

The Gay Wedding Couple That Didn't Sue the Cakemaker

At one Indianapolis shop, 111 Cakery almost turned into a 911 for religious liberty. Like most Christians in the wedding business, Randy and Trish McGath knew the risks of turning down an order for a same-sex ceremony.

In their industry, word was spreading fast about the price of standing up for your faith—from florists and facilities rentals to caterers and bed-and-breakfasts. They'd heard the horror stories of photographers who were dragged before human rights commissions and another baker under threat of jail, all for operating their businesses under the same values that they have lived out all their lives.

What would the McGaths do if the same threat came to their shop? Unfortunately, they didn't have to wait long to find out. A few weeks ago, the owners of 111 Cakery got a call from Mike Stephens and Shane Laney, a newly engaged couple who wanted to hire Randy and Trish to make the cake for their April commitment ceremony. Knowing it could cost them their business—or at the very least, change it forever—the McGaths never wavered. Politely, they explained they couldn't accept the job.

"As artists," Randy told the local Fox affiliate, "we have to find inspiration to create something special for our clients. When asked to do a cake for an occasion or with a theme that's in opposition with our faith, it's just hard for us. We struggle with that."

And like so many other believers trying to strike a balance between compassion and conviction, that struggle isn't rooted in prejudice.

Under 111 Cakery's policy, the McGaths also draw the line at custom cakes with alcohol, drug or violence-related messages.

"There is zero hate here," Randy reiterated. "This causes us to do a lot of soul searching. Why are we doing what we do? We want to show the love of Christ. We want to be right with our God, but we also want to show kindness and respect to other people."

Although Mike and Shane complained about the decision on social media, they seem content to move on and find another bakery without involving local officials.

"We found someone that will do it for us, so we're going to focus on the good," Mike said.

And that's exactly as it should be. This is how religious liberty and the free market are supposed to work. Instead of forcing Christians to participate in these ceremonies against their will, the customers simply found their service elsewhere. As with any business policy, the market will vote with their dollars on whether they agree with the McGaths' position. And as consumers, they should have that right.

Tragically, Mike and Shane's response is an anomaly among those pushing for the redefinition of marriage. Just ask the students of Stanford University. There, a conservative group called the Anscombe Society was blocked from hosting a conference called "Communicating Values: Marriage, Family and the Media" by the campus's student government. Calling it "hate speech," the Graduate Student Council voted 10-2 to cut off funding from the group. This, despite the Anscombe Society's efforts to reach out to the campus LGBT groups in hopes of finding some common ground on the event's scheduled speakers.

According to the minutes from the council's meeting earlier this month, the majority of students pushed to censor the society's beliefs. Only a handful of students seemed to

understand the importance of a fair debate.

“In the name is tolerance, we are silencing and taking away support from a view that we don’t agree with,” one student said. “These views are out there, we should listen to them. I totally disagree with these people, but we need to hear what they have to say.”

Unfortunately for the Anscombe Society, fair debate doesn’t begin with fair treatment.

Tony Perkins *is president of Family Research Council.*