

Prominent Gay Activist Flip-Flops on Christian Baker Decision

Peter Tatchell—a prominent campaigner on homosexuality and free speech—says he now disagrees with the ruling against Ashers Baking Company and has warned that it sets a “worrying precedent.”

His comments come just days before Ashers’ appeal against the decision is heard in the Court of Appeal in Belfast.

Writing in *The Guardian*, Tatchell said, “In my view, it is an infringement of freedom to require businesses to aid the promotion of ideas to which they conscientiously object.”

‘Step too far’

Tatchell has long promoted homosexual rights in high-profile campaigns and has also backed free-speech efforts in Parliament.

In his latest comments on the Ashers case, he said that while he wants to “defend the gay community,” he also wants to back “freedom of conscience, expression and religion.”

Describing the legal action against the bakers as “a step too far,” he said that he now believes the court was “wrong to penalize Ashers, and I was wrong to endorse its decision.”

Discrimination

He continued by making clear why the bakery declined to decorate a cake for Gareth Lee—a volunteer LGBT activist.

“His cake request was refused not because he was gay, but because of the message he asked for. There is no evidence that

his sexuality was the reason Ashers declined his order.”

He added that the ruling against Ashers on “political discrimination” was also flawed and sets a concerning pattern for the future.

That particular law, he commented, was never intended to “compel people to promote political ideas with which they disagreed.”

Muslim printer

Tatchell also raised concerns about others who might be affected if the result stands—“should Muslim printers be obliged to publish cartoons of Mohammed? Or Jewish ones publish the words of a Holocaust denier?”

He concluded: “Discrimination against people should be unlawful, but not against ideas.”

His comments came as Daniel and Amy McArthur said that the case has strengthened their marriage, as well as their faith in God.