

Christian ministry cancels California event fearing the state 'will forbid some of what it teaches'



Summit Ministries said it canceled a California conference scheduled for this summer over fears that the state “will forbid some of what it teaches.” (Image source: YouTube screenshot)

Summit Ministries — a Christian organization that focuses on helping teenagers and young adults apply faith to their lives — said it canceled a California conference scheduled for this summer over fears that the state “will forbid some of what it teaches,” the organization said in a news release.

What’s the problem?

The problem, the organization said, is state Bill 2943, which deems “advertising, offering to engage in, or engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with an individual” an “unlawful business practice.” The bill passed the state Assembly and is headed to the state Senate.

Some have argued the bill, if it becomes law, could open the door for banning some Christian books. National Review writer David French said as much, adding that it “would loom over booksellers and churches, establishing a chilling effect and providing a pretext for even more secular booksellers to refrain from stocking certain Christian titles — no matter how well-reasoned, well-researched, or well-argued.”

But the author of the bill, Assemblyman Evan Low, countered that it applies only to conversion therapy offered as a paid service, wouldn’t shut down speaking or

writing on the subject and wouldn't apply to book sales, the Huffington Post reported.

What are Summit Ministries' concerns?

Summit Ministries said its program would be impacted by the proposed law since its "lineup includes defenders of traditional man/woman marriage and people who advocate pursuing only those sexual activities approved in the Bible."

French in his National Review piece also noted that the bill defines "sexual orientation change efforts" as including "efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex." And that appears to be of primary concern to Summit Ministries.

Given that students commonly ask Summit staff how to address gender identity confusion and sexual attraction as it pertains to their faith, the group's president, Jeff Myers, said in the release that the proposed law "prohibiting such conversations ... would cripple Summit's ability to care for and equip its students."

Which spelled the end of the organization's June 10-23 and June 24-July 7 sessions at Biola University near Los Angeles, the release noted.

"What are we going to say to a young person experiencing sexual confusion?" Myers asked. "That the state of California forbids us from allowing a biblical ethic embraced by billions of people for thousands of years to inform our answer?"

Myers characterized the bill as "the most blatant chilling of free speech in America in my lifetime" and because of it "we simply cannot put our students, staff and faculty at risk."

Source: <https://www.theblaze.com/news/2018/05/01/christian-ministry-cancels-california-event-fearing-the-state-will-forbid-some-of-what-it-teaches>

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