



# Christian Citizenship

**“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.**

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## **Whose Baby is Charlie Gard?**

The case of little Charlie Gard is unprecedented. “Not only are doctors and judges forcing Charlie off life-support,” writes Wesley J. Smith, “they are also declaring that their ethics rule over Charlie’s life, *even if* the parents—Chris and Connie Gard—find alternative care.”

Eleven-month-old Charlie has a mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome which his doctors declare is untreatable. His parents, however, have raised more than \$1 million to pay for their son to be flown from the U.K. to the United States for an experimental treatment that has shown potential in other mitochondrial conditions such as Charlie’s. U.S. Neurologist Michio Hirano says that his experimental therapy has a 56 percent chance of “meaningful improvement.” If that course proves impossible, Charlie’s parents just want to take their son home so he can die there instead of in a pediatric ICU. But, the hospital refuses to let Charlie be discharged. And the courts have agreed, based on what doctors and attorneys assume are Charlie’s “best interests.”

“The refusal to allow Charlie’s parents to remove their baby boy from the hospital,” writes Smith, “is an act of bioethical aggression that will extend futile-care controversies, creating a duty to die at the time and place of doctors’ choosing. And that raises a crucial liberty question: Whose baby is Charlie Gard? His parents’? Or are sick babies—and others facing futile-care impositions—ultimately owned by the hospital and the state?” (Source: “Whose Baby is Charlie Gard, Anyway” by Wesley J. Smith, *First Things*, 7-4-17)

**What can we do?** Equip yourself to speak up for the sanctity of human life by visiting the websites of Lutherans For Life, the Discovery Institute’s Center on Human Exceptionalism, and Patients’ Rights Council. Read *Culture of Death: The Age of “Do Harm” Medicine* by Wesley J. Smith.

***Please pray that the medical community will “do no harm” to the life that God creates and redeems ... in Jesus’ name.***

## **Enabling Evil**

In her book *Life on the Line*, Elizabeth Skoglund quotes an Auschwitz survivor who said, “The doctor ... if not living in a moral situation ... where limits are very clear ... is very dangerous.” Skoglund continues, “Unfortunately for the human race, that statement is still terrifying in its validity. When we see terms such as ‘quality of life’ affecting what we believe about abortion, euthanasia, or refusal of treatment, just as the Nazi phrases ‘life unworthy of life’ and ‘Final Solution’ helped to justify medicalized killing to the German people, it should cause us alarm. When we hear about the need for racial purity, or read about any human being declared non-human, it should cause us alarm. For whenever it becomes acceptable to abuse the rights of anyone, it will inevitably become right to abuse the rights of others, including yours and mine. The enablement for such abuse will start with the distortion of words, which will then facilitate the behavior.”

In biblical terms, writes Skoglund, “the distortion and repetition of words which change our very beliefs are one way in which we can have our ‘conscience seared with a hot iron’ (1 Tim. 4:2). For the Bible says that ‘in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron’ (1 Tim. 4:1-2).”

Skoglund explains that “individual life may become very cheap indeed” even here in the United States

should we face times of “economic pressures, escalating medical costs ... and even epidemics.” Euthanasia or assisted suicide is already legal in Washington, Oregon, Vermont, Montana, and California, “but it may become mandatory for various problems such as old age or chronic disease.” Skoglund reminds us that, “to God who preserves our tears in a bottle (Ps. 56:8) and counts the very hairs on our head (Mt. 10:3), we will never cease to be precious as individuals. It is the love of God, above all else, which will hold us.

**What can we do?** “If we are to survive in such times,” offers Skoglund, “and if we are to avoid being swept up by ‘seducing spirits’ and the very ‘doctrines of devils,’ it is imperative that we remain true to our faith in the absolute authority of the Scriptures and in our commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our individual lives.”

**Please pray** that Christians push back against evil as we love one another as Christ has loved us.

### **Parent Avoids “Assigning” Gender to Baby**

A Canadian baby has been issued a health document that does not specify whether the child is male or female. Searyl Atli Doty was born in British Columbia “outside the medical system,” and did not undergo a genital inspection after birth. Searyl’s parent, Cori Doty, wants to avoid assigning gender to the child. Doty identifies as non-binary trans. Non-binary is a term to describe people whose gender identity falls outside the categories of man and woman. Trans, short for transgender, describes people whose gender identity does not match the sex or gender they were assigned at birth.

Doty stated publicly, “It is up to Searyl to decide how they identify, when they are old enough to develop their own gender identity. I am not going to foreclose their choices based on an arbitrary assignment of gender at birth based on an inspection of their genitals.” Despite difficulties in obtaining a birth certificate, a health card for the baby has been issued with the sex listed as “U” (“unspecified or unknown”). (Source: CNN)

**What can we do?** There are only two ways to respond. The first is to believe, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he

created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). The second is to “exchange the truth of God for a lie” and worship and serve “the creature rather than the Creator” (Ro. 1:25).

**Please pray** for parents to help children resist the deception of the world... in Jesus’ name.

### **Christian Cake Artist to Supreme Court**

Jack Phillips is a cake artist. He has joyfully served the community of Lakewood, CO., from Masterpiece Cakeshop since opening his family business in 1993. Jack’s faith has always motivated how he operates his business which is why, in July of 2012, Jack declined to create a cake for the same-sex wedding of two men. Jack offered to make the couple any other type of baked good or sell them a pre-made cake but, because of his faith, he could not design a cake promoting a same-sex wedding ceremony. The two men were infuriated.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys came to Jack’s defense when the couple filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission for sexual orientation discrimination. It was explained that Jack did not object to the two men, but to the message the cake would send about marriage. Nevertheless, a judge ruled against Jack in December 2013, saying that designing and creating cakes for same-sex wedding ceremonies are not speech protected by the First Amendment. The Civil Rights Commission ordered Jack and his staff to design cakes for same-sex wedding celebrations, go through a “re-education” program, implement new policies to comply with the commission’s order, and file quarterly “compliance” reports for two years to show that Jack has completely eliminated his religious beliefs from his business. ADF attorneys petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to take up Jack’s case. On June 26, 2017, the Supreme Court granted review of the case. Oral arguments will likely be scheduled for this fall. (Source: [www.adf.org](http://www.adf.org))

**What can we do?** Seek opportunities to discuss religious freedom issues with friends and family. Become familiar with Alliance Defending Freedom.

**Please pray** for Supreme Court judges that will protect religious freedom ... in Jesus’ name.