

Daniel McArthur

General Manager of Ashers Baking Company

Court of Appeal, Belfast, Wednesday 3 February 2016 09.00

We're looking forward to this opportunity to have our case heard by the Lord Chief Justice because we believe the County Court got the original ruling wrong.

As I've said many times before, Ashers does not discriminate against anyone. We took issue with the message on the cake and not the customer and as a family we believe we should retain the freedom to decline business that would force us to promote a cause with which we disagree.

As Christians we can't simply switch off our faith when we enter the workplace on a Monday morning. To be a Christian at all is to strive to live for Christ in every corner of our lives.

We served Mr Lee as we would any other customer. We were simply unwilling to endorse this campaign for a new law that so clearly goes against what the Bible says about marriage. And for that we've been punished.

As Christians we are law-abiding citizens and we expect the law to protect us as much as anyone else. We hope the judicial system will now make the correct decision and protect our freedom to carry out our work without being forced to violate our consciences.

As a family we have found the whole process very difficult. We would rather not be here today. But we knew we had to appeal, not only for ourselves, but on behalf of other family businesses who could be forced to endorse or promote views with which they disagree.

So today we appeal to the Lord Chief Justice and his colleagues to overturn the County Court ruling. We appeal to them to recognise that there is a big difference between refusing to serve someone because of their sexual orientation or political opinions, and choosing not to endorse those ideas.

We appeal to those who would condemn us for our actions to consider what they would have done if they were required by law to use their creative abilities to promote a cause which goes against their strongest convictions.

And we also appeal to our fellow Christians to have courage. To have courage in the face of such challenges to our faith. We thank them for their prayers and ask them to continue to pray during the hearing and for the judges considering this ruling.

We know most people don't think we've done anything wrong and we're grateful for the support of many people who, though they disagree with our view on marriage, they recognise that we should not be forced to deny our beliefs.

Above all we continue to trust in God. He's been faithful to us. We know He's in control and His will be done in this case.

Thank you.