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To: Executive Committee
From: Albuquerque Community Foundation Leadership Team
Date: September 5, 2023
Re: Denison Ministries Recommendation

Through deep discussion and analysis, the Leadership Team recommends funding the donor advised fund grant distribution request to Denison Ministries. The enclosed recommendation from the Horizon Forum supports the staff recommendation, and provides their analysis and review of Denison Ministries.

It is important to the Leadership Team that the Executive Committee has context on the nuance, complexity and divide on this recommendation.

The Totality of the Situation

The Leadership Team recognizes the complexity of the legal, policy and values context for the Foundation at this moment. It is important to consider that the Foundation:

- Will make a good faith effort to act upon the advice and recommendations of Donor but may accept or reject any advice or recommendations of Donor in the sole and absolute discretion of the Foundation, as stated in all donor advised fund agreements
- Has board-approved values of Trust, Equity, Accountability and Integrity
- Has a board-approved policy on dEi
- Has a board-approved strategic plan, with a stated goal to reach organizational sustainability and grow our endowment with the objective to “Diversify our donor base and attract new donors so our donor base reflects the community we service in regards to race/ethnicity; gender and gender identity; sexual orientation; religious, spiritual, or ethical practices/values systems; age; ability; veteran status; socio-economic status, etc.”
- Has a draft Values-Aligned/anti-hate grant distribution policy in process, not formally approved by the Board
- Has a draft anti-hate statement, not formally approved by the Board
- Has an aspirational commitment to “dEi in our DNA”.

As stated in its recommendation, the Horizon Forum notes that the assessment is “intended to supplement, not replace, Albuquerque Community Foundation’s own due diligence process.” However, based on the context of the approved and draft items listed above, the Leadership Team recognizes the weight of the Horizon Forum’s recommendation as a third-party consultant in this request.

Denison Ministries: Areas of Concern

Listed below are some areas of concern that caused several members of the Leadership Team to recommend denial of this request in our internal discussions. Those are:



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- The affiliation and promotion through their podcast of the Christian Advocacy Group "Alliance Defending Freedom," a recognized hate organization by Southern Poverty Law Center ("SPLC"), Political Research Associates ("PRA"), Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation ("GLAAD") and included in the "Hate Groups and Extremist Organizations in America: An Encyclopedia" written by Barry Ballech for their Anti-LGBTQ+ positions.
- The intentional spread of misinformation about and the dehumanizing of the LGBTQ+ community
 - I.E - the use of the term "transgender ideology" and "transgenderism," both considered derogatory and dehumanizing terms by GLADD.
 - Horizon states that GLAAD would identify Denison's language as "dehumanizing" which is a word we are considering in a draft form of our anti-hate statement.
- The work against federal protections for the LGBTQ+ community through the Equality Act of 2021, which adds sexual orientation as a protected class.
- Denison Ministries does not appear to provide community services, with their focus mostly on proselytizing and providing religious services.
- The desire for more research into Horizon's assertion that Denison's "position on LGBTQ+ matters remains grounded in conventional religious doctrine" and the weight that should be given to this assertion if we agree it is accurate after further research.

Values-Aligned Philanthropy

Though deeply complex, the investigation of this distribution request has been very beneficial for the Foundation's Values-Aligned policy work. Below are some highlights of our learnings for deeper consideration as our policy development continues:

- Our legal advice has established that the "sole and absolute discretion" provision in the donor advised fund agreements solidifies the Foundation's ultimate discretion. This is important to consider when lawsuits are threatened as a coercive tactic.
- Our policy must provide the Foundation the right to conduct due diligence on any organization at any time.
- The consideration of religious organizations, values alignment, and community services offered will be a complex aspect of our policy development.
- We must adopt an anti-hate statement to further guide our values-aligned approach.
- We must continue to engage the full board in learning to support the deeply complex decisions these types of requests will require.
- We must thoughtfully consider our commitment to values, dEi (noting the prioritization and ultimate goal of Equity in our intentional notation) and the power and privilege this Foundation has to be agents of change in our community, particularly for those communities most disproportionately harmed and affected by inequity.

Relationship with the LGBTQ+ community

Community Foundations are faced with an inherent conflict based on our position in the community. We can make efforts to support and build trust with the LGBTQ+ community by



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building relationships, participating in learning, directing funding, increasing awareness, establishing affinity-based giving circles, among many other mechanisms. We understand that the LGBTQ+ community and the intersections with other issues (i.e. homelessness, mental health, education, etc) cause this community to be disproportionately affected. During the research phase of the Foundation's PRIDE Circle, we learned that only 2% of philanthropy nationally is directed to LGBTQ+ organizations.

We can intentionally invest and support the LGBTQ+ community, and at the same time, direct grants through donor advised funds to organizations that oppose, dehumanize, harm, spread misinformation, work to dismantle civil rights, etc. to this very community.

The complexity of this reality is why we must adopt a values-based approach, deepen our learning and commitment to equity, and use our influence, grant dollars, and sole and absolute discretion to challenge systems of oppression and harm.

For the Executive Committee's awareness, staff will be engaging in a process to identify an LGBTQ+ organization to receive a grant double the amount of this request, totaling \$1,200. These grants will be funded through either the CEO Fund or the Impact Fund, to be determined by staff.

Recommendation

In full transparency, the Leadership Team was divided about the recommendation to approve this distribution given the complexity of the aspects described above. That said, we recommend funding the grant distribution request to Denison Ministries with the following provision:

- Along with the notification of this decision, the donor will be informed that the Foundation reserves the right to re-evaluate this organization should further grant distribution requests be presented.

The Leadership Team was divided on this recommendation and was concerned about the activities of Denison Ministries. We've provided additional context on the recommendation above:

- Given our internal conflict about this request, we recognize the weight of the Horizon Forum recommendation and their approval of this organization.
- While we are on firm legal ground, we are concerned about financial, emotional and public perception and the cost of potential litigation.
- Declining Denison Ministries may be inconsistent with other funds we approve that have similar views, and we don't have the policy/research in place to establish a consistent process.
- The timeline shared with the donor would not allow for full board engagement without calling a special meeting.



Assessment:

Denison Ministries

Prepared for the Albuquerque Community Foundation
August 7, 2023



Introduction

This document has been prepared for Albuquerque Community Foundation by the Horizon Forum. It provides an independent analysis of Denison Ministries, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that, in its own words, aims to resource and equip “Christians on devices they already use with the encouragement they need in the moment.” The Ministry is focused on providing Christians with digital content including Podcasts, articles, courses, and videos. This assessment offers the following contextual elements and is intended to supplement, not replace, Albuquerque Community Foundation’s own due diligence process:

- A brief background on Denison Ministries and key figures in its leadership.
- A summary of the Ministries’ “Brands”
- A summary of their controversial positions
- An assessment on Denison Ministries

Horizon Forum’s assessments document facts, history, and opinions while prioritizing the methodological principles of neutrality, transparency, and replicability. This assessment engages in analytic research and provides direct recommendations on matters of policy.

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Horizon Forum

Horizon Forum is a fiscally sponsored project of the Proteus Fund, a 501(c)(3). The initiative aims to strategically engage with sector leaders in philanthropy to ensure their charitable missions are insulated from extremism, bigotry, and hate activity.

Horizon Forum's primary activity consists of hosting semi-annual dialogues with stakeholders and researchers familiar with the institutional landscape of philanthropy and unique challenges of self-regulation therein. It also partners with peer institutions and university-based research centers to provide public facing thought leadership and data-based recommendations for stakeholders. Finally, the program also provides direct services for foundations, assisting them in establishing processes and policies for vetting grantees and ensuring they protect their mission to nurture the public good and "do no harm" with their philanthropy.

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Organizational Background

Denison Ministries is a prominent evangelical Protestant Christian content creation organization headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The organization claims to reach over 1.1 million individuals across their social media and boasts a site visitor count of over 7 million.¹ Denison Ministries is driven by the mission of reaching “millions of believers with bible truths across articles, devotionals, Bible studies, podcasts, worship music, videos, and books.”² Their overarching goal is to “bring about a true awakening of God’s truth and love” by providing biblical content and resources to empower the “body of Christ.”³

The organization's leadership is comprised of key figures, including Dr. James (Jim) C. Denison, who holds the position of CEO and Co-Founder. Jim Denison is a “cultural theologian” who holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before launching the Denison Forum, he served as a pastor in Georgia and Texas. Alongside him is Jeff L. Byrd, serving as President and Co-Founder, and Janet Denison, who takes on the role of spokesperson. Other individuals, including Jeff and Terra Mattson, lead one of the key “brands” described below.

Activities/Brands

One of Denison Ministries' key guiding principles is encapsulated in their frequently used statement: "Meaningful content transforms lives. And transformed lives transform the world around them."⁴ To fulfill their mission, the organization executes its ministry through several distinct “brands,” each designed to cater to specific aspects of spiritual growth and understanding and are best conceived of as subprograms of the overall organization. The four “brands” are: Denison Forum, First15, Christian Parenting & Foundations with Janet Denison.

- The Denison Forum engages contemporary social, cultural, and political issues from a biblical perspective. Led by Dr. Jim Denison, the forum delivers daily analyses through email newsletters, podcasts, books, interviews, and articles.⁵ Denison Ministries boasts that Denison Forum has received 17.7 million content experiences, with 11.8 million newsletters opened in 2022 alone.⁶
- First15, a daily devotional and podcast experience, offers believers an opportunity to dedicate the first 15 minutes of their day to discovering God in a deeper and more meaningful way.⁷ According to the Ministries, the contents of their First15 brand were experienced over 26 million times.⁸ The podcast is available in both English and Spanish.⁹

¹ <https://impact.denisonministries.org/>

² Ibid

³ <https://www.denisonministries.org/about>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://www.denisonforum.org/>

⁶ <https://impact.denisonministries.org/#denison-forum:~:text=Denison%20Forum%27s%20impact%20in%202022>

⁷ <https://www.first15.org/>

⁸ <https://impact.denisonministries.org/#denison-forum:~:text=impact%20in%202022-,26m,-Total%20content%20experiences>

⁹ <https://www.primeros15.org/>



- As part of their dedication to supporting families, Denison Ministries established the Christian Parenting program, which provides resources that include a podcast network, occasional courses, and pastoral couple mentors acting as "parenting coaches" to offer advice and guidance.¹⁰ This brand offers a for-purchase series of courses titled "Helping Moms Raise Confident Daughters" divided based on age groups, aimed at helping families raise "confident, godly girls."¹¹ Jeff and Terra Mattson are the spokespeople for Christian Parenting and are the cohosts of the "Living Wholehearted Podcast."
- Foundations with Janet Denison, led by Janet Denison, offers online Bible studies, fostering spiritual exploration and growth among participants.¹²

These various programs serve as the primary components of Denison Ministries' comprehensive approach to fulfilling its mission.

Positions

Among the four distinct "brands," the Denison Forum is notably the brand that predominantly assumes the role of representing the Ministries' perspectives. This platform serves as a significant avenue through which Denison consistently showcases a range of positions that he and his Ministries stand behind. The following examples highlight the significance of the Denison Forum in addressing topics of high contention, often referred to as "hot button" issues. This underscores the platform's role as a sounding board for discussing matters that can be polarizing and multifaceted.

On "Radical Islam"

In 2011, Jim Denison published an article titled "Radical Islam: The Greatest threat to the Western World."¹³ Later that year he published a book named "*Radical Islam: What You Need to Know*."¹⁴ In this book, he sets the tone with his statement "the battle waged against the West by radical Muslims is the war of our generation."¹⁵ Denison addressed the content of the article and the book in September 2011 during a lecture at First Lubbock College as part of his "Paradigm" series.¹⁶ In this presentation, he delved into his book's themes and engaged with discussions about Islam, particularly in the context of the decade following the 9/11 attacks.

¹⁰ <https://www.christianparenting.org/>

¹¹ <https://cpguides.mykajabi.com/helping-moms-raise-confident-daughters>
<https://www.cpguides.org/>

¹² <https://www.foundationswithjanet.org/>

¹³ <https://www.denisonforum.org/resources/radical-islam/>

It should be noted that this wasn't the first time that Denison discusses Islam and Muslims. In 2007, he published an article titled "Islam, 9-11, And You" in which he affirms his beliefs that are discussed both in his book and later articles. <https://www.jimdenisonlibrary.org/islam-9-11-and-you/>

¹⁴ <https://www.denisonforum.org/current-events/global/radical-islam-what-you-need-to-know/>

¹⁵ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-book-on-radical-islam-declares-this-is-the-war-of-our-generation-126166658.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1dQG6oYUjY>



During this talk, aimed at college students, Denison gives a history of Islam and its founding and then delves into the “Five Pillars” of the Faith. He then tells his audience of college students that there is a specific distinction between Muslims and Radical Muslims. Denison states that adherents of “Radical Islam” pose a real threat to the United States because they believe in two additional tenets: hatred of the West for the Wests’ war against Islam, and the complicity of all Westerners in this “ongoing siege of Islam.”¹⁷ He also stated that according to a large Gallup poll, 7% of Muslims around the world had been “radicalized” and goes on to say, “by no means are all Muslims radical...I think it’s as unfair to accuse Muslims of being radical as it is to accuse Christians of being Jim Jones or the Crusades or something.”¹⁸ He also spells out to the audience the rough math that “112 million people want to kill you.” He then goes on to say that according to the Gallup Poll “56 million radical Muslims are ready to be suicide bombers, even if that number is off by ten-fold.”¹⁹ While the lecture itself focused primarily on history, Denison ends the lecture by saying that Christians should pray for Muslims to convert, and that to do so, individuals must seek to establish a relationship with Muslims by discussing common ground, and having honest and open conversations.²⁰

In a 2012 article, Jim Denison published an article titled “Is Islam inherently violent?” in which he discusses the wave of “violent” protests in Greece, Bangladesh, and Pakistan against an anti-Muslim movie that was made in the US. Denison cedes examples of an Imam and a Muslim Intellectual who both strictly condemned the violence as anti-Islamic, but also compares the response in those 3 countries with the response in the Christian West to Martin Scorsese’s 1988 “The Last Temptation of Christ.” Denison states that despite depicting Jesus Christ blasphemously, Christians did not have a “violent” response to the movie according to him. One of the reasons that Denison tries to explain the two polar responses is due to the lack of an Enlightenment movement, which he describes as “a cultural movement that led eventually to the Reformation in Europe and the separation of church and state in America.” He states that Muslims have yet to experience such a reformation. He concludes that: To Christians in America, where freedom of religion and freedom of speech are cherished rights, a filmmaker who blasphemes Jesus is better ignored than attacked.²¹

In 2021, Denison published a very similar article to the ones mentioned above titled “Should we fear Radical Islam?” Again, Denison distinguishes between Islam and Radical Islam, and goes further by recalling that a “Muslim saved my life” and that all Muslims shouldn’t be seen in the same light. He also states that: [T]he vast majority of Muslims around the world—and especially those residing outside of the Middle East and certain parts of Africa—do not share these radicalized views.²²

Because this article was published much later, he also discusses other “Radical Muslim” groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, and others that have emerged since 2011.

¹⁷ (16:36)

¹⁸ (20:01)

¹⁹ (20:53)

²⁰ (39:55)

²¹ <https://www.denisonforum.org/daily-article/is-islam-inherently-violent/>

²² <https://www.denisonforum.org/current-events/global/should-we-fear-radical-islam/>



Despite Denison's gross oversimplifications pertaining to the prevalence of "Radical Muslims" and the perceived absence of a "reformation" within the Islam, it is important to note that Horizon Forum researchers would not categorize the statements as Islamophobic. This assessment is based on the fact that Denison's comments don't involve criticizing all of Islam or Muslims broadly or in a totalizing, overdetermined fashion. Instead, he's talking about certain subgroups within the religious community that he finds problematic. This difference shows that Denison's ideas are more focused; he's aiming to look closely at specific aspects within Islamic faith and practice that he sees as concerning, rather than blaming the entire faith tradition. Furthermore, by searching the "tag" Islam on Denison Forum, most of the articles maintain a positive tone towards Islam and Muslim, focusing on finding common ground and possible opportunities to preach to Muslim friends and neighbours.²³

On LGBTQ+

Dr. Jim Denison clearly states the Denison Ministries moral stance on LGBTQ+ in a series of articles posted on Denison Forum in 2022.

In an article titled "The 'Don't Say Gay' bill and a rising threat to our children" Denison briefly discusses Florida's Parental Rights in Education.²⁴ While he doesn't delve deeply into the contents of the bill itself, Denison provides "practical responses for parents" to the "rising threat to our children." The first response is that "It is urgent that you and I understand, embrace, proclaim, and defend biblical sexual morality in all its holistic relevance and beauty" and the second is that "Parents are responsible for every dimension of their children's lives."

In the first response, Denison tells parents that:

God's word clearly teaches that:

- Humans are created in his image as male and female (Genesis 1:27).
- Sex is intended only for a husband and wife within the covenant of marriage (Genesis 1:28; 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2–5).
- And homosexual relationships are outside his design for us and thus forbidden (cf. Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10.)²⁵

²³ <https://www.denisonforum.org/tag/islam/>
<https://www.denisonforum.org/biblical-living/the-muslim-hajj-begins-today-why-christians-should-know-about-hajj/>
<https://www.denisonforum.org/biblical-living/4-things-every-christian-should-know-about-ramadan-the-muslim-month-of-fasting/>

<https://www.denisonforum.org/biblical-living/christianity/happy-halalidays-christians-muslims-and-an-immaculate-misconception/>

²⁴ <https://www.denisonforum.org/daily-article/the-dont-say-gay-bill-and-a-rising-threat-to-our-children/>

²⁵ Ibid



In the second response, Denison states that families should not “subcontract” their children’s education to schools, friends, or their own research online.²⁶ He also states that the parents and churches must protect the culture and spiritually of children more than any time in US history.

In another article Denison analyzes biblical passages that are often cited with regards to biblical authors’ stances on homosexuality, argues against alternative interpretations, and concludes that homosexuality is unbiblical and that no biblical passage endorses it.²⁷ A Q&A video embedded in the page features Dr. Jim Denison answering a Christian’s question of how to show love for his gay uncle without condoning his homosexuality. In the video he affirms that the Bible is clear that homosexuality is not what God intended, and expresses sympathy for homosexuals with the understanding that it may not be their choice to have same-sex attraction, but is an effect of an imperfect world in the aftermath of humankind’s fall from perfection and the destruction that brought into a world that used to have no sickness, death, etc. Interestingly, in the same discussion, Denison states that homosexual sin similar to the many sins that heterosexuals face.²⁸

At the end of the article, Denison gives four responses to “How Should Christians respond to homosexuals.” He states that:

1. God Loves each of us
2. A homosexual person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect
3. While we wish to offer the dignity and respect of Christian grace to all persons, we cannot truly love them while endorsing that which is unbiblical in their lives.
4. Those who consider themselves to be homosexual by sexual orientation should practice sexual celibacy.²⁹

What is clear from this article, is that while Denison argues that homosexuality is indefensible according to the Bible, Christians should approach this by maintaining “that difficult balance that loves the person while opposing that which is unbiblical in his or her life.”

In an article devoted to the topic of transgender people, published by Denison Forum, the author begins with a presentation of what being transgender is, the current secular approach, and then delves into the religious perspective as presented in the Bible. Beginning the latter conversation, the author states that while the Bible is most concerned with discipleship of the people regardless of sex and that men and women are equal before God, the Bible also affirms “sexual identities as grounded in our bodies.” The author adds that the Bible states that the physical differences between men and women defines the role

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ <https://www.denisonforum.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality/>

²⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bl9hhW3V9I&t=210s&ab_channel=DenisonForum

²⁹ <https://www.denisonforum.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-homosexuality/#intended-Bible-teaching-homosexuality:~:text=us%2C%20don%E2%80%99t%20we%3F-How%20should%20Christians%20respond%20to%20homosexuals%3F,-l%E2%80%99m%20writing%20today>



in determining sex. The article further states one should look at “reality as the source of truth, not the internal feelings of a person” when discussing one’s identity.

When quoting directly from the Bible, the author states that scripture goes as far as to condemn wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. The article contends that the term "gender dysphoria" is more accurately understood as "gender identity disorder," and that being transgender is itself a mental disorder, as was formerly commonly believed.

Nonetheless the article acknowledges the difficulties associated with gender of dysphoria, which "amounts to an intense psychological discomfort." It also expresses sympathy to the harassment, discrimination and abuse experienced by many trans people and urges readers to approach the subject and the people themselves with love. It states, for example:

- We must understand the plight of trans people with gender dysphoria at the outset, sympathizing with what amounts to an intense psychological discomfort.
- The path of a trans person is not easy. While the LGBTQ+ community may praise and support them, they nonetheless will face intense hardships. Many of them face what they perceive as workplace harassment and discrimination.
- Every trans person is unique, and we must love them.

The author also makes a point to say that Christians should respond to transgender people with love and to stress that nearly all commandments given to Christians are applied equally regardless of gender, i.e., that there are very few differences applied to Christian followers on the basis of gender.³⁰

The article later discusses the use of “preferred pronouns.” The authors make it clear that this issue must be navigated with care, and that there are two approaches to this. On one hand the article argues, Christians may choose to use the preferred pronouns of a trans person as that “might build enough of a bridge to open up a discussion about Jesus.” The author further adds that “it seems unlikely that refusing to use their pronouns will help communicate the message of truth.” However, the author argues that if you are comfortable with the person, you should also at some point addressing convictions of Christian belief on gender identity.

An exception to this, the article points out, is if one is dealing with their children, as “if you are a parent, you are in authority over your children” and “using their pronouns will almost certainly amount to providing a ‘stumbling block’.”³¹

On the other hand, the article states that Christian may choose to follow their own convictions, including refusing to use preferred pronouns by citing a Bible verse: “do not lie to one another, seeing that you...[are] being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”³²

³⁰ <https://www.denisonforum.org/resources/what-does-the-bible-say-about-transgender/>

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid



In a Denison Forum Podcast episode, author Katie McCoy is brought on the show to discuss the ideas in her book *"To Be a Woman"* and their relevance for Christians today.³³ While most of the episode discusses her views on the history and dangers of "the transgender ideology," on a practical note at the end she advises listeners by way of her own example not to use people's preferred pronouns but instead not using pronouns around them at all, opting for their name instead.³⁴

It should be noted here that GLAAD considers the phrase "transgender ideology" and the term "transgenderism" as derogatory terms used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people.³⁵ Both the article published by Denison Forum, and the podcast with Katie McCoy use these words/phrases.

In a 2021 podcast chat on Denison Forum between Dr. Jim Denison and Greg Baylor of the Christian Advocacy Group "Alliance Defending Freedom," entitled "Why the Equality Act is the greatest threat to religious liberty today" the two discuss the Equality Act.³⁶ The Equality Act of 2021 (H.R. 5 – Equality Act) which was passed in the House "prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federally funded programs, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system."³⁷

Denison and Baylor frame the bill as a grave threat to religious liberty because it adds sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes to Federal non-discrimination laws.³⁸ They warn viewers that while this makes sense to secular people because to them an organization or business denying services to e.g. an LGBTQ+ person is discrimination just as much as denying services to someone on the basis of being Hispanic, the Equality Act would force religious groups to do things against their conscience. For example, the Act they say would make it illegal for a Christian-based hospital to not provide gender-affirming care or for a Christian church to not officiate a gay wedding.³⁹ Greg Baylor also talks about the "Fairness for All Proposal", an alternative to the Equality Act that also adds the 2 protected classes to Federal nondiscrimination laws but carves out religious exemptions, a proposal he still doesn't like but finds much more tolerable than the Equality Act.⁴⁰

³³ <https://www.denisonforum.org/biblical-living/podcast/transgender-ideology-to-be-a-woman-katie-mccoy/>

³⁴ (50:21)

³⁵ <https://glaad.org/reference/trans-terms/>

³⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-94kemMpOk&t=8s&ab_channel=DenisonForum

³⁷ [https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5#:~:text=Passed%20House%20\(02%2F25%2F2021\),-Equality%20Act&text=This%20bill%20prohibits%20discrimination%20based,credit%2C%20and%20the%20jury%20system.](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5#:~:text=Passed%20House%20(02%2F25%2F2021),-Equality%20Act&text=This%20bill%20prohibits%20discrimination%20based,credit%2C%20and%20the%20jury%20system.)

³⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-94kemMpOk&t=8s&ab_channel=DenisonForum

Timestamp: (5:53)

³⁹ (11:30)

⁴⁰ (27:53)



It should be noted here that the ADF has been recognized as a hate group by the SPLC, PRA, GLAAD and included in the “Hate Groups and Extremist Organizations in America: An Encyclopedia” written by Barry Ballech for their Anti-LGBTQ+ positions.⁴¹

Many podcasts in the Christian Parenting podcast network as well as Denison Forum Podcast episodes speak to concerns that cultural and legal norms are in a place (and are advancing) such that restricts religious liberty and indoctrinates children without parental consent in favor of narratives that validate LGBT+ and transgender identities.⁴²

In another article published on Denison Forum, Jim Denison says “We agree that LGBTQ individuals have civil rights and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. But we have civil rights as well,” adding:

We do not want our children exposed to incessant attempts to normalize unbiblical immorality. And we do not want to be branded as bigoted and hateful for upholding moral positions that have been upheld for all of Judeo-Christian history and are still the majority position in much of the world.⁴³

This sentiment is echoed by Janet Denison in an article titled “Bringing the Gospel Back” on her blog “Foundations,” where she starts the article by saying, “if you have read this blog for a while, you have heard me voice my disappointment over the Hallmark Channel’s choice to bow to the demands of the LGBTQ community.”⁴⁴ This was in reference to Hallmark’s airing of its first holiday movie featuring a gay couple struggling to adopt a child.⁴⁵ For Janet, as a spokesperson for Denison Ministries, this move amounts to bringing “unbiblical thinking into our homes” and she encourages others to write to Hallmark and boycott them as she herself has done several times.⁴⁶

Assessment & Conclusion

The Albuquerque Community Foundation’s Working Definition of Hate/Harm reads as follows:

Any activity from the organization that attacks or maligns an individual or groups of individuals on the basis of their having certain characteristics, including, but not limited to, race, color, religion, sex, national origin (including membership in a Native American tribe), sexual orientation, and/or organizations with policies or practices that do not align with this value system.

⁴¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/alliance-defending-freedom>
<https://www.glaad.org/gap/organization/alliance-defending-freedom-adf>
<https://politicalresearch.org/2017/02/07/profile-on-the-right-alliance-defending-freedom>

⁴² “Talking To Your Children About Sexuality and Gender Identity with Dr. Sean McDowell” Let’s Parent on Purpose. March 7, 2021

⁴³ <https://www.denisonforum.org/daily-article/supreme-court-strikes-down-affirmative-action-supports-religious-freedom/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.foundationswithjanet.org/blog/bringing-the-gospel-back/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/hallmark-channel-christmas-house-gay-b1760246.html>

⁴⁶ Ibid



Based on research conducted by Horizon Forum researchers on Denison Ministries, it has been found that the Ministry has not directly espoused hateful beliefs, made hateful comments, or otherwise maligned any group based upon their real or perceived immutable characteristics.

The Ministry's position on LGBTQ matters remains grounded in conventional religious doctrine and scriptural interpretation that considers homosexuality is a sin. This stance aligns with the prevailing discourse embraced by conservative religious groups, wherein there has been a shift towards adopting a "hate the sin, not the sinner" narrative and away from attacking or condemning the LGBTQ community.

Of course, some observers would argue that the very reduction of sexual identity to a behavior, is in and of itself a form of discrimination, stigmatization, hate, and dehumanization.

This is a long-standing debate that Albuquerque Community Foundation may want to reflect upon in light of its values-alignment policy. In doing so, however, it must take into consideration what this would mean for its engagement with other faith-based grantees.

In accordance with Horizon Forum's overall risk-management approach, we recommend that anti-hate policies be narrowly and carefully implemented. In conclusion, in the judgement of Horizon Forum, Denison Ministries is not in violation Albuquerque Community Foundation's anti-hate policy, however, it seems that the Ministries focus mostly on proselytizing and providing religious service rather than community services. This may be in violation of Albuquerque Community Foundation's Grantmaking Policies and Due Diligence Procedures, which states:

Grants from the Competitive Grant Program are NOT made for religious purposes but ARE often made to faith-based organizations for the non-religious programs offered to the broader community.