

# REDEEMING THE TIME

*"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).*

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 3



SUMMER 2018

## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

*A Win for Religious Liberty ... But the War Is Far From Over*

*An Analysis of the Recent Supreme Court Ruling in  
Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Christians in the United States recently rejoiced when the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Colorado Court of Appeals against Christian baker Jack Phillips. Phillips had refused to bake a custom wedding cake celebrating a "gay marriage," stating that it violated his Christian convictions. Although Phillips had no problem selling any of the regular items in his shop to these men, he refused to use his God-given creative talents to design a custom cake specifically for a purpose which is clearly condemned by God's Word. All eyes were on the Court, since a mounting number of similar cases have arisen, resulting in severe persecution of Christians.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the opinion of the Court, with concurring and dissenting opinions offered by several of the justices. Although the 7-2 decision was a win for



the First Amendment of our Constitution, a close look shows some serious weaknesses and storm clouds ahead — with the real possibility of a denial of religious liberty and free speech by the Court in the not-too-distant future.


### **The Issue Before the Supreme Court**

Justice Kennedy described the issue before the Court:

*Continued on page 6*

**"WHETHER THEREFORE YE EAT, OR DRINK, OR WHATSOEVER YE DO,  
DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD" (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31).**

# REFORMATION



## *Beginnings*

### PART V

## The Elector and the Monk

BY MARK W. EVANS

**W**hen the pope's bull of excommunication — filled with anathemas — reached Martin Luther, most of Germany had already learned its contents. It was as if Luther was the last one to receive it. He responded by a solemn renewing of his appeal to a council and his rejection of the jurisdiction of the pope.

He next conducted a public ceremony, burning several volumes of the papacy's Canon Law and other books symbolic of Rome's deceptions. He then lifted up the papal bull and declared, "Since thou hast vexed the Holy One of the Lord, may everlasting fire vex and consume thee."<sup>1</sup> With these words, he threw the pope's bull of excommunication into the flames. The tie with Rome was broken. The Augustinian monk rejected the apostate church to enter Christ's true universal church.

The papacy was stunned. No one had ever dared to commit such an act of defiance. Church historian J.A. Wylie wrote: "For centuries no opponent had been able to stand before her. In no instance had her anathemas failed to execute the vengeance they were meant to inflict. Kings and nations, principalities and powers, when struck by excommunication, straightway collapsed and perished as if a vial of fire had been emptied upon them. And who was this Wittenberg [*sic*] heretic, that he should defy a power before which the whole world crouched in terror? Rome had only to speak, to stretch out her arm, to let fall her bolt, and this adversary would be swept from her path; nor name nor memorial would remain to him on earth. Rome would make Wittenberg [*sic*] and its movement a reproach, a hissing, and a desolation. She did speak, she did stretch out her

arm, she did launch her bolt. And what was the result? To Rome a terrible and appalling one. The monk, rising up in his strength, grasped the bolt hurled against him from the Seven Hills, and flung it back at her from whom it came."<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that Luther was willing to retract two positions. The first concerned Indulgences. He stated: "In submission to the holy and learned bull, I retract all that I have ever taught concerning indulgences. If my books have been justly burned, it is certainly because I made concessions to the pope on the doctrine of indulgences; for this reason I condemn them to the flames."<sup>3</sup>

The other position concerned the bull's linking him with the martyr Jon Hus: "I now say that not a few articles, but all the articles of Jon Hus are wholly Christian. By condemning Jon Hus, the pope has condemned the gospel. I have done five times more than he, and yet I much fear I have not done enough. Hus only said that a wicked pope is not a member of Christendom; but if Peter himself were

**"If the Gospel ... was of a nature to be propagated or maintained by the powers of this world, God would not have intrusted [*sic*] it to fishermen. It belongs not to the princes and pontiffs of this age to defend the Word of God. They have enough to do to shelter themselves from the judgments of the Lord and of his Anointed. If I speak, it is in order that they may attain a knowledge of the Divine Word, and that by it they may be saved."**

Martin Luther

now sitting at Rome, I should deny that he was pope by divine appointment.”<sup>4</sup>

The Lord ordained that the fledgling Reformation would contend with the great ones of the earth, both civil and ecclesiastical. Charles V, loyal son of the “Church,” was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire on October 23, 1520. Martin Luther’s enemies rejoiced to think that the reformer and his followers would soon be crushed. The astute Romanists perceived that there were two obstacles to overcome — Elector Frederick of Saxony and the new emperor.

Frederick seemed to be the chief obstacle. The pope’s two representatives, Marino Caraccioli and Jerome Aleander, arranged an audience. Caraccioli attempted to flatter the ruler, but Aleander pushed him aside and bluntly delivered the pontiff’s orders: “Look at the imminent dangers into which this man is plunging the Christian republic. If we do not make haste to apply some remedy, the empire is ruined. Why were the Greeks destroyed, but because they abandoned the pope? You cannot remain united to Luther without separating from Jesus Christ. I require two things of you, in the name of his holiness: first, that you will burn Luther’s writings; secondly, that you will inflict on him the punishment he deserves, or at least that you will deliver him up to the pope. The emperor and all the princes of the empire have declared their willingness to accede to our request; you alone hesitate still.”<sup>5</sup> The elector must decide between the will of the new emperor, the princes, and the pope versus the life of a “feeble monk.”<sup>6</sup> There were some who urged the Elector to protect Luther, including his nephew and trusted councilors. In the storm, Luther remained calm. He wrote to Spalatin, the elector’s secretary: “If the Gospel ... was of a nature to be propagated or main-



**Portraits of Elector Frederick and Martin Luther by German Renaissance painter Lucas Cranach.**

tained by the powers of this world, God would not have intrusted [*sic*] it to fishermen. It belongs not to the princes and pontiffs of this age to defend the Word of God. They have

**“By condemning Jon Hus, the pope has condemned the gospel. I have done five times more than he, and yet I much fear I have not done enough. Hus only said that a wicked pope is not a member of Christendom; but if Peter himself were now sitting at Rome, I should deny that he was pope by divine appointment.”**

Martin Luther

enough to do to shelter themselves from the judgments of the Lord and of his Anointed. If I speak, it is in order that they may attain a knowledge of the Divine Word, and that by it they may be saved.”<sup>7</sup>

The elector reached a decision that paved the way for Luther’s stand at the Diet of Worms. Incensed by the pope’s intrusion into his realm, the potential destruction of his university, and the likely upheaval among his subjects, the Elector of Saxony determined to protect the monk.

Charles V called for his first political Diet to gather in the city of Worms. Merle d’Aubigne wrote: “A final struggle remained to be undergone. The Word was destined to triumph over the emperor of the West, over the kings and princes of the earth; and then, victorious over all powers of the world, to uprise in the Church, and reign as the very Word of God.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>J.A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, vol. I (New York: Cassell and Company, Ltd., n.d.), p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>3</sup>J.H. Merle D’Aubigne, *The Life and Times of Martin Luther* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), pp. 356-357.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>5</sup>J.H. Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. II (New York: American Tract Society, 1847), p. 161.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.



*The Rev. Mark Evans is the Moderator of Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, and is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC.*

## REDEEMING THE TIME

**Editor: Brad K. Gsell**

**Associate Editor: Mark W. Evans**

*Redeeming the Time* is a quarterly publication with the purpose of encouraging God’s people and applying God’s Word to the issues of our day.

Individual copies are distributed free of charge, but the generous donations of God’s people are necessary for this ministry to continue. Checks may be made payable to “**Redeeming the Time**,” and mailed to: **P.O. Box 26281, Charlotte, NC 28221-6281**. All donations are tax deductible.

**e-mail: [redemptingthetime@bellsouth.net](mailto:redemptingthetime@bellsouth.net)**

Sponsored by Publication Fund • Bible Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, NC





# Great Grades — But Too Much Bible!

Researchers at North Carolina State University have just finished a new study comparing test scores between public school students and those receiving “Opportunity Scholarships” from the State to attend private schools of their choice. The *Charlotte Observer*, June 4, 2018, reports that the private school students “showed a ‘positive, large and statistically significant’ edge on the exams, based on about 500 public and private school students who voluntarily took the same nationally-normed exam.”

But, let us not rejoice too quickly on the success of these young scholars. The *Observer* reports that “a recent study by the League of Women Voters of Lower Cape Fear found the majority of voucher schools use a Bible-based curriculum that their experts say could leave students ill prepared for college.

“The league found that just over three-quarters advertised that their curriculum reflects a Christian world-

view that includes literal reading of the Bible, while other religious and independent schools (including Catholic schools) use a curriculum that incorporates North Carolina’s standard course of study.

“Academic experts then reviewed biology, history, government and lit-

**Christian school children in North Carolina were found to do better than public school students by a “positive, large and statistically significant” margin on “the same nationally-normed exams.” Nonetheless, “experts” assert that because these Christian schools use a “Bible-based curriculum,” it could “leave students ill prepared for college.”**

erature textbooks from the Abeka Christian curriculum, the one most commonly advertised by voucher schools. The Abeka program rejects evolution in favor of a view of science ‘firmly anchored to Scriptural truth,’ promotes free-enterprise economics and offers history texts that instill ‘an intelligent pride for their own country and a desire to help it back to its traditional values,’ according to its website.

“The reviewers concluded that Abeka texts neglect such topics as human genome research, misrepresent the fossil record and intersperse religious teachings with science and history. For instance, the report says a unit on Asia teaches that China was populated as a result of the Tower of Babel dispersion.”

The Abeka curriculum has a reputation for educational excellence and continues to be widely used. It was begun by Dr. Arlin and Rebekah Horton, founders of Pensacola Christian College. How dare parents go against these self-appointed “educational experts,” and have their children taught a Christian worldview, with evolution denied, free enterprise championed, patriotism promoted, and a call to return to our Founding principles!

These students exposed to a Bible-based curriculum routinely excel in their math, science, English, geography, history and other scores — prime prerequisites for excelling in advanced educational settings. But, we are asked to put common sense aside.

Apparently that dreaded Biblical influence, according to these “experts,” cancels out the academic excellence and actually makes these young people “ill-prepared for college.” Could it be that they fear it will make them “ill prepared” to be swayed by the radical leftist propaganda promoted by far too many professors? Might they be “ill prepared” to accept everything they are told by the perveyors of political correctness? Perhaps they will be “ill prepared” to buckle



Perhaps they WILL be prepared to think critically for themselves. Perchance they WILL seek to evaluate all views on a subject, rather than seeking to shut down debate in favor of “safe spaces.” Maybe they will promote freedom, respect, love of God, and love of country, and influence other students to their Christian world view. Perhaps they WILL have principled ethics, based on the Bible, which will serve them well in their higher education, as well as all of their life endeavors. Could it be that they will be pillars of courage to stem the tide of the radical educational system that is destroying America? Could it be?

under intimidation practices which seek to push students into mind-numbing “group think.”

Perhaps they WILL be prepared to think critically for themselves. Perchance they WILL seek to evaluate all views on a subject, rather than seeking to shut down debate in favor of “safe spaces.” Maybe they will promote freedom, respect, love of God, and love of country, and influence other students to their Christian worldview. Perhaps they WILL have principled ethics, based on the Bible, which will serve them well in their higher education, as well as all of their life endeavors. Could it be that they will be pillars of courage to stem the tide of the radical educational system that is destroying America?

Could it be? •

# High Court Protects Free Speech in California

“Forced Speech,” like “suppressed speech,” violates the First Amendment

**T**he liberal progressive movement in America seemingly loves nothing more than to force citizens with whom they disagree to do things against their consciences.

In 2015, the State of California passed a law requiring Pro-Life crisis pregnancy centers to post signs advertising state-sponsored abortion services. This forced them to offer “speech” which contradicted their very mission: to offer women the support needed to choose life for their unborn babies. The National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA) sued to stop this violation of its rights.

Writing for the majority in *NIFLA v. Becera*, Justice Clarence Thomas raised First Amendment concerns: “[the law] imposes a government-scripted, speaker-based disclosure requirement that is wholly disconnected from the State’s informational interest.... The notice does not facilitate informed consent to a medical procedure. In fact, it is not tied to a procedure at all.”

Justice Anthony Kennedy, joined by Chief Justice John Roberts, and Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch, strongly rebuked the California

legislature, which described this law as “forward thinking.”

Kennedy wrote: “It is forward thinking to begin by reading the First Amendment as ratified in 1791; to understand the history of authoritarian government as the Founders then knew it; to confirm that history since then shows how relentless authoritarian regimes are in their attempts to stifle free speech; and to carry those lessons onward as we seek to preserve and teach the necessity of freedom of speech for the generations to come.”

Mark Rienzi, president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, stated: “This ruling proves that when it comes to important issues, the government doesn’t get to tell people what to believe, and it also doesn’t get to tell people what to say about it.”

Continue to pray that more judges will be added to our courts who love and defend our Constitution, with the precious liberties it affords. Fine Christian citizens are being seriously persecuted for their faith by their government and by those who disingenuously and hypocritically shout the loudest for “tolerance” and “diversity.” •

**“It is forward thinking to begin by reading the First Amendment as ratified in 1791; to understand the history of authoritarian government as the Founders then knew it; to confirm that history since then shows how relentless authoritarian regimes are in their attempts to stifle free speech; and to carry those lessons onward as we seek to preserve and teach the necessity of freedom of speech for the generations to come.”**

Justice Anthony Kennedy

(joined by Chief Justice John Roberts, and Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch)

## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

Continued from page 1

- “The case presents difficult questions as to the proper reconciliation of at least two principles. The first is the authority of a State and its governmental entities to protect the rights and dignity of gay persons who are, or wish to be, married but who face discrimination when they seek goods or services. The second is the right of all persons to exercise fundamental freedoms under the First Amendment, as applied to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment.”

Kennedy continued:

- “The freedoms asserted here are both the freedom of speech and the free exercise of religion.”

### Phillips’ Beliefs

#### The religious beliefs of Mr. Phillips are those held by all true Bible-believing Christians

The Court stated:

- “One of Phillips’ religious beliefs is that ‘God’s intention for marriage from the beginning of history is that it is and should be the union of one man and one woman.’”
- “He [Phillips] later explained his belief that ‘to create a wedding cake for an event that celebrates something that directly goes against the teachings of the Bible, would have been a personal endorsement and participation in the ceremony and relationship that they were entering into.’”

#### The Court established that Mr. Phillips’ views were not illegal, and deserved the full protection of the law, stating:

- “... the religious and philosophical objections to gay marriage are

## “THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION’S TREATMENT OF HIS CASE HAS SOME ELEMENTS OF A CLEAR AND IMPERMISSIBLE HOSTILITY TOWARD THE SINCERE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS THAT MOTIVATED HIS OBJECTION....”

Justice Anthony Kennedy

protected views and in some instances protected forms of expression. As this Court observed in *Obergefell v. Hodges* [the gay marriage ruling of the Court in 2015]: ‘[t]he First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths.’”

- “In this context [baking a cake for a same sex ‘wedding’] the baker likely found it difficult to find a line where the customers’ rights to goods and services became a demand for him to exercise the right of his own personal expression for their message, a message he could not express in a way consistent with his religious beliefs.”

### Hostility to Freedom of Religion

Much documentation was presented by the Court to prove open hostility and dismissiveness to Biblical convictions by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. The justices declared without equivocation that:

- “The Civil Rights Commission’s treatment of his case has some elements of a clear and impermissible hostility toward the sincere

religious beliefs that motivated his objection....”

- “At several points during its meeting, commissioners endorsed the view that religious beliefs cannot legitimately be carried into the public sphere or commercial domain, implying that religious beliefs and persons are less than fully welcome in Colorado’s business community.”

- “On July 25, 2014, the Commission met again. This meeting, too, was conducted in public and on the record. On this occasion another commissioner made specific reference to the previous meeting’s discussion but said far more to disparage Phillips’ beliefs. The commissioner stated: ‘I would also like to reiterate what we said in the hearing or the last meeting. Freedom of religion and religion has been used to justify all kinds of discrimination throughout history, whether it be slavery, whether it be the holocaust, whether it be — I mean, we — we can list hundreds of situations where freedom of religion has been used to justify discrimination. And to me it is one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use to — to use their religion to hurt others.’”

“To describe a man’s faith as ‘one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use’ is to disparage his religion in at least two distinct ways: by describing it as despicable, and also by characterizing it as merely rhetorical — something insubstantial and even insincere.”

- “... the Commission’s treatment of Phillips’ case violated the State’s duty under the First Amendment not to base laws or regulations on hostility to a religion or religious viewpoint.”
- “The Free Exercise Clause [of the First Amendment] bars even ‘subtle departures from neutrality’ on matters of religion.”



- “the record here demonstrates that the Commission’s consideration of Phillips’ case was neither tolerant nor respectful of Phillips’ religious beliefs.... Phillips’ religious objection was not considered with the neutrality that the Free Exercise Clause requires.”

In a concurring opinion, Justice Neil Gorsuch, joined by Justice Samuel Alito, wrote:

- “... no bureaucratic judgment condemning a sincerely held religious belief as ‘irrational’ or ‘offensive’ will ever survive strict scrutiny under the First Amendment. In this country, the place of secular officials isn’t to sit in judgment of religious beliefs, but only to protect their free exercise.”

Gorsuch brought the importance of this to a fine point:

- “It is in protecting unpopular religious beliefs that we prove this country’s commitment to serving as a refuge for religious freedom.”

### **Colorado Civil Rights Commission shows clear viewpoint discrimination in who must bake a cake and who may decline**

In explaining the basis for the following point of reasoning, Justice Kennedy wrote:

- “Indeed, while enforcement proceedings against Phillips were ongoing, the Colorado Civil Rights Division itself endorsed this proposition in cases involving other bakers’ creation of cakes, concluding on at least three occasions that a baker acted lawfully in declining to create cakes with decorations that demeaned gay persons or gay marriages.”

William Jack, the man who was also refused cakes by several bakeries, did indeed have explicit messages identifying homosexuality and gay “marriage” as a sin, but included such phrases as “God loves sinners” and

**“... NO BUREAUCRATIC JUDGMENT CONDEMNING A SINCERELY HELD RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS ‘IRRATIONAL’ OR ‘OFFENSIVE’ WILL EVER SURVIVE STRICT SCRUTINY UNDER THE FIRST AMENDMENT. IN THIS COUNTRY, THE PLACE OF SECULAR OFFICIALS ISN’T TO SIT IN JUDGMENT OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, BUT ONLY TO PROTECT THEIR FREE EXERCISE.”**

Justice Neil Gorsuch

“While we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

With this as a background, Justice Kennedy continued in the Court’s opinion to press against the impermissible religious bigotry of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission:

- “Another indication of hostility is the difference in treatment between Phillips’ case and the cases of other bakers who objected to a requested cake on the basis of conscience and prevailed before the Commission.”
- “... the Division found no violation of CADA [Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act] in the other cases in part because each bakery was willing to sell other products, including those depicting Christian themes, to the prospective customers. But the Commission dismissed Phillips’ willingness to sell ‘birthday cakes, shower cakes, [and] cookies and brownies,’ to

gay and lesbian customers as irrelevant. The treatment of the other cases and Phillips’ case could reasonably be interpreted as being inconsistent.”

Although joining the majority in the Court’s opinion, the Breyer/Kagan concurring opinion took issue with this point. It states:

- “The three bakers in the Jack cases did not violate that law. Jack requested them to make a cake (one denigrating gay people and same-sex marriage) that they would not have made for any customer. In refusing that request, the bakers did not single out Jack because of his religion, but instead treated him in the same way they would have treated anyone else — just as CADA requires.... Phillips contravened CADA’s demand that customers receive ‘the full and equal enjoyment’ of public accommodations irrespective of their sexual orientation.”

The Ginsburg/Sotomayor dissent continued this inconsistent theme:

- “The bakers would have refused to make a cake with Jack’s requested message for any customer, regardless of his or her religion.”
- “The bakeries’ refusal to make Jack cakes of a kind they would not make for any customer scarcely resembles Phillips’ refusal to serve Craig and Mullins: Phillips would not sell to Craig and Mullins, for no reason other than their sexual orientation, a cake of the kind he regularly sold to others.”
- “Jack, on the other hand, suffered no service refusal on the basis of his religion or any other protected characteristic. He was treated as any other customer would have been treated — no better, no worse. The fact that Phillips might sell other cakes and cookies to gay and lesbian customers was irrelevant to the issue Craig and Mullins’ case presented.”

*Continued on page 8*

## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

Continued from page 7

The Gorsuch/Alito concurring opinion brilliantly shows the inconsistent and illogical thinking of Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, Kagan and Sotomayor. Gorsuch states:

■ “the Commission allowed three other bakers to refuse a customer’s request that would have required them to violate their secular commitments.... The facts show that the two cases share all legally salient features. In both cases, the effect on the customer was the same: bakers refused service to persons who bore a statutorily protected trait (religious faith or sexual orientation). But in both cases the bakers refused service intending only to honor a personal conviction. To be sure, the bakers knew their conduct promised the effect of leaving a customer in a protected class unserved. But there’s no indication the bakers actually intended to refuse service because of a customer’s protected characteristic. We know this because all of the bakers explained without contradiction that they would not sell the requested cakes to anyone, while they would sell other cakes to members of the protected class (as well as to anyone else).”

■ “In both cases, it was the kind of cake, not the kind of customer, that mattered to the bakers.”

■ “Yet, in Mr. Phillips’s case, the Commission dismissed this very same argument as resting on a ‘distinction without a difference.’ It concluded instead that an ‘intent to disfavor’ a protected class of persons should be ‘readily ... presumed’ from the knowing failure to serve someone who belongs to that class. In its judgment, Mr. Phillips’s intentions were ‘inextricably tied to the sexual orienta-

**“AT SEVERAL POINTS DURING ITS MEETING, COMMISSIONERS ENDORSED THE VIEW THAT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS CANNOT LEGITIMATELY BE CARRIED INTO THE PUBLIC SPHERE OR COMMERCIAL DOMAIN, IMPLYING THAT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PERSONS ARE LESS THAN FULLY WELCOME IN COLORADO’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY.”**

Justice Anthony Kennedy

tion of the parties involved’ and essentially ‘irrational.’”

■ “... it presumed that Mr. Phillips harbored an intent to discriminate against a protected class in light of the foreseeable effects of his conduct, but it declined to presume the same intent in Mr. Jack’s case even though the effects of the bakers’ conduct were just as foreseeable. Underscoring the double standard, a state appellate court said that ‘no such showing’ of actual ‘animus’ — or intent to discriminate against persons in a protected class — was even required in Mr. Phillips’s case.”

■ “The Commission cannot have it both ways. The Commission cannot slide up and down the *mens rea* scale, picking a mental state standard to suit its tastes depending on its sympathies. Either actual proof of intent to discriminate on the basis of membership in a protected class is required (as the Commission held in Mr. Jack’s

case), or it is sufficient to ‘presume’ such intent from the knowing failure to serve someone in a protected class (as the Commission held in Mr. Phillips’s case). Perhaps the Commission could have chosen either course as an initial matter. But the one thing it can’t do is apply a more generous legal test to secular objections than religious ones.”

■ “Nor can any amount of after-the-fact maneuvering by our colleagues save the Commission.”

■ “If ‘cakes’ were the relevant level of generality, the Commission would have to order the bakers to make Mr. Jack’s requested cakes just as it ordered Mr. Phillips to make the requested cake in his case.”

■ “It is no answer either simply to slide up a level of generality to re-describe Mr. Phillips’s case as involving only a wedding cake like any other, so the fact that Mr. Phillips would make one for some means he must make them for all. These arguments, too, fail to afford Mr. Phillips’s faith neutral respect.”

■ “Only by adjusting the dials just right — fine-tuning the level of generality up or down for each case based solely on the identity of the parties and the substance of their views — can you engineer the Commission’s outcome, handing a win to Mr. Jack’s bakers but delivering a loss to Mr. Phillips. Such results-driven reasoning is improper.”

### The Government can’t be dismissive of someone’s Faith

One tactic which has been used to deny religious liberty has been for government officials to be dismissive of people’s religious convictions. In denying the importance, in minimizing the impact and in questioning the motives or sincerity of deeply held Christian beliefs, government officials excuse their behavior in placing



the heavy boot of Government on the neck of Bible-believing Christians. Speaking for the majority, Justice Kennedy wrote concerning statements by some of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission members:

- "... They might be seen as inappropriate and dismissive comments showing lack of due consideration for Phillips' free exercise rights and the dilemma he faced."

**The Government can't seek to correct what someone's religion supposedly teaches. The tenets of an adherent's Faith are decided by the adherent**

With the dismissive attitude that secularists often have for Christian faith, there are far too many examples of where government officials seek to determine what a Christian's beliefs should be, which again is an impermissible government intrusion on religious freedom. The Gorsuch/Alito concurring opinion discusses this problem:

- "There is another problem with sliding up the generality scale: it risks denying constitutional protection to religious beliefs that draw distinctions more specific than the government's preferred level of description."
- "Civil authorities, whether 'high or petty,' bear no license to declare what is or should be 'orthodox' when it comes to religious beliefs ... or whether an adherent has 'correctly perceived' the commands of his religion...."
- "Any other conclusion would invite civil authorities to gerrymander their inquiries based on the parties they prefer."

Justice Gorsuch then commented on the case of Eddie C. Thomas, a Jehovah's Witness steel mill worker who agreed to help manufacture sheet steel, but was unwilling to work on a fabrication line producing tank turrets:

**"... THE ONLY REASON THE COMMISSION SEEMED TO SUPPLY FOR ITS DISCRIMINATION WAS THAT IT FOUND MR. PHILLIPS'S RELIGIOUS BELIEFS 'OFFENSIVE.' THAT KIND OF JUDGMENTAL DISMISSAL OF A SINCERELY HELD RELIGIOUS BELIEF IS, OF COURSE, ANTITHETICAL TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND CANNOT BEGIN TO SATISFY STRICT SCRUTINY. THE CONSTITUTION PROTECTS NOT JUST POPULAR RELIGIOUS EXERCISES FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES. IT PROTECTS THEM ALL."**

Justice Neil Gorsuch

- "Instead, it [the Supreme Court] recognized that Mr. Thomas alone was entitled to define the nature of his religious commitments — and that those commitments, as defined by the faithful adherent, not a bureaucrat or judge, are entitled to protection under the First Amendment."
- Justice Gorsuch concluded:
- "Mr. Phillips has conclusively proven a First Amendment violation and, after almost six years facing unlawful civil charges, he is entitled to judgment."

**Government reeducation**

Reeducation by the State brings to mind the reeducation camps of some of the most brutal dictatorships in world history. Sadly, we are seeing more government intrusion in ordering State-mandated "education" to seek to change a person's beliefs.

Justice Kennedy wrote concerning the Colorado Civil Rights Division:

- "It also ordered additional remedial measures, including 'comprehensive staff training on the Public Accommodations section.'"

The Alliance Defending Freedom, in commenting on this, stated: "They told him which cakes he must make. They told him to fill out quarterly reports to ensure he was obeying their demands. They even forced Jack [Phillips] to reeducate his staff by telling them it was illegal for him to act on his religious beliefs about marriage."

**Hostility to Freedom of Speech**

**Is wedding cake artistry communicative and thus deserving of free speech protections?**

Two of the concurring opinions dealt very clearly with the freedom of speech ramifications of this case. Even in the opinion of the Court, Justice Kennedy wrote that:

- "wedding cake artistry is communicative, thus having First Amendment protections."
- "application of constitutional freedoms in new contexts can deepen our understanding of their meaning."

However, four of the justices opposed this last point. The Ginsburg/Sotomayor Dissenting Opinion stated:

- "But Phillips submitted no evidence showing that an objective

*Continued on page 10*

## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

Continued from page 9

observer understands a wedding cake to convey a message, much less that the observer understands the message to be the baker's, rather than the marrying couple's."

- "Indeed, some in the wedding industry could not explain what message, or whose, a wedding cake conveys. See Charsley, *Interpretation and Custom: The Case of the Wedding Cake* ... (no explanation of wedding cakes' symbolism was forthcoming 'even amongst those who might be expected to be the experts')."

These justices fail to cite where the First Amendment can be abridged based on the opinions of their own hand picked "expert" bakers!

Justice Gorsuch, countered in his concurring opinion:

- "To suggest that cakes with words convey a message but cakes without words do not — all in order to excuse the bakers in Mr. Jack's case while penalizing Mr. Phillips — is irrational."
- "Nor can anyone reasonably doubt that a wedding cake without words conveys a message. Words or not and whatever the exact design, it celebrates a wedding, and if the wedding cake is made for a same-sex couple it celebrates a same-sex wedding. [Documents in evidence state] that Mr. Craig and Mr. Mullins 'requested that Phillips design and create a *cake to celebrate their same-sex wedding*' (emphasis added)."

Justice Thomas's concurring opinion had heavy emphasis in championing the right to freedom of speech.

In 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America could exclude gay scoutmasters due to their freedom of association and speech rights. Thomas refers to this case in his concurring opinion:

**"WHEREVER MAN  
MAY STAND,  
WHATEVER HE MAY  
DO, TO WHATEVER HE  
MAY APPLY HIS HAND  
... IN WHATSOEVER IT  
MAY BE, CONSTANTLY  
STANDING BEFORE  
THE FACE OF HIS GOD,  
HE IS EMPLOYED IN  
THE SERVICE OF HIS  
GOD, HE HAS STRICTLY  
TO OBEY HIS GOD, AND  
ABOVE ALL, HE HAS TO  
AIM AT THE GLORY  
OF HIS GOD."**

Abraham Kuyper

- "Although public-accommodations laws generally regulate conduct, particular applications of them can burden protected speech. When a public-accommodations law 'ha[s] the effect of declaring ... speech itself to be the public accommodation,' the First Amendment applies with full force."

In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the South Boston War Veterans Council did not have to allow a gay advocacy group to march in its St. Patrick's Day/Evacuation Day Parade (*Hurley v. Irish-American...*). Justice Thomas used this opinion to make a point:

- "The parade in [this case] was an example of what this Court has termed 'expressive conduct.'"

In quoting from other Supreme Court precedents, Thomas continues:

- "[s]ymbolism is a primitive but effective way of communicating ideas,' *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette* (1943). Thus, a person's 'conduct may be "sufficiently imbued with elements of communi-

cation to fall within the scope of the First and Fourteenth Amendments,'" *Texas v. Johnson* (1989)."

- "To determine whether conduct is sufficiently expressive, the Court asks whether it was 'intended to be communicative' and, 'in context, would reasonably be understood by the viewer to be communicative,' *Clark v. Community for Creative Non-Violence* (1984). But a "particularized message" is not required, or else the freedom of speech 'would never reach the unquestionably shielded painting of Jackson Pollock, music of Arnold Schönberg, or Jabberwocky verse of Lewis Carroll,' *Hurley v. Irish-American...*"

- "Phillips is an active participant in the wedding celebration. He sits down with each couple for a consultation before he creates their custom wedding cake. He discusses their preferences, their personalities, and the details of their wedding to ensure that each cake reflects the couple who ordered it. In addition to creating and delivering the cake — a focal point of the wedding celebration — Phillips sometimes stays and interacts with the guests at the wedding.... To him, a wedding cake inherently communicates that 'a wedding has occurred, a marriage has begun, and the couple should be celebrated.'"

- "('It is not unusual to hear people declaring that they do not like wedding cake, meaning that they do not like to eat it. This includes people who are, without question, having such cakes for their weddings'); [M. Kronld, *Sweet Invention: A History of Dessert*] (explaining that wedding cakes have long been described as 'inedible'). The cake's purpose is to mark the beginning of a new marriage and to celebrate the couple."

- "... The Colorado Court of Appeals acknowledged that 'a wedding cake, in some circumstances,



may convey a particularized message celebrating same-sex marriage,' depending on its 'design' and whether it has 'written inscriptions.' And by forcing him to provide the cake, Colorado is requiring Phillips to be 'intimately connected' with the couple's speech, which is enough to implicate his First Amendment rights."

- "Forcing Phillips to make custom wedding cakes for same-sex marriages requires him to, at the very least, acknowledge that same-sex weddings are 'weddings' and suggest that they should be celebrated — the precise message he believes his faith forbids. The First Amendment prohibits Colorado from requiring Phillips to 'bear witness to [these] fact[s],' or to 'affir[m] ... a belief with which [he] disagrees,' [see Hurley]."

### **The First Amendment protects our right to decide "what NOT to say"**

Justice Thomas continued:

- "[O]ne important manifestation of the principle of free speech is that one who chooses to speak may also decide "what not to say" and 'tailor' the content of his message as he sees fit. Id., at 573 (quoting *Pacific Gas & Elec. Co. v. Public Util. Comm'n of Cal.* (1986) (plurality opinion)). This rule 'applies not only to expressions of value, opinion, or endorsement, but equally to statements of fact the speaker would rather avoid.' *Hurley, supra*. And it 'makes no difference' whether the government is regulating the 'creati[on], distributi[on], or consum[ption]' of the speech. *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Assn.*"
- "Because the government cannot compel speech, it also cannot 'require speakers to affirm in one breath that which they deny in the next.' *Pacific Gas & Elec.*, (citing *PruneYard*). States cannot put individuals to the choice of

**"... THERE IS NO PART OF OUR LIFE, AND NO ACTION SO MINUTE, THAT IT OUGHT NOT TO BE DIRECTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD...."**

John Calvin

'be[ing] compelled to affirm someone else's belief' or 'be[ing] forced to speak when [they] would prefer to remain silent.'"

### **Profit motive does not restrict free speech**

For the Christian, it is of course important to earn money to take care of himself, his family, and those less fortunate. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 3:10: "... this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

However, to the secularist, the profit motive is the main reason one engages in commercial activity. In stark contrast, the true child of God has a far higher motive. Paul tells us: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Abraham Kuyper, theologian and prime minister of the Netherlands at the dawn of the 20th century, wrote: "Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or his mind, in the world of art, and science, he is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face of his God, he is employed in the service of his God, he has strictly to obey his God, and above all, he has to aim at the glory of his God."<sup>1</sup>

John Calvin wrote: "... there is no part of our life, and no action so minute, that it ought not to be directed to the glory of God...."<sup>2</sup>

Justice Thomas makes this crucial point in his concurring opinion:

- "But this Court has repeatedly rejected the notion that a speaker's profit motive gives the government a freer hand in compelling speech. See *Pacific Gas & Elec.; Virginia Bd. of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council, Inc.*, (deeming it 'beyond serious dispute' that '[s]peech ... is protected even though it is carried in a form that is "sold" for profit')."

- "Phillips routinely sacrifices profits to ensure that Masterpiece operates in a way that represents his Christian faith. He is not open on Sundays, he pays his employees a higher-than-average wage, and he loans them money in times of need. Phillips also refuses to bake cakes containing alcohol, cakes with racist or homophobic messages, cakes criticizing God, and cakes celebrating Halloween — even though Halloween is one of the most lucrative seasons for bakeries. These efforts to exercise control over the messages that Masterpiece sends are still more evidence that Phillips' conduct is expressive."

### **"Orthodox expression": the government cannot determine what beliefs are or are not offensive**

The government cannot decide what is and is not offensive. The Progressive Left, for instance, can decide that a Bible verse condemning sin is impermissibly offensive, yet these same people would often be dismissive of a Christian's offense at the Lord's name being taken in vain. The government cannot pick winners and losers in such cases.

In considering the Colorado's allowing bakers to refuse to bake cakes quoting Scriptures that deal with sin, but refusing to allow Mr. Phillips to refuse to bake a custom cake for a gay wedding, the opinion of the Court, written by Justice Kennedy, states:

*Continued on page 12*

## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

Continued from page 11

- “In those cases, the [Colorado] court continued, there was no impermissible discrimination because ‘the Division found that the bakeries ... refuse[d] the patron’s request ... because of the offensive nature of the requested message.’”
- “A principled rationale for the difference in treatment of these two instances cannot be based on the government’s own assessment of offensiveness.”
- “The Colorado court’s attempt to account for the difference in treatment elevates one view of what is offensive over another and itself sends a signal of official disapproval of Phillips’ religious beliefs.”

The Ginsburg/Sotomayor dissent would not even admit to this. Instead these Justices, with their dangerous “living, breathing” Constitution philosophy, decided to take into their own hands what is and is not offensive. It states:

- “Phillips declined to make a cake he found offensive where the offensiveness of the product was determined solely by the identity of the customer requesting it. The three other bakeries declined to make cakes where their objection to the product was due to the demeaning message the requested product would literally display.”

Ginsburg then quotes the Colorado Court of Appeals:

- “(‘The Division found that the bakeries did not refuse [Jack’s] request because of his creed, but rather because of the offensive nature of the requested message.... [T]here was no evidence that the bakeries based their decisions on [Jack’s] religion ... [whereas Phillips] discriminat[ed] on the basis of sexual orientation’).”

The Gorsuch/Alito concurring opinion again very ably shows the

**“IN THIS COUNTRY, THE PLACE OF SECULAR OFFICIALS ISN’T TO SIT IN JUDGMENT OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, BUT ONLY TO PROTECT THEIR FREE EXERCISE.”**

Justice Neil Gorsuch

prejudice and inconsistency of these liberal justices:

- “... the only reason the Commission seemed to supply for its discrimination was that it found Mr. Phillips’s religious beliefs ‘offensive.’ That kind of judgmental dismissal of a sincerely held religious belief is, of course, antithetical to the First Amendment and cannot begin to satisfy strict scrutiny. The Constitution protects not just popular religious exercises from the condemnation of civil authorities. It protects them all.”
- “Instead, as the Court explains, it appears the Commission wished to condemn Mr. Phillips for expressing just the kind of ‘irrational’ or ‘offensive ... message’ that the bakers in the first case refused to endorse.”

In the Boy Scouts of America case, previously mentioned, Justice William Rehnquist, writing the opinion of the [Supreme] Court, stated that to force the Boy Scouts to include homosexual scoutmasters: “would, at the very least, force the organization to send a message ... that the Boy Scouts accept homosexual conduct as a legitimate form of behavior.” In referring to this case, Justice Thomas stated:

- “While this Court acknowledged that the unit’s exclusion might have been ‘misguided, or even hurtful,’ it rejected the notion that governments can mandate ‘thoughts and statements acceptable to some

groups or, indeed, all people’ as the ‘antithesis’ of free speech.”

### Denigration vs. free speech

Free speech is not only guaranteed to those expressing popular beliefs. The First Amendment was written to protect speech with which some may disagree. It is not the Government’s place to seek to shield people from being offended. This becomes an even greater problem when the Government seeks to protect one group from “humiliation, frustration, and embarrassment” (the ones wanting a cake for a same-sex “wedding”), while showing no concern at all for protecting the Christian baker from violating his conscience. Justice Thomas clearly shows the error of the Colorado Civil Rights Division:

- “According to the individual respondents, Colorado can compel Phillips’ speech to prevent him from “‘denigrat[ing] the dignity’” of same-sex couples, “‘assert[ing] [their] inferiority,’” and subjecting them to “‘humiliation, frustration, and embarrassment.’” Brief for Respondents *Craig et al.* (quoting *J.E.B. v. Alabama ex rel.* (1994); *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States*, (1964) (Goldberg, J., concurring)). These justifications are completely foreign to our free speech jurisprudence.”
- “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.”
- “If the only reason a public accommodations law regulates speech is ‘to produce a society free of ... biases’ against the protected groups, that purpose is ‘decidedly fatal’ to the law’s constitutionality, ‘for it amounts to nothing less than a proposal to limit speech in the service of orthodox expression.’ (Hurley).”
- “Consider what Phillips actually said to the individual respondents

**“IF THE ONLY REASON A PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS LAW REGULATES SPEECH IS ‘TO PRODUCE A SOCIETY FREE OF ... BIASES’ AGAINST THE PROTECTED GROUPS, THAT PURPOSE IS ‘DECIDEDLY FATAL’ TO THE LAW’S CONSTITUTIONALITY, ‘FOR IT AMOUNTS TO NOTHING LESS THAN A PROPOSAL TO LIMIT SPEECH IN THE SERVICE OF ORTHODOX EXPRESSION.’”**

Justice Clarence Thomas

in this case. After sitting down with them for a consultation, Phillips told the couple, “I’ll make your birthday cakes, shower cakes, sell you cookies and brownies, I just don’t make cakes for same sex weddings.” It is hard to see how this statement stigmatizes gays and lesbians more than blocking them from marching in a city parade, dismissing them from the Boy Scouts, or subjecting them to signs that say “God Hates ----” — all of which this Court has deemed protected by the First Amendment.”

- “Nor does the fact that this Court has now decided *Obergefell v. Hodges* [the gay ‘marriage’ case], somehow diminish Phillips’ right to free speech. ‘It is one thing ...to conclude that the Constitution protects a right to same-sex marriage; it is something else to portray everyone who does not share [that view] as bigoted’ and unentitled to express a different view

(Roberts, C.J., dissenting [in *Obergefell*]).”

- “[T]he fact that [the social acceptance of homosexuality] may be embraced and advocated by increasing numbers of people is all the more reason to protect the First Amendment rights of those who wish to voice a different view”) [Boy Scouts case].

### **Freedom of Speech Argument Essential**

Justice Thomas wrote further in his concurring opinion:

- “Because the Court’s decision vindicates Phillips’ right to free exercise, it seems that religious liberty has lived to fight another day. But, in future cases, the freedom of speech could be essential to preventing *Obergefell* from being used to ‘stamp out every vestige of dissent’ and ‘vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy.’ (Alito, J., dissenting in *Obergefell*). If that freedom is to maintain its vitality, reasoning like the Colorado Court of Appeals’ must be rejected.”

### **Weaknesses / Storm Clouds on the Horizon**

#### **The hostility of Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor, and the attacks on religious liberty by Justices Breyer and Kagan show that our precious First Amendment liberties are far from safe**

Justices Breyer and Kagan ONLY sided with the majority because it was very difficult to deny the unconstitutional hostility to religion by the Colorado officials. Otherwise, these two justices would have voted against Mr. Phillips’ rights. Justice Ginsburg (with agreement by Justice Sotomayor) showed hostility to Mr. Phillips rights. She stated in her concurring opinion:

- “I strongly disagree, however, with the Court’s conclusion that Craig and Mullins [the opponents of cakebaker Jack Phillips] should lose this case.”

### **The Main Point at Issue Was Not Fully Decided**

Justice Kennedy wrote, in the opinion of the Court:

- “... it is proper to hold that whatever the outcome of some future controversy involving facts similar to these....”
- “While the issues here are difficult to resolve, it must be concluded that the State’s interest could have been weighed against Phillips’ sincere religious objections in a way consistent with the requisite religious neutrality that must be strictly observed.”
- “In this case the adjudication concerned a context that may well be different going forward in the respects noted above. However later cases raising these or similar concerns are resolved in the future, for these reasons the rulings of the Commission and of the state court that enforced the Commission’s order must be invalidated.

“The outcome of cases like this in other circumstances must await further elaboration in the courts, all in the context of recognizing that these disputes must be resolved with tolerance, without undue disrespect to sincere religious beliefs, and without subjecting gay persons to indignities when they seek goods and services in an open market.”

The hostility to religion of the Colorado officials was the decisive factor in this decision, NOT the merits of having freedom to decline artistic creation for sentiments and activities which violate the artist’s conscience. A future case involving less overt hostility could easily bring a different outcome.

*Continued on page 14*



## GOOD, BUT NOT QUITE A MASTERPIECE

Continued from page 13

### The idea was clearly set forth that Christian businesses have less First Amendment rights than churches:

Justice Kennedy pointed out concerning the Colorado Civil Rights law:

- “The Act defines ‘public accommodation’ broadly to include any ‘place of business engaged in any sales to the public and any place offering services ... to the public,’ but excludes ‘a church, synagogue, mosque, or other place that is principally used for religious purposes.’”

### Clergy are given more First Amendment “free exercise” protections than individual Christians

Although the Bill of Rights in our Constitution provides protections for individual citizens, the Court wrongly seeks to differentiate what kind of citizen and/or organization is to be given more or less rights.

Justice Kennedy writes in the opinion of the Court:

- “When it comes to weddings, it can be assumed that a member of the clergy who objects to gay marriage on moral and religious grounds could not be compelled to perform the ceremony without deni-

al of his or her right to the free exercise of religion.”

- “Yet if that exception were not confined [to clergy], then a long list of persons ...” could run afoul of civil rights laws.”

### Mr. Phillips’ reasons for not baking the cake were often misrepresented by some of the justices, and the Court left undecided whether those reasons alone should offer protection to Mr. Phillips

Justice Kennedy wrote:

- “And the ALJ determined that Phillips’ actions constituted prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, not simply opposition to same-sex marriage as Phillips contended.”

The Court did state:

- “Petitioners [Jack Phillips] conceded, moreover, that if a baker refused to sell any goods or any cakes for gay weddings, that would be a different matter and the State would have a strong case under this Court’s precedents that this would be a denial of goods and services that went beyond any protected rights of a baker who offers goods and services to the general public and is subject to a neutrally applied and generally applicable public accommodations law.”

Thankfully, the Gorsuch concurring opinion did seek to dispel the false allegation that the issue was Phillips’ supposed discrimination against homosexuals, rather than just opposition to an EVENT: same-sex marriage.

Justice Gorsuch wrote:

- “Later, Mr. Phillips testified without contradiction that he would have refused to create a cake celebrating a same-sex marriage for any customer, regardless of his or her sexual orientation. (“I will not design and create wedding cakes for a same-sex wedding re-

gardless of the sexual orientation of the customer”). And the record reveals that Mr. Phillips apparently refused just such a request from Mr. Craig’s mother. (Any suggestion that Mr. Phillips was willing to make a cake celebrating a same-sex marriage for a heterosexual customer or was not willing to sell other products to a homosexual customer, then, would simply mistake the undisputed factual record.”

### The opinion of the Court was only by a razor thin majority

Many were elated that this opinion was decided by a 7-2 majority. However, the extreme hostility of Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor, and the attack on religious liberty by Justices Breyer and Kagan, in their concurring opinions, makes the future of religious liberty much more tenuous.

## Conclusion

We are thankful that the final words of the opinion were: “The judgment of the Colorado Court of Appeals is reversed. It is so ordered.” However, the forces which want to destroy our nation are very busy in their attacks on our God-given freedoms. We must continue to be vigilant to ever fight for the liberties which allow every individual to stand before God, without interference by the heavy hand of the State. •

<sup>1</sup>Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Vol. XX): *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 347.



Mr. Brad Gsell is an elder and minister of music of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and President of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.

**BACK TO COURT:** As we go to press, the State of Colorado is harrasing Christian baker Jack Phillips once AGAIN. This time, in an obvious set-up, an “attorney” requested a cake celebrating his “transition from male to female,” which Mr. Phillips politely declined to do. The same State agency, despite a strong rebuke by the Supreme Court, is after Mr. Phillips again. Alliance Defending Freedom is going on the offensive, and is suing the State to stop their unwarranted attacks against Mr. Phillips and the precious freedoms of speech and religion of us all.

# "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33)

According to Open Doors USA, research shows that the following countries are the 50 worst in the world for persecution of Christians. There are many others which did not make the list. Religious persecution, particularly that of Christians, is at an all-time high. Ancient Christian groups which have endured for millennia are now being extinguished in the Middle East and elsewhere. Even in the United States we are seeing unprecedented attacks in what has been the beacon of liberty for nearly 250 years.

Recently, we received a report of a Christian leader who recently died in a Pakistani prison, where he was being incarcerated for running afoul of that country's Muslim anti-blasphemy laws. He was the grandson of Dr. K.L. Nasir, a former leader in the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), now with the Lord.

The fact should not be overlooked that of the 50 countries in the list below, 33 of them had "Islamic Oppression" as the main factor in the persecution of Christians, and it is also involved in many others.

Please be in prayer for Christians around the world who would rather suffer affliction, and even death, to remain faithful to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. **North Korea** / Communist Oppression
2. **Afghanistan** / Islamic Oppression
3. **Somalia** / Islamic Oppression
4. **Sudan** / Islamic Oppression
5. **Pakistan** / Islamic Oppression
6. **Eritrea** / Dictatorial Paranoia

7. **Libya** / Islamic Oppression
8. **Iraq** / Islamic Oppression
9. **Yemen** / Islamic Oppression
10. **Iran** / Islamic Oppression
11. **India** / Religious (Hindu) Nationalism
12. **Saudi Arabia** / Islamic Oppression
13. **Maldives** / Islamic Oppression
14. **Nigeria** / Islamic Oppression
15. **Syria** / Islamic Oppression
16. **Uzbekistan** / Dictatorial Paranoia
17. **Egypt** / Islamic Oppression
18. **Vietnam** / Communist/Post-Communist Oppression
19. **Turkmenistan** / Dictatorial Paranoia
20. **Laos** / Communist/Post-Communist Oppression
21. **Jordan** / Islamic Oppression
22. **Tajikistan** / Dictatorial Paranoia
23. **Malaysia** / Islamic Oppression
24. **Myanmar** / Religious (Hindu) Nationalism
25. **Nepal** / Religious (Hindu) Nationalism
26. **Brunei** / Islamic Oppression
27. **Qatar** / Islamic Oppression
28. **Kazakhstan** / Dictatorial Paranoia
29. **Ethiopia** / Islamic Oppression
30. **Tunisia** / Islamic Oppression
31. **Turkey** / Islamic Oppression
32. **Kenya** / Islamic Oppression
33. **Bhutan** / Religious (Buddhist) Nationalism
34. **Kuwait** / Islamic Oppression
35. **Central African Republic** / Islamic Oppression
36. **Palestinian Territories** / Islamic Oppression
37. **Mali** / Islamic Oppression

38. **Indonesia** / Islamic Oppression
39. **Mexico** / Organized Crime and Corruption
40. **United Arab Emirates** / Islamic Oppression
41. **Bangladesh** / Islamic Oppression
42. **Algeria** / Islamic Oppression
43. **China** / Communist/Post-Communist Oppression
44. **Sri Lanka** / Religious (Buddhist) Nationalism
45. **Azerbaijan** / Dictatorial Paranoia
46. **Oman** / Islamic Oppression
47. **Mauritania** / Islamic Oppression
48. **Bahrain** / Islamic Oppression
49. **Colombia** / Organized Crime and Corruption
50. **Djibouti** / Islamic Oppression

## Present With the Lord

MISS MARION WILLITS, a long-time missionary with The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, went home to be with her Saviour on Thursday, January 4, 2018.

Miss Willits arrived as a missionary in the United Arab Emirates in 1952. There she labored with Dr. Sarah Hosmon and Miss Edna Barter. Miss Joan Davenport joined them in 1962. It took real courage and dedication to the Lord for these lady missionaries to serve in this Arab, Muslim land.

Miss Willits was a faithful, long-time member of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, NJ. Upon her retirement in 1982, Miss Willits continued to serve the Lord in many capacities.

*"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"* (Revelation 14:13).



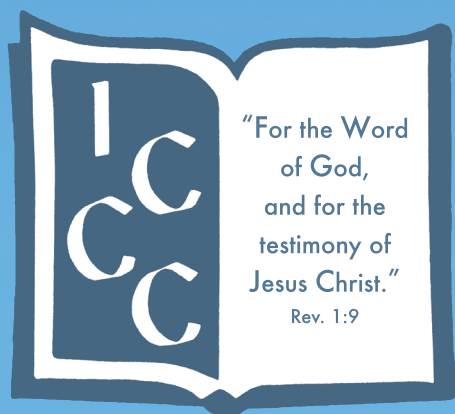


# GOD IS LOVE

*"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).*

## 20TH WORLD CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

January 22-29, 2020 ♦ Puerto Montt, Chile



STANDING FOR THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE 21ST CENTURY