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ARTICLE

California's Quiet Assault On Christian Education



AIRFRANCE

WHEN T



BY PNW STAFF FEBRUARY 09, 2026

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It does not begin with padlocks on church doors or police standing in chapel aisles. It begins with paperwork. With notices taped to bulletin boards. With a government rule that sounds reasonable—until you follow it to its logical end.

California has decided that Christian education itself must be optional.

Under a state regulation upheld by the Ninth Circuit, Christian schools are now required to allow students to opt out of religious services and activities—and to publicly advertise that option at the state's command. On paper, it is framed as a matter of "choice." In reality, it is something far more serious: the state inserting itself into the spiritual formation of children and quietly redefining what faith-based education is allowed to mean.



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Christian schools exist for one reason—to form children in a Christian worldview. Not to dabble in faith. Not to offer religion as an elective alongside art or band. But to shape hearts and minds around the truth of Christ. Scripture does not present faith as a detachable component of life. It presents it as the foundation of all things.

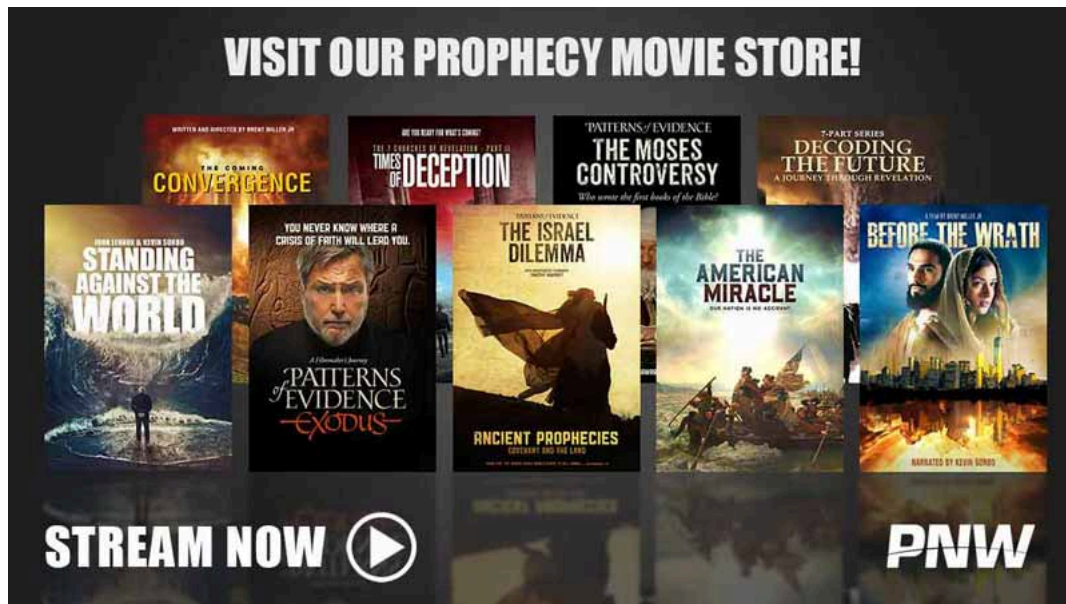
California's mandate treats worship as optional, prayer as negotiable, and spiritual formation as a preference rather than a purpose. That is not neutrality. That is interference.



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That is not a compromise—it is coercion.



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Even more troubling is the message this policy sends to children themselves. By forcing schools to post opt-out notices, the state subtly teaches young minds that faith is something one might need protection from. That worship is burdensome. That religious conviction is an imposition rather than a gift. Long before a child reads a philosophy book or watches a political debate, they are already being disciplined—by the assumptions embedded in rules like this one.

And then there is the role the government now assigns to itself. Inspectors must determine whether students feel “free” to opt out of religious activities. Think about that. State officials are being asked to evaluate worship, community prayer, and spiritual instruction—things the government has neither the authority nor the competence to judge. This is precisely the kind of entanglement the Constitution was designed to prevent.

History teaches us that when the state begins to supervise religious life, faith does not remain free for long.

Perhaps most alarming is the forced speech component. Christian schools are being compelled to promote a message that contradicts their beliefs—that religious participation is optional within a Christian institution. This echoes past attempts by California to force pro-life pregnancy centers to advertise abortion services. Different issue. Same tactic. Turn faith-based organizations into mouthpieces for ideas they reject.

Christians should recognize the pattern by now.

This is not about protecting children from coercion. No one is forced to attend a Christian school. Enrollment itself is a choice—one made by parents precisely because they want religious formation woven into daily life. California’s regulation pretends to expand freedom while actually eroding it, replacing parental authority with bureaucratic oversight.

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The Christian response to this moment must be clear-eyed and courageous. Scripture reminds us that faith has always faced pressure—not just from open hostility, but from quiet conformity. The danger is not only persecution, but permission granted on the state's terms.

This is why Supreme Court review matters—not for political reasons, but for spiritual ones. The question before the nation is simple: do religious institutions have the freedom to remain authentically religious, or only the freedom to exist so long as their convictions are treated as optional?

Christian education cannot survive if its spiritual core is negotiable. Parental rights cannot endure if they are conditional. And religious liberty is not liberty at all if it requires faith to apologize for itself.

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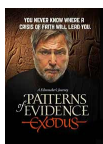
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