

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

SUPREME COURT SIDES WITH FIRST AMENDMENT IN LANDMARK COLORADO CASE



America's Bill of Rights is the most robust protection of individual civil rights in the history of Gentile nations. It is the product of an experiment that began in England with the Magna Carta of the 13th century and concluded with the founding of the United States of America in the 18th. Though America's Bill of Rights is under vicious assault and has been weakened over the past century and more by Congress and the Courts, it still offers protections far greater than those enjoyed by citizens of other nations. While America is ridiculously marked as a systemically racist, fundamentally evil nation by the Woke, CRT crowd, multitudes have been willing to sacrifice life and limb to live there. The following is excerpted from "Colorado agrees to pay," *Standing For Freedom*, Nov. 21, 2024: "The state of Colorado has agreed to pay more than \$1.5 million in attorneys' fees for violating the free speech rights of Lorie Smith, a web designer and plaintiff in the landmark Supreme Court case

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BAKER JACK PHILLIPS WINS MAJOR VICTORY AFTER 12-YEAR PERSECUTION



Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, Lakewood, Colorado

The following is excerpted from "Baker Jack Phillips," CBN, Nov. 2, 2024: "Christian baker Jack Phillips has been locked in a long legal battle over his refusal to make cakes for a same-sex wedding and a gender transition. But after over a decade of court battles, Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado, recently won a major victory at the Colorado Supreme Court--something over which he's elated. ... The baker first found himself in the crosshairs more than a decade ago, when he declined to make a same-sex wedding cake. After that case made its way through the courts, he again found himself facing a new battle after he refused to make a cake celebrating a gender transition. 'I want to make it clear that, at Masterpiece Cakeshop, we serve everybody, but we can't create every cake with every message that people ask us to,' Phillips said. 'In ... the first case, the two men asked me to create a cake celebrating a same-sex wedding. To me, a wedding

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303 Creative v. Elenis. Smith brought her challenge to Colorado's Anti-Discrimination Act in 2016, claiming that the law violated her First Amendment rights by compelling her to create messages that violate her conscience. Smith, a devout Christian, wanted to create websites celebrating traditional weddings, but faced the possibility of being punished by the state if she refused to also celebrate same-sex weddings. ... **Smith's challenge to the law also reached the Supreme Court, which ruled in the summer of 2023 that Colorado's law violated Smith's free speech rights.** The Court noted that Smith served customers of all groups including homosexuals; she simply did not want to be forced to create websites for homosexual weddings, an act which violates her religious beliefs. Justice Neil Gorsuch, who authored the majority opinion of the Court, wrote, "The First Amendment prohibits Colorado from forcing a website designer to create expressive designs speaking messages with which the designer disagrees. ... **The First Amendment's protections belong to all, not just to speakers whose motives the government finds worthy.** In this case, Colorado seeks to force an individual to speak in ways that align with its views but defy her conscience about a matter of major significance."

WHY MUSK'S PURCHASE OF TWITTER WAS A GAME CHANGER

The following is excerpted from "Why Elon Musk's Purchase," *PJMedia*, Nov. 30, 2024: "When Elon Musk first floated the idea of purchasing Twitter, I don't think anyone could fully appreciate how big a deal it was or would be. At the time, many conservatives had been banned from the platform and saw his potential

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acquisition of Twitter as a means to having our accounts restored and being able to tweet without being censored for saying the 'wrong' things. If that had been all that Musk accomplished, it would have been enough, but his purchase of Twitter, since renamed X, may very well have been a huge turning point in American discourse. ... The media simply can't handle that they have competition. And whether they like it or not, X is becoming their competition. 'There's no question that X is the platform with the greatest reach,'

Emmy Award-winning investigative journalist Catherine

Herridge noted recently. 'And when I say the greatest reach, it's not just the numbers, but it's the individuals that you can have this contact with, whether it's people who are very senior in politics, major business leaders.' She continued, 'It's not just the size of the audience, it's the diversity of the audience, and it's being able to reach out to a lot of different types of people. You know, the powerful, the decision makers, but then also the everyday consumers of information. I feel like on X, the people who are following the account are a lot more engaged in the news. They're super consumers of information. You can't argue with the numbers.'"

BAKER JACK PHILLIPS WINS MAJOR VICTORY...
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cake has an inherent message, and that's a message I couldn't express.' ... [T]he second case surrounded a person he described as an 'activist attorney' who called and requested yet another cake Phillips couldn't in good conscience make. '[The individual] asked if we could create a cake that was pink on the inside and blue on the outside,' Phillips said. 'And then we were told that those colors were symbolic of celebration of changing gender, and then it became a message that I couldn't create. ... **Phillips, he also spoke about what it's been like to be dragged through the courts almost endlessly over the past 12 years. 'It's been a very encouraging time, though it seems like it shouldn't.'** Phillips said he decided to keep fighting rather than throw in the towel, appealing to the Bible to express his motivation for seeing the case to its conclusion. ... Phillips said it is God who provides the strength to enable us to be committed to Him and to find solace in our faith. It's through that dynamic that he's found his own ability to persist in peace. **'Just knowing that God is in control of all these issues and I can trust Him implicitly for everything,' he said. 'That's pretty much what's helped keep us going.'** Ultimately, Phillips said it's essential to take a stand for truth, regardless of pushback. **'We have to stand for what we believe, and we get what we believe from God's Word, the Bible,' he said.'**

THE METHUSELAH TREE

The world's most famous date palm is the Methuselah Tree that was grown from a 2,000-year-old seed that was found by archaeologists in the 1960s in Masada, Herod the Great's desert fortress overlooking the Dead Sea. The seeds date to before Christ, so they are 2,000 years old. Masada was stocked with every type of food and wine that the luxury-loving Herod craved, but the fortress was abandoned after his death. It was briefly occupied in 73-74 AD for the last stand of Jewish revolt in the First Roman-Jewish War. When the revolt committed mass suicide, the burned fortress was left to crumble into the dust. The Judean Date Palm itself went extinct sometime between AD 1000 and 1400. The palms were destroyed by centuries of war, neglect, and desertification. About 20 years ago, Dr. Sarah Sallon, a natural medicine researcher, had the idea of planting some of the ancient seeds to see if they had medicinal benefits not found in other dates. With difficulty, she convinced the skeptical Masada archaeologists to give up a portion of their

precious find for this purpose. Dr. Elaine Soloway, with the Arava Institute at the Kibbutz Ketura in the Israeli Negev, oversaw the planting. One of three seeds sprouted and grew into a healthy date palm that began flowering and producing pollen in 2011. They named it *Methuselah* after the oldest living man in recorded history (Genesis 5:27). The problem, as its name suggests, is that the tree is a male and needs a female to produce fruit. Soloway convinced other archaeologists to give up ancient seeds they found in Qumran, a few miles north of Masada, and they have been successful in growing females. One is named *Hannah*, after the prophet Samuel's mother. In 2020, Hannah was successfully pollinated by Methuselah and in September she bore 111 dates of the ancient Judean variety! They are said to be very tasty with a slight honey flavor. As of 2021, there were multiple thriving male and female Judean date palms grown from ancient seeds, and the vision is to produce groves of them for science and commerce.

AUSTRALIA BANS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UNDER 16s

On Nov. 29, the Australian parliament passed a law banning social media for children under 16. "The law will make platforms including TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X and Instagram liable for fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars (\$33 million) for systemic failures to prevent children younger than 16 from holding accounts" ("Australian Parliament bans," AP, Nov. 29, 2024). Regardless of possible benefits, the law has at least three major

problems. First, it puts the onus for protecting children on social media companies rather than parents. Second, the law will doubtless be ignored by unsupervised children who will find a way around it. Third, even if it were effective, the law doesn't go far enough. Older teens should not have uncontrolled, unsupervised access to social media. In light of the massive moral dangers that permeate social media, to allow such a thing is child abuse.

THE LOVING POISON DART FROG

"The Choco Indians of Panama and Colombia use the poison from the skin of the beautiful poison dart frog to make their lethal darts. The bright orange and deep blue skin of this frog serves to warn predators that it is best left alone and its poisonous skin untouched. Although it is deadly, the poison dart frog is one of the most loving parents in the entire amphibian world. The female will lay about a dozen eggs in the leaf litter within her mate's territory. Both parents will stand watch over the eggs, keeping them moist, until the tadpoles emerge. Then the female allows each tadpole, one at a time, to wriggle onto her back. She takes each tadpole, in its turn, to its own miniature pond created by water trapped in the fronds of jungle plants. The mother poison dart frog remembers where each one of her tadpoles is and returns on a regular schedule to lay infertile eggs for the growing youngster to eat. I would prefer to think that the care of the adult poison dart frogs for their children grows out of a sense of love for their offspring, and we know that God is the author of all love. But even if this care is programmed instinct, we must still find the 'programmer'--and that takes us back to the Creator once again. Such wisdom cannot be said to come from nowhere."



Poison Dart Frog

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.
