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“The name of the Lord (says the Scripture) is a strong tower; thither the righteous flee and are safe (Proverbs 18:10). Let us secure His favor and He will lead us through the journey of this life and at length receive us to a better.”
Samuel Adams

Tennessee Christian School Faces Tragedy

The AACCS mourns with the community of The Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee, in the tragic loss of three students and three adults on Monday when a woman entered the building by shooting through a glass door. The woman, who was shot at the scene by police, has been identified as a 28-year-old female who claimed to be a transgender male. She had been a student at the Christian K–6th grade school during her elementary years. Reports of the tragic event noted the [heroic response](#) of school personnel, including the head of school Katherine Koonce, who sadly became one of the victims. Many are also lauding the actions of the [Nashville police](#) for their quick and courageous response to stop the woman’s murderous rampage and protect students. Many in the Tennessee community [have responded](#) with tangible support for the families and the school, as have many churches and Christian schools across the country through prayers and letters of condolence and support. While all tragedies invoke great sadness and grief, this particular situation has deeply affected Christian ministries, given the nature of The Covenant School.

As Christians pray for the families involved, a poignant reminder of God’s love and grace comes from Pastor Chad Scruggs, the father of 9-year-old Hallie Scruggs who was one of the victims in Tennessee. As shared in a [podcast](#) episode of “The World and Everything in It,” Pastor Scruggs preached a sermon at the beginning of this month in which he spoke from John 11 on how Christians can face heartbreak and sadness. Pointing out Jesus’ weeping, even when He knew the end of the story for Lazarus, Pastor Scruggs stated: *“Do you see that a strong confidence in the end of the story does not undo or justify the absence of grief in the middle. A mature faith adds its tears to the sadness in our world. Jesus says, ‘Blessed are those who mourn,’ all the while, not losing confidence in how that sadness will eventually be overcome in him. If you’re doubting the love of Jesus—do you try to work it out through your circumstances? No, you never read your circumstances, and then read the love of Jesus. You read the love of Jesus towards your circumstances. If you are doubting his love for you, if you are struggling with His authority in the midst of sadness and confusion, let the cross speak to you again. Look there, so that you might say confidently, ‘See how He loves me. This is the one man given for me.’ ”*

Several resources are available to aid schools in implementing the best policies and programs to ensure school safety: A [Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety](#), released during the Trump administration, offers a compilation of best practices regarding training school personnel, strengthening building security, decreasing bullying, and developing a stronger awareness of mental health issues. The Heritage Foundation also offers the [School Safety Initiative](#), which provides policy solutions to limit these tragedies, including increasing school security, protecting Second Amendment rights, involving the community in young people’s lives, addressing mental health issues, and building strong families and civil institutions.

New York Court Issues Ruling Regarding Private School Academics

A New York judge has [issued a ruling](#) that private schools must abide by a baseline of “secular academic achievement” for their students; however, that same ruling states that a private school cannot be shut down if the state determines that it is not offering an adequate education. The case involved regulations which were issued by the New York State Department of Education that require non-public schools to provide an education that is “substantially equivalent” to that offered in public schools. The regulations also give the NY Board of Regents the power to conduct a review of a private school to determine if the school meets the criteria in the areas of English, math, science, and physical education. While the regulations were aimed primarily at Yeshiva schools, which had been criticized by some of their alumni for not adequately preparing their students academically, the regulations cover all non-public schools. A religious group filed suit against the regulations, charging that they unfairly targeted the Orthodox Jewish schools. However, Judge Christina Ryba ruled that the “substantially equivalent” rule will remain in place, while also ruling that education officials did not have the authority to close a private school that does not meet state standards. Rather, the judge’s decision [places the responsibility on parents](#) to supplement a child’s education if that child is enrolled in a school that is found to be lacking in an academic review.

Supreme Court Supports Parental Involvement Laws on Abortion

The Supreme Court [issued a decision](#) (8-1) that upholds parental rights by reversing a lower court’s ruling against parental involvement in a teen’s decision to have an abortion. The case involved a 17-year-old girl from Missouri who sought an abortion in December 2018. In Missouri, abortion laws state that a minor under the age of 18 may not seek an abortion unless she has parental consent. A minor can [bypass parental consent](#) in instances where there is abuse at the home of the minor, by receiving a court order granting the right of self-consent or judicial consent. The 17-year-old girl attempted to apply for a judicial bypass consent in order to avoid telling her parents; however, the circuit clerk Michelle Chapman called her parents to inform them, according to the law. The minor proceeded to go to another state for the court order, and then [sued Michelle Chapman](#) on the grounds that she “violated her Fourteenth Amendment rights” by refusing to give the judicial bypass application. A federal appeals court agreed with the minor, causing Chapman to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. However, before the case could reach a trial, both parties asked the High Court to dismiss the case. On March 20, the Supreme Court reversed the lower federal court’s ruling against parental involvement, with [Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson](#) being the only dissenter. The Supreme Court instructed the federal appeals court to vacate the judgment and declare it moot so that the case cannot be used as precedent in the future.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America’s Children](#)

[ADF Video: Respect for Marriage Act: What Church and Ministry Leaders Should Know](#)

[School Choice Primarily Benefits Students Who Weren’t Already in Private Schools](#)

[40 States Legislatures Have Passed or Are Considering Legislation to Restrict Transgender Child Abuse](#)

[5 Takeaways from House Hearing on COVID-19 School Lockdowns](#)