

Christian Baker: 'We Are Staying True to Our Beliefs'

The Christian bakery managers who face a court challenge because of their stance on traditional marriage have spoken out in Northern Ireland's news media, saying, "we are staying true to our beliefs."

Daniel McArthur has been at the center of a religious-liberty debate after the bakery he manages—Ashers Baking Company—declined to decorate a cake with the slogan "Support Gay Marriage."

Now he has explained how the company came to its decision and commented: "I am sorry for any distress we have caused, but we are staying true to our beliefs."

Daniel and Amy McArthur, who have a 1-year-old daughter and are expecting another child, spoke out after the bakery's decision made the news worldwide.

The bakery, which is owned by Daniel's parents, is facing court action after the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland claimed it breached equality laws.

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

In an interview with the *Daily Mail*, Daniel said the family discussed the cake order—"weighing up what our conscience told us against the risk our response might get some public attention."

He added: "As we don't believe in gay marriage and did not want to be associated with a politicized campaign, mum phoned the customer to explain politely that we could not accept the

order and would be returning his deposit.”

“We never thought we could be prosecuted for our beliefs,” he added.

Daniel commented: “We are not discriminating against gay people. Our church’s definition of marriage is clear: It’s a covenant between a man and a woman, a 6,000-year-old tradition, which is ordained by God. Sexual activity outside marriage is a sin.”

He also questioned the Equality Commission’s actions, saying: “The commission talks about discrimination on the grounds of disability, race and sexuality, but never against people’s Christian beliefs. Why?”

“We pray that God will give us the strength to fight this,” Daniel added.

The interview was carried out by journalist Andrew Pierce, who is gay and in a civil partnership.

He noted that while Northern Irish legislators have voted against same-sex marriage, the Equality Commission is in favor of it.

Pierce concluded, “Its website states: ‘The commission supports the introduction of legislation permitting same-sex marriage ... with sufficient safeguards for religious organizations.’

“But not, it seems, for small Christian bakeries.”