

# Christian Baker's Lesbian Niece Speaks Out About Family's Firm Beliefs

A homosexual relative of the Christian owners of a bakery facing legal action over its stance on marriage has questioned whether gay rights should be prioritized over faith.

Angela McArthur, whose uncle co-owns the firm, spoke of her respect for the family's faith in an interview with the BBC's Stephen Nolan.

McArthur, who is in a civil partnership, questioned whether it was possible to prioritize one "equality strand"—such as sexual orientation or faith—over another.

Ashers Baking Company in Northern Ireland—the bakery at the center of the case—declined to produce a cake with the slogan "Support Gay Marriage" for a campaign group, QueerSpace.

The group had the cake made elsewhere, but the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland claims the bakery breached equality laws.

The Christian Institute is supporting the bakery, and says the case proves the need for the law to reasonably accommodate family-run businesses with firmly held beliefs.

In her interview, McArthur was pressed on whether the bakery should have baked the cake, but she said she could not answer.

"I do a lot of equality and diversity training within my job, and for me, you have your strands of equality and diversity and within that is faith and the other one is sexual orientation, so how can you prioritize one over the other?"

She acknowledged that her family has the freedom to express

their deeply held faith, while commenting: "I have a right to live how I want to live as well."

Under the Equality Act 2010, religion is one of nine protected characteristics, which include age, race, disability and sexual orientation.

In response to a question about the case in the House of Commons this week David Cameron failed to back religious freedom.

Asked by DUP MP Gregory Campbell whether he thought religious freedoms should be "protected by the introduction of a conscience clause," the prime minister said he was unaware of the Ashers case.

He commented: "But I do think a commitment to equality in terms of racial equality, in terms of equality to those of different sexes, equality in terms of people who have disabilities or indeed tolerance and equality of people with different sexualities, all of that is a very important part of being British."

The Christian Institute's Director Colin Hart said: "All the McArthurs want is to run their bakery according to their Christian beliefs."

"Imagine the uproar if the Equality Commission said that an environmentally-conscious baker had to produce a cake saying 'Support fracking'? Or if they threatened a feminist bakery for refusing to print a 'Shariah for U.K.' cake?" he added.

Simon Calvert spoke to Stephen Nolan about the case earlier this week. Watch the video below.