

Student ministry leader affirms University position

Following is an email response from Jimmy Satterwhite, a UNC student ministry group leader, to Mike Adams, a townhall.com columnist who has written about the Alpha Iota Omega issue. Satterwhite is Student Chaplain for the Episcopal Campus Ministry. The views expressed in the email represent his personal opinion.

August 12, 2004

Dr. Adams,

I happen to be one of the leaders of the Episcopal Campus Ministry here at UNC, and I can honestly say that the administration has done nothing to harm our organization. The chancellor is a member of Chapel of the Cross and a supporter of religious diversity on this campus. Jon Curtis has always been helpful and supportive of our group as well.

Discrimination may be the reason those groups referenced in your article have had a different experience. I'm proud to say that ECM does not practice discrimination; anyone, regardless of their faith or lack thereof, may worship with us. After all, it is not up to us to say who will join us at God's table. Students on this campus have the right to form an exclusive group, but it would be wrong for the University to help them do so. I happen to be a member of an exclusive group, but we would never imagine asking the University for funding or recognition. That would clearly be a ridiculous request! Taking part of everyone's money to fund a group that won't allow an entire group of people (atheists for example) to join just seems wrong.

As for the part about the administration forcing a group to take "belief in God" out of their constitution; that is a little more troubling. I would need to read the entire statement myself to determine if the University was justified in making such a request.

I commend you on your vigilance, but you might want to try to interview members of other religious groups on campus before making a blanket statement that the administration is carrying out a covert war against religion based on what I see as a few isolated cases. Especially when the University's actions seemed justified.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Satterwhite