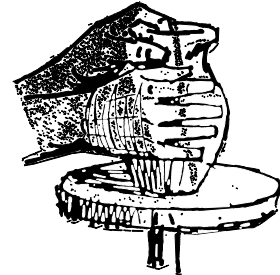


# His Workmanship at Westside

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”*  
—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

## “No Crying He Makes” by Shane Scott

Christmas is coming, and I love this time of year, and I love holiday music. But I am also concerned about the way many Christmas carols mis-describe the birth of Jesus. My concern is not really about the trappings of Christmas *per se*. I am sure that you are well versed in the Bible and understand that a lot of the traditional elements of the “Christmas story” have no connection to Scripture. We do not know when Jesus was born, and the Bible nowhere commands us to set aside December 25<sup>th</sup> as a special holy day in His honor. “We Three Kings” were not actually kings, they were wise men, and we have no idea how many of them there were.

But these details are really ancillary to my concerns. What troubles me the most is the almost fairy-tale quality of many of the Christmas carols, the unrealistic way they describe the birth of Jesus. The problem is that many Christmas carols paint such a rosy picture of Jesus’s birth, a scene of unrelenting joy and peace and beauty, that the story becomes too unrealistic, totally irrelevant for a world that is filled with pain and conflict and evil. When that happens, the miracle of the incarnation can easily be relegated to

the same bookshelf as *Mother Goose* and the powerful message of the coming of Jesus is muted.

Here’s an example. Look carefully at the second verse of “Away in a Manger”:

The cattle are lowing,  
The poor Baby wakes.  
But little Lord Jesus  
No crying He makes.

“No crying He makes.” This song expects us to believe that having been stirred awake by the lowing of the cattle, the infant Jesus did not cry. I understand that poetic license plays a role in lyrics, although hymns should be scripturally accurate. It is more likely that at the time of this line in “Away in a Manger,” Jesus and His family were at peace even though the circumstances of Jesus’s birth were less than ideal. But to say that the baby Jesus didn’t cry is to stretch the limits of poetic license to the breaking point. In the first place, the Biblical text nowhere says this. In the second place, how realistic is it to think that Jesus wouldn’t cry? Babies cry. Jesus was a baby. He was fully human. Jesus would have cried and done all of the other things that babies do in the real world.

Yet some Christians through the centuries have been uneasy with the full implications of the humanity of the baby Jesus. One 4<sup>th</sup> century writer said this: “Of Him then His mother’s burden was light, the birth immaculate, the delivery without pain, the nativity without defilement, neither beginning from wanton desire, nor brought to pass with sorrow. For as she [Eve] who by her guilt engrafted death into our nature, was condemned to bring forth in trouble, it was meet [fitting] that she who brought life into the world [Mary] should accomplish her delivery with joy.” --St Gregory of Nyssa, *Homily on the Nativity*. We would agree that Mary was a virgin and that the birth of Jesus was miraculous. But no Scripture suggests Mary’s delivery was pain free. This compulsion to “clean up” the story of Jesus’s birth is at the root of such lyrics as “no crying He makes.”

It is also typical of most artistic presentations of the Nativity, in which the infant Jesus is beautiful, crowned with a halo. The stable is clean, and the animals look as well groomed as dogs preparing for the Westminster dog show! This highly sanitized version of.  
continued on p. 2

**"Then the angel said to the shepherds, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord.' "** —Luke 2:10-11

the story of Jesus is in stark contrast to the real world in which childbirth is painful and bloody and dangerous. In the real world stables are smelly and dirty. And in the real world newborn babies are blotchy and don't arrive with glowing cylinders around their head!

And of course, in the real world, little babies cry. That is the insidious nature of lyrics like "no crying He makes." Babies that don't cry are for the world of make-believe, not the world that any of us live in, a world that is dirty and dangerous and often filled with tears. The gospel story needs to be more real for all of us, not less real.

After all, the adult Jesus certainly

did cry. According to Luke 19:41-44, Jesus wept as He approached Jerusalem the final time and saw with prophetic vision the awful destruction that awaited the city. In John 11:35, Jesus wept at the tomb of His beloved friend, Lazarus. And Jesus offered up prayers "with loud cries and tears" as He contemplated the cross in Gethsemane, Heb 5:7-8.

The real Jesus cried, because in the real world sinful people reap tragic, devastating consequences for their actions. Jesus cried because in the real world loved ones suffer and die. Jesus cried because in the real world doing the will of God rather than your own requires painful, heartbreaking sacrifices.

Uninspired songs might have the tendency to diminish Jesus's full humanity, but the inspired song of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 did not. Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Is 53:3. I am comforted that my Savior cries, because it means He cares. He cares for me when I am heartbroken with grief. He cares for me when I wander way from Him. He cares for me when I face crisis and distress. And because He cried and because He cares, I can go to him with confidence that as I pray through my tears He hears me and knows exactly what I am going through, Heb 4:14-16.

## **Discipleship and Self-Denial** *by Gary Henry*

*"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me,'" Mt 16:24. Self-denial is a difficult discipline, to be sure, but it is one of life's most important virtues. If we wish to become "disciples" in any serious sense, then we must learn to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Christ.*

One reason that we find self-denial so difficult is that it goes against the grain of our culture. The social environment in which we live is increasingly dominated by self-affirmation rather than self-denial. This ethic comes through loud and clear in the lyrics of our popular music. For example, a hit by one of the most powerful pop stars of the past decade tells us, "You've got to do what you've got to do." Another song, this one even by an artist known for his spirituality, says, "You've got to do it in

your own way."

What is wrong with this philosophy? It is certainly true that when tough personal decisions have to be made, we have to have the courage to act on our own convictions. When we've asked for God's wisdom, consulted the scriptures, analyzed a decision from every angle, and considered the advice of others, the time comes when we have to make up our own minds. Integrity requires that we do what we believe is right, even if this conflicts with the collective judgment of everybody we know. But the philosophy of self-affirmation advocates far more than the simple following of conscience. Instead, when we're told that "you've got to do what you've got to do," it's understood that what we've "got to do" is whatever we want to do. One of the scariest statements I have ever heard illustrates this ethic. The

remark came from an up-to-date friend who said with evident satisfaction, "It feels so good at this point in my life finally to have the courage to do what I want to do and not what anybody else says I ought to do." In our culture, "want" trumps "ought" every time.

As "self-actualized" people, then, it is hard for us to learn self-denial. We do not find it easy to yield to God when what we want is on a collision course with His standards of what is right. Yet self-denial is what we must learn. Somehow we must recover the old-fashioned virtue of SACRIFICE—the willingness to let go of everything except what pleases God and advances His glory.

*"We tend to be devoted, not to Jesus Christ, but to the things which allow us more spiritual freedom than total surrender to Him would allow," Oswald Chambers.*



## Discipleship Here At Home

**CO Baker Faces Jail**, from p. 4  
businesses to participate in anything it wants them to. "If the government can tell Jack what to think and say, that is a government we should fear," said Phillips's attorney, Nicole Martin.

In both instances—the HHS mandate and marriage—Americans are being required to do something the Founders never intended: separate their values from their vocations. If Jack Phillips, Barronelle Stutzman (the Richland, WA, florist), Elaine Huguenin (the Albuquerque photographer), or Hobby Lobby want to serve the Lord full time, the First Amendment encourages it. What it doesn't encourage are judges like Spencer, who trample Americans' Constitutional rights as a way of inventing other rights. "I'm a huge supporter of gay rights, gay weddings, gay marriage," said Denver radio host Peter Boyles, "but these guys are wrong, and Masterpiece Cakes is right. [Jack] doesn't say, 'You can't come in here and buy;' he says, 'I'm not going to make you a cake of two men getting married.' As much as I support two men getting married, I support his right to say no."

So do 85% of Americans, who agreed that vendors like Christian wedding photographers should be able to turn down jobs if they had strongly-held beliefs on same-sex "marriage." Now, instead of turning down work, some may have to discontinue their businesses altogether. "If Jack can't make wedding cakes," his attorney pointed out, "he can't continue to support his family. And in order to make wedding cakes, Jack must violate his belief system. That is a reprehensible choice."

This reprehensible choice presents a

mountain of problems. What happens when a law butts heads with the Constitution? What happens when religious freedom and free speech come in conflict with alleged discrimination?

The Colorado anti-discrimination act doesn't include churches or religious organizations in the text. Specifically, the act pertains to "public accommodations," places that provide items or services to the public for a fee. Essentially, businesses are targeted by the act. Churches are protected under religious freedom. There are several problems I have with that.

First, if a church is protected simply because it doesn't sell items or services, what happens if a church does decide to sell merchandise and services? Does it then become a public accommodation? If so, would it fall under the umbrella of the act and be ripe for litigation if a gay couple were denied wedding services? Second, why merchandise and services? Does faith end when business begins? Are people supposed to set their faith aside if they decide to support themselves by starting a business? Finally, this seems like an obvious violation of religious freedom. The gay couple could go to any other bakery after being denied at the first one, while Phillips has no counter move following his baking a wedding cake for the couple. Phillips' faith is violated forever at that point, while the gay couple can simply make a different choice. It's not a balanced fight.

Moreover, what is a religious organization? I know what the law says, but why can't an individual constitute his own religious organization? Can one person stand as his own religious entity in the eyes of the law? If faith is protected on a scale of "more than one," why isn't an individual protected in the same way? In reality, it is corporate worship that is protected, not religion. A church is protected, not the people. And if individuals are not protected from religious oppression, the

### PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

**Mark Campbell**—home with **Campbells** with 6 stents, angioplasty, and LifeVest defibrillator; to Spruce House in Colorado Springs tomorrow

**Pat Wilkes**—recovering from knee surgery

**Melanie Baughn** in OK with ill mother

**Nell Free**—recovering from cataract surgery; also chronic heart; back pain

**Vicky Keyes**, a friend of **Judy Sartin**—triple negative stage breast cancer; husband **Jim** shaken, but treatment may extend her life 10 years

### CHRONIC CONDITIONS

**Logan Corray**; **Rocco Sangellino Jr**;

**Addison Tope**; **Pat Wilkes**—asthma

**Pearl Chapman**—leg pains; pancreatitis

**Rod Green**—thyroid trouble; life crises

**Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy

**Jonathan Hadders**—RA

**Danielle Huelsman**—vertigo, CV syndrome

**Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; needs help around his house

**Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP

**Judy Sartin**—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis

**Judy Sartin's** grandson **Tristen**—autism

**Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

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Traveling **Judy Sartin** will leave Thur to visit family in FL.; **Gary Boyd** leaves Thurs to visit family in Neb; **Gintchins** out of town; **Campbells** to AR Mon-Fri

Bereaved **Chris Hayes's** mother **Cathy** passed away last week; funeral in MS

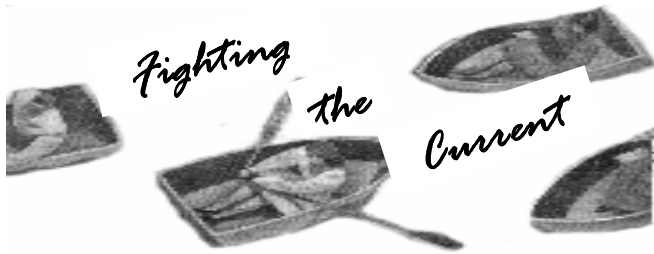
Job concerns **Linda Szymanski**

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood platelets low; **Christina Adams's** daughter

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Constitution is being misinterpreted.

Tragically, it's a choice more Christians are having to make in industries like counseling, broadcasting, education, small businesses, and even the military, where Biblical views are consistently squeezed out. The law in Colorado is being used to oppress faith.



### Exposing current thoughts & trends

#### Colorado Baker Faces Jail for Refusing to Sell Wedding Cake to Homosexual Couple *by Frank Camp*

The owner of Masterpiece Cakes, Jack Phillips, refused in 2012 to bake a cake for a gay couple that requested his services for their wedding. He told them that he would sell them a great many goods, but not a wedding cake, as it violated his religious beliefs. The case had been brewing since July 2012, when two homosexuals stormed out of Phillips's shop, and filed suit. Hours later, the threatening phone calls started—followed by boycotts, death threats, and protests outside the shop. For the 40-year-old business, a fixture of the Denver community for over a generation, it was a defining moment. "My decision not to participate in the gay weddings is not motivated by politics," Phillips explained, "or hatred of gays, though I've been accused of [that]. My decision is based solely on a desire to live my life in obedience to God and His word."

Last week Colorado Judge Robert Spencer ruled that because of Colorado's anti-discrimination law, Jack Phillips would either have to provide his services to the couple or face possible prison time. Jack's rights—and those of thousands of other Christian businessmen—are not what matters. What matters is Americans' ideological conformity on an issue that contradicts the teachings of every mainstream world religion. To Judge Spencer, surrendering those beliefs is just the price of doing business in a politically correct market. "Conceptually," Spencer wrote, "[Phillips's] refusal to serve a same-sex couple due to religious objection to same-sex weddings is no different from refusing to serve a biracial couple because of religious objection to biracial marriage."

Like most activist judges, Spencer tries to equate sexual behavior with skin color, a comparison with no basis in science—or logic. What's more, he tied the case to a Supreme Court suit involving Bob Jones University, in which the justices stripped the college's tax status over its rule against biracial relationships. But, as Family Research Council's Ken Klukowski pointed out, Jack's case is an enormous leap from that decision because the Supreme Court never told Bob Jones that it couldn't hold those views. It simply stripped the university's tax exemption. In Jack's case, the judge is ordering the baker to abandon his beliefs (in a state that defines marriage the same way Jack does)—or else jail. Sound familiar? It should. The President's HHS mandate insists on the same kind of viewpoint capitulation. Of course, the logical conclusion of this "marriage mandate" is that the government can force

*continued on p. 3*



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#### Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987  
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

#### Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

### Assembly Schedule

#### Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

#### Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: "Teaching Our Children," by Jonathan Hadders

This afternoon: "Lot's Wife: she looked back behind him," by Jim Reingrover