



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

January 2026

This briefing is strictly for your information. It is a summary of some current public policy issues, including pending legislation, that involve moral and biblical principles. While suggested action may be included from time to time, no specific position by EFCC is implied. Find contact and subscription information at the end of this document.

In the Courts

Judge Delivers Decisive Victory for Parents Statewide, State Pushes Back – On December 22, Judge Roger Benitez delivered his long-awaited [decision](#) in the *Mirabelli v. Olson* class action lawsuit. The case began with two Christian Escondido elementary school teachers suing their district for the right not to lie to parents about their children’s perceived gender identity. In what is a clear vindication of parents’ rights, Judge Benitez wrote of the state defendants, “They harm the child who needs parental guidance and possibly mental health intervention to determine if the incongruence is organic or whether it is the result of bullying, peer pressure or a fleeting impulse. They harm the parents by depriving them of the long-recognized Fourteenth Amendment right to care, guide, and make health care decisions for their children, and by substantially burdening many parents’ First Amendment right to train their children in their sincerely held religious beliefs. And finally, they harm teachers who are compelled to violate the sincerely held beliefs and the parent’s rights by forcing them to conceal information they feel is critical for the welfare of their students.” He notes that “the State Defendants justify their parental exclusion policies based on privacy rights established by the state.” However, regardless of how these privacy rights relate to students under the California Constitutional and Education Code, the Court states that under the Supremacy Clause “where state-created rights run headlong into federal constitutional rights, federal rights are supreme.”

The [class-wide permanent injunction](#) requires that the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Attorney General cease implementing or enforcing numerous provisions in the CA Education Code regarding transgender youth in schools, as well as the “newly produced PRISM cultural competency training” [see our [last issue](#) for more on PRISM] in any manner to “permit or require any employee in the California state-wide education system from misleading the parent or guardian of a minor child in the education system about their child’s gender presentation at school ... permit or require any employee in the California state-wide education system to use a name or pronoun to refer to that child that do not match the child’s legal name and natal pronouns, where a child’s parent or legal guardian has communicated their objection to such use ... require any employee in the California state-wide education system to use a name or pronoun to refer to a child that do not match the child’s legal name and natal pronouns while concealing that social gender transition from the child’s parents, over the employee’s conscientious or religious objection ... or in any way interfere with a teacher or other school administrator, counselor or staff from communicating to parents that his, her, or their child has manifested a form of gender incongruity such as changing preferred names or pronouns.”

Unfortunately, but as anticipated, California officials requested an emergency injunction to pause implementation of the decision. On January 7, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals granted the State’s request to keep Judge Benitez’s order from going into effect. Plaintiffs’ counsel, The Thomas More Society, is seeking an en banc review (the full Ninth Circuit Court) and will also file an emergency request to the U.S. Supreme Court. “We believe the panel’s decision misapplied both the facts and the law,” stated Paul Jonna, Special Counsel and lead attorney, “This is an issue of national importance and will likely need to be settled by the U.S. Supreme Court.”

Judge Benitez’s ruling is an incredible victory for parents, teachers and students. Let’s pray it prevails. Read more [here](#).

In California

Legislators Return to Sacramento – The California Assembly and State Senate reconvened on January 5 for the second year of the 2025-6 session as the state faces an \$18 billion budget deficit. Bills that did not pass their house of origin last year have a short window during which to move forward now. Policy committees have just until January 16 to pass any two-year bills to the fiscal committee (if needed) with all 2025 bills required to pass the floor of their first house on January 31 to stay alive. In the meantime, new 2026 bills are being introduced daily, with a deadline of February 20. Hearings will begin thereafter.

Biola Discontinues LGBTQ “Ministry” – In our last issue, we reported that for nearly a decade Biola University has been providing a school-sanctioned ministry for LGBTQ+ students led by pastoral staff called “The Dwelling.” Now, the university’s newspaper, The Chimes, [reports](#), “On Dec. 5th, President Barry Corey announced on the Think Biblically podcast that The Dwelling, a ministry for LGBTQ+ and same-sex attracted (SSA) students at Biola, would be permanently discontinued in the Spring 2026 semester. In his conversation with Scott Rae and Sean McDowell, Corey explained that the original intention of The Dwelling was to provide pastoral care, but that recent concerns from online content creators and journalists have led to the decision to close it. Corey said that he has tasked the President’s Council on Discipleship and Spiritual Formation to develop a new model to care for Biola’s same-sex attracted students.” Read more [here](#).

In the News

Study Finds Churchgoers Hungry for Worldview Training – While 68% of Christians in a recent survey affirmed marriage as between one man and one woman, only 46% defined “family” in corresponding terms (people united by God’s design: a husband and wife, their children, and relatives). Importantly, 79% agreed there are only two genders, 70% said it is important for society to facilitate families with a father, mother, and children living together. But questions about seven fundamentals of biblical worldview showed a decline in orthodox belief since 2023.

These are just a few of the findings of a “Social Issues and Worldview” report released in October. Researcher George Barna directed the study in partnership with Family Research Council and the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, surveying 1,003 adults who attend worship services at least monthly.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins states, “In the wake of *Obergefell*, many feared biblical truth would fade from public life, yet courageous Christians recognized it as a call to stand firm. Over the past decade, their moral clarity helped lay the groundwork for victories like *Dobbs*. This report reminds us that there is much work to do – the church must continue to teach, live, and defend a biblical worldview with conviction and hope.” Read more [here](#). Review the survey [here](#).

Netflix Exposes Kids to LGBTQ Themes – Parents and grandparents have learned to constantly be on their guard when choosing media content for the children in their care. Many rely on ratings provided on the programming (PG, PG-13, Y-7, etc.). Unfortunately, these can prove to be unreliable – at least where gender and sexuality themes are concerned, as a review of Netflix content over the past few years by Concerned Women for America (CWA) has revealed. For example:

- *Transformers Earthspark* (rated Y-7), featured this conversation: “Hey, it’s okay. I know I’m safe when I’m with my friends or other non-binary people.” “Non-binary?” “People who aren’t female or male. Oh, I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have assumed ...” “I always knew my pronouns felt right, but ... what a wonderful word for a wonderful experience.”
- *Jurassic World Camp Cretaceous* (TV-PG) featured a same-sex kiss between two adolescent girls.
- *CoComelon Lane* (TV-Y), for preschoolers, features a toddler boy dressed in a tutu and tiara dancing for his gay dads.

As a post by CWA warns, “This is not Netflix’s first brush with controversy, and it won’t be the last. In May of this year, Netflix released the final season of *Big Mouth*, an animated series that sexualizes pubescent children. In September 2020, Netflix lost subscribers over sexualized depictions of children in the movie, *Cuties*. In 2019, Christians boycotted Netflix over blasphemous depictions of Jesus in *The First Temptation of Christ* and *The Last Hangover*. And in 2017, Netflix faced a backlash due to the depiction of a teen girl’s suicide in *Thirteen Reasons Why*”

The bottom line? Be aware of more than just the rating – try to review the actual content. Sources include [Common Sense Media](#) (movies, shows, books, gaming, social media) and [Kids in Mind](#) (movies). Further, watching with your children gives you the opportunity, should controversial themes arise, to teach the biblical truth about the issue. (Read more [here](#).)

Young People Lead Return to Church – Barna Group first began tracking church attendance in 1991. Over time, the older generations have been the foundation of church attendance, but a new study released in September showed, “Millennials and Gen Z Christians are attending church more frequently than before and much more often than are older generations. The typical Gen Z churchgoer now attends 1.9 weekends per month, while Millennial churchgoers average 1.8 times, a steady upward shift since the lows seen during the pandemic.” (Millennials generally refer to those born from 1981-1996; Gen Z from 1997-2012.) Part of this exciting shift is a growth in interest among young people in Jesus Christ, especially among Gen Z men, which jumped 15 percentage points between 2019 and 2025. Overall, some 66 percent of all U.S. adults say they have made a [personal commitment to Jesus](#) that is still important in their life today (up 12 percent from 2021). Read more [here](#).

In Prayer

Author and Bible teacher Anne Graham Lotz has penned a wonderful “Prayer for the New Year.” An excerpt reads, “And now, God of grace, as we pray for the New Year, we ask bottom-line that You send down Your Holy Spirit in fullness. Ignite the fire of revival in our own hearts. Protect us. Defend us. Comfort us. Empower us. Equip us as we put on the full armor of God so that we can stand against the devil’s schemes...so that when the day of evil comes, we may be able to stand our ground...taking up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God...and pray. With this in mind, we remain self-controlled and alert while we keep on praying until we prevail in prayer. And we keep on watching expectantly. Is this the decade of Your return? We fervently hope so! *Even so, come Lord Jesus...*” Amen! Read Anne’s entire prayer [here](#).

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