

Persecuted Christian Bakers Redeemed with Huge Court Victory in Oregon

The Oregon Court of Appeals has reversed part of a state decision that forced Christian bakers Aaron and Melissa Klein out of business by penalizing them \$135,000 for refusing to create a custom cake for a same-sex wedding.

The court held that a state agency, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), acted with bias against the bakers' religion, sending the case back to the same agency to reconsider the damages award.

Oregon's ruling comes after the U.S. Supreme Court slapped the state of Colorado for showing hostility against Christianity in a similar case: *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*.

In its 37-page opinion, the Oregonian court concluded, "When viewed in the light of *Masterpiece Cakeshop*, BOLI's handling of the damages portion of the case does not reflect the neutrality toward religion required by the Free Exercise Clause."

It added, "The prosecutor's closing argument apparently equating the Kleins' religious beliefs with 'prejudice,' together with the agency's reasoning for imposing damages in connection with Aaron's quotation of Leviticus, reflect that the agency acted in a way that passed judgment on the Kleins' religious beliefs, something that is impermissible under *Masterpiece Cakeshop*."

CBN News has reported for years about the Kleins, two Oregon bakers who were fined for refusing to make a cake promoting a gay commitment ceremony. They were punished with a \$135,000

fine for declining to create a same-sex wedding cake in 2013. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2019, where the justices threw out a previous state court ruling against the Kleins, sending the case back down to that court in Oregon.

The high court said the state court needed to reconsider the case in light of last year's Supreme Court ruling in favor of Colorado baker Jack Phillips, who couldn't make a cake for a same-sex wedding. The court had ruled that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission showed anti-religious bias against the Christian baker. {eo}

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