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The University of California and Calvary Christian Schools Controversy — Both Sides Have Much to Lose?

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Charles C. Haynes of the [First Amendment Center](#) offers an analysis of the controversy between the [University of California](#) and [Calvary Chapel Christian School of Murrieta](#), California [see background [here](#)] in “[War of Worldviews: Christian Schools vs. University of California](#).”

Haynes argues that both sides have plenty to lose in this controversy and lawsuit:

At lot is at stake for both sides. If the university's decision to reject these courses is upheld, ACSI fears that religious schools throughout the nation will be pressured to make sure that course offerings aren't "too religious" to qualify for consideration at public universities. But if ACSI prevails, UC worries about interference with the university's right to establish academic standards for admission.

Whatever the California judge decides, this new culture-war conflict is unlikely to end soon. Unless some mutual understanding is reached, the peaceful co-existence that has historically marked relations between religious schools and public universities may come to a bitter end. For a nation increasingly divided by religion and ideology, that would be bad news indeed.

While most in the secular media have come down solidly on the side of the university, Haynes thinks both sides have a point. He defends the Christian school's use of texts for history and literature courses and says that he is “troubled” that the university objected to these:

Especially troubling to me are the rejections of literature and history courses taught from a Christian perspective. For example, UC claims that “Christianity's Influence on American History” was disallowed because the focus was “too narrow/too specialized.” Yet courses from other schools that sound just as narrow or specialized (e.g., “Race, Class and Gender in Modern America”) have won approval.

As I see it, no university should have the right to complain about anything worldview issue related to Christian school textbooks. The university has a right and responsibility to require certain areas of knowledge, but has no right to investigate the worldview issues.

For example, the university can require all students to be able to explain the theory of evolution, but it has no right to demand that the books used in Christian schools not argue for an alternative worldview.

