

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING EQUALITY RIDE

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1. Who is Soulforce, and what is the Equality Ride?

**A: Soulforce ([www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org)) is an organization whose stated purpose is to “promote freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance.” The Equality Ride ([www.equalityride.com](http://www.equalityride.com)) is a bus tour which will visit over 30 college campuses this year to promote Soulforce’s cause and beliefs. Most of these campuses are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Now in its second year, the Equality Ride is sponsored by Soulforce, and claims to follow in the tradition of the freedom rides of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.**

2. Why is the Equality Ride coming to Covenant?

**A: Covenant College is a member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Covenant has been targeted by Soulforce as a campus to visit to promote the cause and beliefs of Soulforce and to challenge college policies that they consider to be anti-gay.**

3. Did Covenant invite the Equality Ride to its campus?

**A: No. Covenant did not invite the Equality Ride group to come to campus. The Equality Ride contacted Covenant and informed us of their intention to visit our campus on Monday, April 2.**

4. How did Covenant respond to the Equality Ride?

**A: After prayerful and careful consideration, we felt it best to allow the Equality Riders to visit, while placing guidelines on their visit. We believed this was an opportunity for us to embrace our visitors without condoning their lifestyles or beliefs. We presented the Equality Ride officials with a Letter of Agreement, which outlined a schedule for the day and guidelines. The Equality Ride officials, however, refused Covenant’s offer to have dialogue. We regret that they have made this decision and now must consider our response to them.**

5. Will students be safe?

**A: Providing a safe and secure environment is always a priority. We have a strong security plan that has been communicated to all personnel involved. We will also brief local law enforcement. Additionally, any groups that either oppose or support the Equality Ride will not be allowed on campus. We are considering not allowing the Equality Ride members to enter Covenant’s campus. Should they set up a gathering at an off-campus location, we will encourage students to make wise decisions.**

6. What is Covenant's stance on homosexuality?

**A: Our policy is clear as it relates to a student’s sexual conduct while enrolled at Covenant. When students enroll at Covenant College, they voluntarily sign the biblically-based Standards of Conduct ([www.covenant.edu/standardsofconduct](http://www.covenant.edu/standardsofconduct)), agreeing to *abstain from "sexual sins (such as premarital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior and the use or possession of obscene or pornographic material.)"* Covenant’s policy on human sexuality is based on the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith.**

7. Is Covenant considering changing its policies?

**A: No. Covenant is not changing its policies. Our policies are biblically-based and in keeping with the historical position of the Church and current laws governing private colleges and universities.**

8. How does Covenant help students who may be struggling with these issues?

**A: Covenant provides trained Resident Assistants and Resident Directors along with other caring Student Development staff, faculty, coaches and staff who seek to come alongside students in their struggles. Additionally, licensed counselors are available on campus for students struggling with any personal issue. These counselors are willing to provide ample support to students who may struggle with a wide array of personal issues. Covenant will also refer students to outside resources in Chattanooga and the surrounding areas in order to get students the assistance they need.**