

Christian B&B Owners Lose UK Supreme Court Appeal

The U.K. Supreme Court has dismissed an appeal by Christian bed-and-breakfast owners that only allows married couples to share a double bed.

Owners Peter and Hazelmary Bull had been successfully sued by gay couple Martyn Hall and Steven Preddy and were ordered to pay £3,600 (about \$5,800) in damages.

The Bulls say their policy—which was applied to heterosexuals as well as homosexuals—is based on their sincere Christian belief that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

Peter and Hazelmary Bull had appealed to the Supreme Court, asking for a “reasonable accommodation” of their religious beliefs.

But five judges all said the policy amounted to sexual orientation discrimination and dismissed the Bulls’ case.

Three judges said it amounted to direct discrimination, and two said it was indirect discrimination that, in this case, was not justified.

The lead decision was written by Deputy President of the Court Lady Hale, who in the past has argued that marriage serves no useful purposes.

Hazelmary Bull says she is “deeply disappointed and saddened” by the ruling, which is the first of its kind to be handed down by the U.K. Supreme Court.

She adds, “We are just ordinary Christians who believe in the importance of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

“Our B&B is not just our business, it’s our home. All we have

ever tried to do is live according to our own values, under our own roof.

“These beliefs are not based on hostility to anyone—we certainly bear no ill will to Steven and Martyn. Our policy is based on our sincere beliefs about marriage.

“Britain ought to be a country of freedom and tolerance, but it seems religious beliefs must play second fiddle to the new orthodoxy of political correctness.

“We appealed to the Supreme Court to introduce a bit more balance when dealing with competing rights of sexual orientation and religious liberty.

“Somehow we have got to find a way of allowing different beliefs to coexist in our society.

“But the judges have sidestepped that big issue and reinforced the notion that gay rights must trump everything else.

“In particular, we are deeply troubled by the remarks of Lady Hale, who says rulings by European judges means gay rights are almost untouchable.

“What does this mean for other people in Britain who believe in traditional marriage—not just Christians, but Muslims, Jews, people of all faiths and none?

“We ask Parliament to take a serious look at how Christians with traditional beliefs are being left out in the cold.

“We have no regrets about contesting this case, nor will we ever be ashamed of our beliefs.

“We are not perfect people, but we are trying to do our best to live out our faith with honesty and consistency. And we will continue to do that, come what may.

“As Christmastime approaches, we are reminded that Jesus came

into the world to save sinners—like me and Pete.

“We want to take this opportunity to wish everyone peace and goodwill, and a happy Christmas to you all.”

The Bulls’ legal appeal was paid for by the Christian Institute’s Legal Defence Fund.

Spokesman Mike Judge says, “What this case shows is that the powers of political correctness have reached all the way to the top of the judicial tree.

“So much so, that even the Supreme Court dares not say anything against gay rights.

“Writing the major opinion in the ruling, Lady Hale effectively said gay rights are almost untouchable because of the rulings by European judges.

“Combine that with gay marriage, and it’s a recipe for all sorts of threats to people who believe in traditional marriage.

“This ruling is another slap in the face to Christians and shows that the elite institutions are saturated with a liberal mindset which cares little about religious freedom.

“It should be noted that the one-sided laws which paved the way for this case, the Sexual Orientation Regulations 2007, were voted for by the now Prime Minister David Cameron.

“Parliament needs to reform the law to allow a more reasonable approach which balances competing rights. Otherwise Christianity will become the belief that dare not speak its name.”