



## Focus on Religious Freedom

***"You shall have no other gods before me"*** Exodus 20:3

### **Parents Sue California Over Mandated Chants to Aztec Gods**

A group of parents and the Californians for Equal Rights Foundation (CFER), a civil rights group, have sued the state of CA over a new public school curriculum, "Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum" that includes teaching the state's high school students how to pray and chant to Aztec gods and invoking an ancient Nigerian Yoruba religious prayer. The lawsuit, presented by the Thomas More Society, claims the State Board of Education violates the California Constitution's free-exercise and establishment clauses and state law banning government aid to religion.

"The curriculum's unequivocal promotion of 5 Aztec gods or deities through repetitive chanting and affirmation of their symbolic principles constitutes an unlawful government preference toward a particular religious practice," said the CFER president. <sup>(1)</sup>

"Can you imagine if elements of the Christian faith were proposed to be included in the public school curriculum? What if a class incorporated praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or even reciting the Lord's Prayer? How would that be received?" said attorney Paul Jonna. <sup>(2)</sup>

### **The Importance of Faith to America's Founders: Benjamin Franklin**

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was one of the most prominent Americans of the colonial period as a statesman, author, publisher, scientist, inventor and diplomat. He was an advocate of colonial unity, defender of American rights against the encroachments of the British Parliament and an extraordinarily charitable person. He wrote in his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, "Proportion your Charity to the Strength of your Estate, or God will proportion your Estate to the Weakness of your Charity." <sup>(3)</sup>

During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Franklin became frustrated at the lack of progress during the deliberations and delivered this famous plea:

**"...How has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding?"**

**"I have lived, Sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth - that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings that "except the Lord build they labor in vain." <sup>(4)</sup>**

(washingtontimes.com, 9/3/21(1); dailywire.com, 10/4/21(2); thecentersquare.com, 9/8/21; joshuatcharles.com, 12/10/18(3); americanrhetoric.com, 8/14/18(4); history.com, 11/9/09)



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