

## WHEN AND WHY DID MAYOR LARRY HANSEN SWITCH TO ALLOW JESUS PRAYERS?

TIMELINE SUGGESTS MAYOR HANSEN CHANGED HIS VOTE ON SEP 28<sup>TH</sup> 2009 :

**BECAUSE OF BILLBOARDS? FOLLOW TIMELINE OF HANSEN QUOTES:**

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MAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MAYOR LARRY HANSEN SUGGESTS MOVING TO A MOMENT OF SILENCE

### **Group may sue city of Lodi over prayers at council meetings**

By Maggie Creamer

News-Sentinel Staff Writer

Friday, May 29, 2009 6:34 AM PDT

A national organization is threatening to sue the city of Lodi because of Christian prayers said before Lodi City Council meetings.

On May 21, the city received a letter from Madison, Wis.-based nonprofit Freedom From Religion Foundation asking the city to stop allowing pastors to say prayers in the name of Jesus Christ...

...The letter states that Mayor Larry Hansen said he knew the city was in violation of court case law by having an invocation. He made the comments during a 2006 debate on whether "In God We Trust" should be in the council chambers.

Hansen said he has expected that the city would eventually have to deal with the Christian-centered invocations.

He said he does not know what the city will do until the council talks to City Attorney Steve Schwabauer about the threatened lawsuit. But he believes the city might have to change its policy in order to avoid legal action.

He suggested possibly a moment of silence or a stricter set of rules on what can be said during the invocation time.

"It would be very easy to say, 'You know, we are going to fight this all the way,' but they are citing the U.S. Supreme Court, so I don't think we would have any opportunity to overcome that," Hansen said.

[Source: [http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/05/29/news/2\\_prayer\\_090529.txt](http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/05/29/news/2_prayer_090529.txt)]

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JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> MAYOR LARRY HANSEN WANTS TO AVOID RISK OF LAWSUIT BY ATHEISTS:

### **Lodi City Council invocations catch attention of more national groups**

By Maggie Creamer

News-Sentinel Staff Writer

Thursday, June 25, 2009 2:10 AM PDT

“...With a tight city budget, Mayor Larry Hansen has previously commented that he would be hesitant to risk being sued...”

[Source: [http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/06/25/news/2\\_invocations\\_090625.txt](http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/06/25/news/2_invocations_090625.txt)]

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AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup> CHAPLAIN KLINGENSCHMITT RALLIES 400 CHRISTIANS, DELIVERS 5,000 PETITIONS, BUT MAYOR HANSEN UNMOVED

### **Lodi Council Faces Prayer Debate: Some Upset Over References To Christ**

UPDATED: 8:02 pm PDT August 5, 2009

...Altogether, hundreds of people showed up to express their opinions. "Jesus is not an illegal word and we are defending pastors' right to compose a prayer of their own making to their own god," Chaplain Gordon Klingenschmitt said earlier in the day...

...The threat [to sue and censor Jesus] came from the Freedom From Religion Foundation in Wisconsin.

Officials said the council may settle on a moment of silence in place of a prayer.

"There's kind of an implied civil rights violation," Lodi Mayor Larry Hansen said.

[Source: <http://www.kcra.com/news/20292247/detail.html>]

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*And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go. (Exodus 8:32)*

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AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup>, MAYOR HANSEN SENDS EMAIL INDICATING HE WANTS NON-SECTARIAN PRAYERS, IGNORING 500 CITIZENS WHO LOVE JESUS

From: Larry Hansen

Date: Tue, 18 Aug 2009 14:59:50

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns about the cities policy on invocations in city council meetings. This issue is clearly very important to you and many others. To this date I have received approximately 500 e-mails from citizens all over this country. I do not have the time to respond to every e-mail specifically addressing the concerns that a citizen cited. Many of those responding offer interpretations on the constitution, case law and the intent of our forefathers. The city of Lodi is not alone in having to decide weather to continue with invocations, go to a moment of silence or abandon the practice all together. It has become clear to me that this is a battle that is being fought across the country. The main issue is weather to allow Christian ministers to invoke the name of Jesus Christ in council agendized invocations and weather that practice violates the constitutional rights of members of other faiths or non believers. This is an issue that has not been decided definitively by the Untied States Supreme Court or even the California Supreme Court. However one California appellate case (Rubin vs. Burbank) held that prayer may not reference a

specific Deity, Jesus Christ in that case. People often cite Marsh vs. Chambers as a U.S. Supreme court case upholding specifically Christian prayer. However the legislative prayer in Marsh did not reference Jesus Christ. Many of you have expressed concerns about violations of your freedom of speech and freedom of religion protections. Our city council meetings have an agenda item called comments by the public on Non-Agenda Items. During that time citizens are free to pray or talk about any issue they desire with virtually no restrictions. **But an invocation is government speech and should probably be non sectarian.** Different appellate districts have issued decisions that indicate the issue could go either way. I have called for a special meeting on Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup> to allow for public debate and give the council an opportunity to make a decision on what an appropriate policy might be. Again thank you for taking the time to express your concerns. Larry Hansen Mayor City of Lodi.

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*“And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.” (Exodus 9:12)*

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MID-SEPTEMBER: MAYOR HANSEN MEETS WITH SEVERAL LODI AREA PASTORS WHO PETITION HIM TO ALLOW JESUS PRAYERS, BUT HE IS NOT YET MOVED.

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*But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. (Exodus 10:27)*

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SEPT 22<sup>ND</sup> CHAPLAIN KLINGENSCHMITT FAXES CITY COUNCIL LETTER ANNOUNCING PLAN TO ADVERTISE THEIR VOTE ON BILLBOARDS, IF THEY VOTE AGAINST JESUS PRAYERS. **Mayor Hansen either doesn't read letter or indicate awareness of billboard plan until 28 Sep.**

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SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup> MONDAY **NOON**: MAYOR HANSEN EMAILS HE WANTS NON-SECTARIAN PRAYERS (EVEN AFTER RECEIVING 800 EMAILS and 6,000 PETITIONS FOR JESUS PRAYERS)

From: Larry Hansen  
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2009 12:54 PM

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns about the city's policy on invocations in city council meetings. This issue is clearly very important to you and many others. To this date I have received approximately **800 e-mails** from citizens all over this country. I do not have the time to respond to every e-mail specifically addressing the concerns that a citizen cited. Many of those responding offer interpretations on the constitution, case law and the intent of our forefathers. The city of Lodi is not alone in having to decide whether to continue with invocations, go to a moment of silence or abandon the practice all together. It has become clear to me that this is a battle that is being fought across the country. The main issue is whether to allow Christian ministers to invoke the name of Jesus Christ in council agenda items and whether that practice violates the constitutional rights of members of other faiths or non believers. This is an issue that has not been

decided definitively by the United States Supreme Court or even the California Supreme Court. However one California appellate case (Rubin vs. Burbank) held that prayer may not reference a specific Deity, Jesus Christ in that case. People often cite Marsh vs. Chambers as a U.S. Supreme court case upholding specifically Christian prayer. However the legislative prayer in Marsh did not reference Jesus Christ. Many of you have expressed concerns about violations of your freedom of speech and freedom of religion protections. Our city council meetings have an agendaized line item called comments by the public on Non- Agenda Items. During that time citizens are free to pray or talk about any issue they desire with virtually no restrictions. **But an invocation is government speech and should probably be non sectarian.** Different appellate districts have issued decisions that indicate the issue could go either way. I have called for a special meeting on Wednesday September 30th to allow for public debate and give the council an opportunity to make a decision on what an appropriate policy might be. Again thank you for taking the time to express your concerns. Larry Hansen Mayor City of Lodi.

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*And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land. (Exodus 11:10)*

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SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> MONDAY **AFTERNOON**: LODI NEWS TELLS HANSEN ABOUT BILLBOARDS

**Group threatens to display on billboards how council members vote on invocations**

By Maggie Creamer (*Writes the story Monday afternoon, but is not posted until 6am Tues?*)

News-Sentinel Staff Writer

Tuesday, September 29, 2009 6:20 AM PDT

...The money to purchase the billboards will come from the \$10,000 in donations Klingenschmitt has pledged to provide the city help in court if Lodi is sued because it continues to allow Jesus' name to be said during prayers, he said.

Mayor Larry Hansen described the idea of using billboards as a "veiled threat."

"First of all, **this doesn't influence me to any degree,**" Hansen said. "I liken this to e-mails I receive that say if you don't vote against Wal-Mart, I will not vote for you again. **I will never, ever, ever vote based upon whether people are going to vote me in or out of office.**"

... Klingenschmitt said he did not mean to offend the council members, but instead wanted to inform them about his plans.

"If they are embarrassed about the way they intend to vote, then I can see how they would fear the publicity. If they vote against Jesus, against free speech, against the Constitution and against 85 percent of the public, I could see where they would want that to be kept secret," he said....

[Source: [http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/09/29/news/2\\_billboard\\_090929.txt](http://www.lodinews.com/articles/2009/09/29/news/2_billboard_090929.txt)]

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BUT MAYOR HANSEN, UP FOR RE-ELECTION NEXT YEAR, SUDDENLY SEES THE LIGHT...

SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup> **MIDNIGHT**: MAYOR HANSEN SWITCHES AND LOVES JESUS

**Prayer debate to draw a crowd in Lodi**

By Daniel Thigpen (*Writes the story evening, but not posted until midnight?*)

Record Staff Writer

September 28, 2009 12:00 AM

...Rather, debate is likely to center largely on whether to enforce the city's current policy or to allow uncensored prayers for all faiths, which Christian groups have argued is perfectly legal if officials make an effort to include all faiths.

Mayor Larry Hansen is leaning toward the latter.

"The more I researched this, the more I believe that God is part of the foundation of this country. It's on our currency, it's in our pledge, it's our motto," he said. "I want a policy that is all-encompassing. If a member of the Jewish faith or the Muslim faith or the Buddhist faith wants to come, **we need to be receptive to how they pray and not censor it.** I think if we do that, we're going to be on fairly solid ground legally"...

[Source:[http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090928/A\\_NEWS/909280316#STS=g09313uj.dqb](http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090928/A_NEWS/909280316#STS=g09313uj.dqb)]

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*And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt...And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. (Exodus 12:30, 51)*

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SEPT 30<sup>TH</sup>, WEDNESDAY NIGHT: MAYOR HANSEN VOTES FOR JESUS PRAYERS 5-0.

**Lodi council votes to stick with prayers**

By Loretta Kalb

The Sacramento Bee

Published: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2009

The city of Lodi, one of a handful of small California cities challenged for their invocations during public meetings, on Wednesday night rebuffed efforts to eliminate the prayers.

The council voted unanimously to develop a policy allowing uncensored invocations that avoid favoring any one religion.

The motion by Mayor Larry Hansen declared that the council under the policy would encourage participation from diverse religious representatives and from non-religious groups.

In a nod to the threat of lawsuits, the council members agreed to hold the invocation before the meeting is called to order.

The decision puts Lodi on the same track as the cities of Tracy, Turlock and Tehachapi, all of which faced challenges from the national Freedom From Religion Foundation over what the group called a violation of the U.S. Constitution.

As of Wednesday night, all four cities had decided to allow invocations and not put limits on what the clergy say...

The mayor said he had received nearly 1,500 e-mails on the subject in recent months...

[Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/topstories/story/2222342.html>]

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## VICTORY FOR THE RIGHT TO PRAY "IN JESUS' NAME!"

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WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON: ATHEISTS REALIZE THEY'RE LOSING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS BATTLE, SO THEY'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO GO TO COURT:

### Public-prayer battle lines drawn in Lodi

By Loretta Kalb

Last Modified: Wednesday, Sep. 30, 2009 - 9:55 am

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is making its case across the state and has sent warning letters to the cities of Tracy, Tehachapi, Turlock and Lodi about what it calls unconstitutional religious practices.

[CHAPS NOTE: ALL FOUR CITIES VOTED TO ALLOW JESUS PRAYERS]

"We have a complaint going out soon to Bakersfield," said foundation Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. "No 'D,'" she said of her name spelling. "There's no 'Lord' in my name."

More than 20 "brush fires" on the issue have arisen nationally, she said. But now California is the focus.

"There is a very common disrespect for court precedent over government prayer in California," Gaylor said. "Our sense is that it's going to have to end up in court."

[Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/topstories/story/2218971.html>]

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Chaplain Klingenschmitt's timeline analysis:

The timeline of Hansen quotes shows, I believe, after MONTHS of standing against Jesus prayers,

After ignoring 400 Christians who rallied at the 5 August City Council Meeting,

After ignoring 800 pro-Jesus emails in his inbox,

After ignoring 6,000 pro-Jesus paper petitions,

After ignoring the pleas of his own community pastors,

Mayor Hansen finally woke up and changed his vote IN ONE DAY ON SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup> coincidentally the same day the Lodi Newspaper alerted him that his name would be put on billboards, if he voted against Jesus prayers.

In my opinion, the timeline shows Mayor Hansen had a 'come to Jesus moment' on Mon., Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>.

--At noon that day his email said he still believed the prayers should "probably be non-sectarian."

--That same afternoon the Lodi Paper told the Mayor about our plan to publish his vote on billboards.

--That evening Mayor Hansen told the Sacramento paper that suddenly, for the first time ever, he was leaning toward allowing pastors to pray "in Jesus name" among other faiths.

Thank God for Mayor Hansen's change of heart, whatever the reason.

Jesus gets all credit. The LORD has delivered us from the hand of Pharaoh.

(But the timing on 28 September when he learned of the billboards is remarkable.)

"When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat." --Ronald Reagan.

For interviews, call Chaps at 719-360-5132 cell.

Or email: [chaplaingate@yahoo.com](mailto:chaplaingate@yahoo.com)