

'We Are Definitely Making a Sacrifice for Our Convictions'

Betty and Richard Odgaards, the owners of an Iowa gift shop and bistro who refused to hold a gay wedding, have decided to stop doing weddings altogether.

The move comes after a gay couple filed a complaint against the owners with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, saying the shop could not discriminate based on religion since the former church is a public venue.

The shop owners say their facility has always served gays and lesbians, but providing a space for the wedding would have violated their religious beliefs as Mennonites.

Facing mounting legal fees, the Odgaards settled the complaint by the two gay men.

As part of the deal, they had to pay the same-sex couple \$5,000 and agree not to discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation.

Consequently, the Odgaards opted to stop hosting all weddings.

"We are definitely making a sacrifice for our convictions. It affects the value of our business," Richard Odegaard told Iowa's WHOTV.

"We could either maintain a position to be at risk for future or subsequent claims of discrimination or we could get clear out of serving the wedding industry. That's what we chose to do," he said.

"Our faith hasn't changed," Betty Odgaard told *The Des Moines Register*. "Of course, it's kind of a crushing blow because

that's a major part of our business and weddings are so absolutely gorgeous in that place."