program at Westminster, therefore, we provide theological instruction for men and women alike and we have actively sought to recruit women as well as men as students. We offer the Th.D.; Th.M.; D.Min.; M.Div.; and M.A.R. degrees. Only two of these are designed specifically for professional preparation for the pastoral ministry. These are the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. We do not admit women to certain pastoral courses in these programs, nor do we seek to recruit women as candidates for these degrees.

In all other respects women students are given every privilege, including scholarship assistance. On at least two occasions the faculty has rejected protests by a few male students concerning the full privileges granted to women. We regarded these protests as exaggerations or misapplications of the Biblical principles alluded to above.

A woman serves as our registrar and is a voting member of our committee on administration. Women have lectured and taught classes. A distinction must be made, however, to the degree that authorized ecclesiastical teaching is engaged in. It would not be proper, in terms of our religious convictions, to seek women for certain teaching positions where dogmatic theology is involved.

Since we seek to operate our institutions in a way that is consistent with our theological viewpoint, including our convictions about role differentiation between men and women, we recognize the possibility that some of our policies or practices might be regarded as out of compliance with 45 C.F.R. 86.4, especially if that is interpreted from different assumptions. On the other hand, we do recognize the real danger of prejudicial discrimination; and we realize, too, that theological principle may sometimes be invoked as a cover for prejudice. To the best of our present knowledge we are in compliance with the statute except as noted above, and we are willing to examine our policies and practices regularly to avoid prejudicial actions.

W. B. Lowmy, president
August 9, 1977