The Ashers bakery was taken to court today for refusing to supply a cake in support of homosexual 'marriage'. The Northern Ireland Equality Commission is supporting Gareth Lee, a homosexual rights activist, in his legal action against the Christian-run bakery on grounds of sexual discrimination.

On the 1st of January 2007, the Labour government under the leadership of Prime Minister Tony Blair, introduced the Sexual Orientation Regulations, which made homosexuality, lesbianism and other sexual persuasions a 'protected trait', similar in status to race, religion or disability. This made it illegal to discriminate against individuals on the grounds of sexuality, by withholding goods or services. A number of months ago a homosexual activist from the QueerSpace group requested Ashers bakery to manufacture a cake decorated with the phrase 'Support Gay Marriage'. The cake was intended to be presented to Northern Ireland's first elected openly homosexual mayor. Ashers initially accepted the order and the cake was reportedly paid for in full, but the company subsequently contacted the customer to inform them they felt they could not fulfill the order and the money was refunded. Being a Christian-run bakery, they felt that producing a cake to support something that the Bible expressly forbids and is currently against the law in Northern Ireland was something they could not do in good conscience. When the matter went to press, another bakery offered to create the cake. But Mr. Lee decided to take Ashers to court on the grounds that they unlawfully discriminated against him. The Northern Ireland Equality Commission decided to back Mr. Lee to the sum of £33,000 in taxpayers money, to win back damages from Ashers amounting to around £500 for 'hurt feelings'.

The McArthur family deny they discriminated against Mr. Lee, saying that they were unaware of Mr. Lee's background to start with, and have always treated every customer with equal respect. They said their refusal was based solely on the message the cake was to portray, as it conflicted with their moral beliefs. They have also declined to create cakes for other customers in the past, who have requested ones printed with pornographic images. The McArthurs feel that nobody should be forced to provide a service that goes against their moral beliefs or conscience. Christian companies in the United Kingdom are increasingly being targeted by homosexual activists. Mr. and Mrs. Bull, who ran a bed and breakfast in their home in England, were deliberately targeted by two homosexual activists. Mr. and Mrs. Bull, who ran their bed and breakfast for around thirty years, made no secret of the fact that they were Christians. It was clearly displayed on their website. They politely requested that guests who were not married, regardless of their sexual orientation, to sleep in separate rooms. When they phoned to book a room, Steven Preddy and Martyn Hall led Mrs. Bull to believe that they were husband and wife. When two men appeared on her doorstep, she did not refuse them a room, but said they would have to sleep in separate rooms. They took her to court for discrimination, and backed by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission which is pushing hard for

homosexual 'marriage' to be legalized throughout the UK, she was ordered to pay £3600 in damages for 'hurt feelings'. But the hurt feelings caused to Mrs. Bull did not end there. She became the victim of a vicious hate campaign carried out by homosexual activists. Every time the story appeared in the press, her home was vandalized, she received death threats and abusive phone calls. She lost her business, and to top it all, her husband was admitted to hospital on the day of the trial.

These are just a few of the people who are now suffering as a result of the government's decision to create civil partnerships and now recognize homosexual 'marriage' in England, Scotland and Wales, even though a majority of people were opposed to it. The government assured us at the time that a 'triple-lock' system would be created which would protect those who disagreed with homosexual 'marriage' so they wouldn't face legal action. They later had to admit that they had no power to prevent it. There are calls for an amendment to be made to the law which would provide reasonable accommodation for those who feel they are unable to provide a service on the grounds of moral belief or conscience. But it may be too little too late for the marriage registrars that have lost their jobs, for the Catholic adoption agencies that have closed, for the Christian business owners who are being persecuted for standing up for what they believe, which is simply that God created marriage to be between one man and one woman.

Christians are often portrayed in the media as bigoted and hateful because of their beliefs. I was at the conference at the Waterfront in Belfast where over three thousand Christians had gathered to show their support to the McArthur family and Ashers bakery. There was no atmosphere of bitterness, vengeance, anger or hatred. They prayed, they read the Scriptures where it says we are to pray for those in authority and be subject to governmental authority. They prayed for the McArthur family, for the judge, for Mr. Lee and the people on the equality commission who are opposing them. Then they prayed for a fair trial. Those who weren't fortunate enough to get a seat in the Waterfront stood outside in the cold singing hymns. Does that sound like people who are bigoted, who hate homosexuals, and who want to impose their views on everyone else? No, it is people that just want to live lives that are pleasing to God. And for that we need just laws that do not criminalize the innocent and that allow people to live according to their conscience and beliefs.

I don't know how things will go in the court case for Ashers. I do pray that people see sense, and that some good will come out of this. But at the same time I do believe there is a spiritual battle being waged behind the scenes, and that Satan is trying desperately to undermine the authority of the Bible worldwide, by forcing people to acknowledge something that God declares to be sinful. Now I'm not saying that homosexuals are any greater sinners than the rest of us. The Bible declares that all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God

(Romans 3:23). That is why none of us have the right to boast, or to think that we are better than anyone else. A Christian is just someone whose sins have been forgiven. That's why we want to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. Not because we think we are better than anyone else, but because we want others to hear the good news, that their sins can be forgiven and that they too can have eternal life. There is no sin that is too great for God to forgive. The Bible says in Acts 13:38-39, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses
”. God loves you. Jesus died for you. Trust Him for salvation today.

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