

'The New School Prayer' Poem Controversy

Pastor Jack Hibbs revived attention to a provocative poem credited to an anonymous student and a history that reaches back more than six decades.

CHINO HILLS, CA, UNITED STATES, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Was the author really a courageous teenage student, as versions circulating for years have claimed? Or has this poem of uncertain origin traveled through generations, acquiring new words, new attributions and new relevance along the way?

Pastor Jack Hibbs, senior and founding pastor of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, included "[The New School Prayer](#)" (TNSP) in his book, [Living in the Daze of Deception](#). But to understand why Hibbs included the poem, some context is helpful.

Hibbs introduces the poem in his book chapter section titled "The New Tolerance Decides What Is Tolerated," where his discussion addresses what he sees as "an increasingly difficult environment for openly expressing traditional Christian beliefs."



Pastor Jack Hibbs, Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills, California

For example, "Mention Jesus," Hibbs writes, "and you are suddenly branded as intolerant because you say, 'Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.'" He then raises another example, writing that "bowing one's head and praying 'in Jesus' name' can be regarded as an offensive division that must stop."

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Pastor Jack Hibbs re. "The New School Prayer" poem.

Within this context, Hibbs introduces TNSP, explaining that "the poem had been credited to an anonymous student and that it bears repeating because young people are sometimes more willing to speak up when adults will not."

The TNSP poem begins with a striking variation on the familiar children's bedtime prayer: "Now I

sit me down in school, where praying is against the rule.” The poem and its reported history can be viewed at: <https://leadstories.com/hoax-alert/2022/06/fact-check-poem-about-school-prayer-is-not-new-and-the-author-is-unknown.html>

What follows is a commentary contrasting restrictions on government-sponsored religious activity in public schools with other ideas, behaviors and forms of expression encountered in contemporary society. Perhaps someone will someday find an earlier publication bearing the TNSP writer’s name and finally solve that mystery.



Church Service by Pastor Jack Hibbs, Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills, California

But Hibbs’ reason for spotlighting the poem did not depend on establishing its authorship. His point was its message — and someone’s willingness to express it when others might remain silent.

WCNi News Service offers no verdict, realizing some will read “The New School Prayer” and applaud it. Others will debate its history, accuracy or conclusions.

Or, as Pastor Hibbs credits the candor of youthful expression, one could interpret TNSP by accepting its Latin *Res ipsa loquitur* translation: “The thing speaks for itself.”

MEDIA REFERENCE SOURCES

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Jack Hibbs — Living in the Daze of Deception.

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