



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 15, 2016

Thirty-year Christian Worker Fired After Opposing “Gay Marriage”

By all accounts, Charles Rhoads, Jr. was an excellent worker. After 30-plus years of employment at SPX Flow Technology’s site in Rochester, New York, he was an experienced man who’d been promoted and enjoyed excellent performance reviews. But that didn’t stop SPX from unceremoniously firing him last year — after he expressed opposition to faux marriage.



The problems began on April 20, 2015, when the dutiful Rhoads approached a subordinate, named Craig Tyler, who was engaging in a non-business conversation after his break time had ended — Tyler and another worker were on a phone viewing pictures from the latter’s faux wedding. Instead of simply resuming work, however, Tyler asked Rhoads if he wanted to see the pictures. After Rhoads declined, he says that Tyler “accused me of personally disliking the employee who was in a gay marriage.” Defending himself, Rhoads, a believing Christian, stated that the worker was a “likable person but marriage was from God and not from the politics of man,” reports Rhoads. He again expressed his disinterest in seeing the pictures, and Tyler departed in a huff.

That should have been the end of it. Instead, something transpired that Rhoads never could imagine. As he stated in his exclusive interview with *The New American*:

My interaction with my employee [Tyler] was on a Monday. On that Friday at 3 pm I was told I had an employee complaint for abuse of power and they would investigate and allow me the opportunity to respond. At that time they collected my company badge, iPhone, laptop, keys and walked me out the door in front of my team. I was told not to come to work on Monday. I received an overnight letter stating my termination. All this when I had just received my yearly performance evaluation. I was rated three out of a possible four, [four] being the highest, as well as a pay for performance of five percent when the budget was three percent.

To top it off, SPX never did give Rhoads the promised opportunity to respond. When he inquired about it, he was told, reports Rhoads, that “the corporate lawyers have already approved it [the firing], so



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there would be no meeting for me. None of my bosses were in the room when I was let go. Corporate arrived a week later and went through my office for two days and interviewed the hand-selected employees to speak with." And that was that.

Except that Rhoads has now filed a wrongful-termination lawsuit, represented pro bono by upstate N.Y. attorney Philip Vecchio. Citing how SPX's actions are contrary to First Amendment court rulings, Mr. Vecchio told *The New American*, "It's patently unfair on the face of it to discharge an employee after 30 years because of opposition to same-sex marriage.... Basically, the employer has to make reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs.... There is definitely case law on this." Yet SPX's violation of the law apparently extends beyond the First Amendment.

In this age of religious bakers being punished for not servicing events — faux weddings — astute observers won't be surprised to hear that a faithful Christian was fired for expressing a politically incorrect view. Yet as they say, "Follow the money," because SPX may have mercenary motives as well. In fact, Rhoads suspects that Tyler, though upset, might not actually have filed a complaint with SPX's Human Resources Department. Rather, he says that once word of his discussion with Tyler got around, "HR may have used the employee to meet their personal goals." As he explained, given that SPX is "a self-insured health provider for its employees and families, my wife was a huge burden to them. She has close to \$100,000 worth of prescriptions needs on a yearly basis. She also suffered three brain hemorrhages, [and] a broken hip as well as a chronic condition of Multiple Sclerosis. SPX stopped our medical insurance three days after being terminated — 10 days before she was to order her \$20,000 prescriptions."

And the loyal Rhoads, being 56 years old at the time and relatively close to retirement, was just the type of worker a mercenary company unencumbered by feelings of loyalty would want to sack. As Rhoads further explained, "SPX took about 40% of my retirement plan, saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in the insured medical plan and they also reduced [by replacing him with a lower-paid worker] the six-figure salary which I had earned after 30 years of service."

In fact, Rhoads has good reason to believe that SPX had long been looking to get rid of him. Vecchio told *The New American* that a superior had made suggestive comments to Rhoads about how he should retire and move down south. Comments were also made to Rhoads that implied that "he was too old to understand life as it is today," said Vecchio." For this reason, Rhoads is also suing under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. "The age-discrimination act prohibits discrimination based on age," stated Vecchio. It's natural for "older people to incur more medical expenses," he continued, "and now Mr. Rhoads is being let go at his very time of need." As for SPX's side of the story, the company did not respond to *The New American's* request for a comment.

But its actions speak louder than words. And as for the irreligious sentiment, Rhoads explained that he started to witness an anti-Christian bias and felt that the company had "tried distancing itself from Christianity." He elaborated, "I was told by a higher up that Christmas was a Hallmark holiday and they stopped giving us Good Friday off. I remember them replacing 'Merry Christmas' with 'Happy Holidays.'" And now, says Rhoads, SPX has been "able to remove a Christian from the workplace who would speak up when the professional environment was lacking" — and replace him, no doubt, with someone far more "politically correct."

SPX's problem is that political correctness is no substitute for legal correctness, a fact it may soon learn in a very painful way.



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