

Court Halts Abortion-Pill Mandate Against Bible Publisher

In a victory for faith-based companies, a federal court on Friday stopped enforcement of the Obama administration's **abortion-pill mandate** against Tyndale House Publishers, which filed a health care lawsuit against the government Oct. 2.

In its opinion accompanying a preliminary injunction order in *Tyndale House Publishers v. Sebelius*, the court wrote that "the beliefs of **Tyndale** and its owners are indistinguishable. ... Christian principles, prayer and activities are pervasive at Tyndale, and the company's ownership structure is designed to ensure that it never strays from its faith-oriented mission.

"The court has no reason to doubt, moreover, that Tyndale's religious objection to providing insurance coverage for certain contraceptives reflects the beliefs of Tyndale's owners," the court continued. "Nor is there any dispute that Tyndale's primary owner, [Tyndale House] Foundation, can 'exercise religion' in its own right, given that it is a nonprofit religious organization; indeed, the case law is replete with examples of such organizations asserting cognizable free exercise and RFRA [Religious Freedom Restoration Act] challenges."

Tyndale House, based in Carol Stream, Ill., is the world's largest privately held Christian publisher of books, Bibles and digital media, directing 96.5 percent of its profits to religious nonprofit causes worldwide. The publisher specifically objects to covering abortion pills. The court's order is the third nationwide against the health care mandate, according to Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

"Bible publishers should be free to do business according to

the book that they publish,” said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Matt Bowman, who argued before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on Nov. 9. “The court has done the right thing in halting the mandate while our lawsuit moves forward. For the government to say that a Bible publisher is not religious is startling. It demonstrates how clearly the Obama administration is willing to disregard the Constitution’s protection of religious freedom to achieve certain political purposes.”

The administration argued that Tyndale House “isn’t religious enough” for an exemption from the mandate, a component of Obamacare that forces employers, regardless of their religious or moral convictions, to provide insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization and contraception under threat of heavy penalties.

The publisher is subject to the mandate because **Obama administration** rules say for-profit corporations are categorically non-religious, even though Tyndale House is strictly a publisher of Bibles and other Christian materials and is primarily owned by the nonprofit Tyndale House Foundation. The foundation provides grants to help meet the physical and spiritual needs of people around the world.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld “**Obamacare**” as constitutional. Formally known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Obamacare includes a “preventive services” mandate issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which forces businesses to provide the morning-after and “week-after” pills—without co-pay—in their health insurance plans.

In September, Hobby Lobby and its sister company, Mardel Christian & Education, filed a similar suit, claiming the government mandate is forcing the company’s owners “to violate their deeply held religious beliefs under threat of heavy fines, penalties and lawsuits.” Failure to provide the drugs

in the company's health insurance plan could lead to fines of up to \$1.3 million a day. That case is still pending.