



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 10, 2018

Christians Who Refused to Bake Pro-Gay Marriage Cake Win in U.K. Supreme Court

The United Kingdom's Supreme Court ruled Wednesday in favor of Christian bakers from Northern Ireland who had turned down an order for a cake promoting same-sex marriage, ending a four-year, \$600,000 legal battle.

In 2014, Gareth Lee, who is homosexual, placed an order at Ashers Bakery for a cake featuring the Sesame Street characters Bert and Ernie and the message "Support Gay Marriage." According to the [BBC](#), "His order was initially accepted at a branch of Ashers in Belfast city center, but two days later the baking firm's head office contacted Mr. Lee to say the firm would not make the cake."



Lee was told his order had been refused because its message conflicted with the religious beliefs of Daniel and Amy McArthur, the Christian couple who founded the bakery chain with the biblical name. "Asher was a tribe of Israel who had many skilled bakers and created bread fit for a king," they explain on [their website](#).

Rather than simply seeking out another bakery that would be happy to fill his order, Lee took his grievance to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission, which sued the McArthurs in Belfast County Court. Lee prevailed, so the McArthurs appealed, but the appeals court upheld the ruling.

"If equality law means people can be punished for politely refusing to support other people's causes, then equality law needs to change," Daniel McArthur [said](#) at the time.

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The facts of the case were never really in dispute. The McArthurs did not know Lee was homosexual at the time they refused his order. They only objected to the message on the cake.

"We didn't say no because of the customer; we'd served him before, we'd serve him again," McArthur said when he arrived at the Supreme Court in May. "It was because of the message. But some people want the law to make us support something with which we disagree."

The only question was whether the McArthurs' actions ran afoul of the Equality Act, which forbids discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, among other characteristics. The Supreme Court unanimously decided that they did not.

"They would have refused to make such a cake for any customer, irrespective of their sexual orientation," the court wrote. "Their objection was to the message on the cake, not to the personal characteristics of Mr. Lee."

The McArthurs, of course, were overjoyed at the decision. Speaking to reporters outside the court,



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Daniel McArthur [said](#), “I want to start by thanking God. He has been with us during the challenges of the last four years. Through the Bible and the support of Christians, He has comforted us and sustained us. He is our rock and all His ways are just.”

“The judges have given a clear signal today. In fact it couldn’t be clearer. Family businesses like ours are free to focus on giving all their customers the best service they can — without being forced to promote other people’s campaigns.”

McArthur also demonstrated Christian charity and forgiveness, saying Lee will “always be welcome in any of our shops.”

Lee, on the other hand, was disappointed, saying he was now concerned about “the implications for all of the gay community.”

“To me, this was never about conscience or a statement. All I wanted to do was to order a cake in a shop,” he said.

That cake, by the way, would have cost Lee about \$48. The Equality Commission spent roughly \$330,000 prosecuting the case, and the McArthurs ran up about \$260,000 in legal fees, paid for by the [Christian Institute](#), a charitable organization dedicated to “the furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion in the United Kingdom.” All told, nearly \$600,000 has been spent on the case, making it, in the BBC’s words, “the most expensive cake order in U.K. history.”

Ian Paisley, a member of parliament from Northern Ireland, isn’t taking this misuse of taxpayer funds lightly. “I have written to the Secretary of State for NI calling for a review of funding for the Equality Commission,” he [tweeted](#). “After such a decisive finding by the Supreme Court the Equality Commission[’]s immediate response has been to threaten to waste more public money on this case. Stop it now!”



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