



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 1, 2011

Gay Rights Groups Fry Chick-fil-A

The voices of “tolerance” on the left are once again demonstrating their intolerance of those who disagree with them. The target this time is the Georgia-based fast-food chain Chick-fil-A, under fire for providing food for a marriage seminar.

What could be so offensive about giving free refreshments to a conference on improving one’s marriage? The problem, according to the ever-tolerant Left, is that the conference, called [“The Art of Marriage,”](#) is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Family Institute, a conservative Christian public-policy organization that, quite naturally, is opposed to homosexual marriage. That makes Chick-fil-A an accessory to the [thoughtcrime](#) of homophobia, so the argument goes, and a prime target for boycotts and negative publicity by gay rights groups.



With [an assist from the New York Times](#) and [other media outlets](#), these fringe groups have turned an innocuous donation of sandwiches and brownies by “a local, independent operator” (according to PFI President Michael Geer) into “an opportunity for organizing” against the entire company by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender advocates such as Georgia Equality.

There’s no question that Chick-fil-A has a distinctly Christian ethos. Founded in the early 1960s by S. Truett Cathy, described by the *Times* as “an 89-year-old, Harley-riding Southern Baptist” who entered the restaurant business with a small diner in 1946, the chain is closed on Sundays (as was the diner) and weaves Christian principles throughout its corporate culture. The company’s corporate purpose: “To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.”

“Over the years,” writes the *Times*, “the company’s operators, its WinShape Foundation and the Cathy family have given millions of dollars to a variety of causes and programs, including scholarships that require a pledge to follow Christian values, a string of Christian-based foster homes and groups working to defeat same-sex marriage initiatives.”

In a [statement](#), Chick-fil-A President Dan T. Cathy, one of Truett Cathy’s two sons who now run the business, denied that the scholarships “require a pledge to follow Christian values.” He also denied that the company “requires potential franchisees to discuss their church involvement,” contrary to media reports. In addition, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, he said that the WinShape Foundation “does not bar gay couples from its marriage retreats or training” (as alleged by one blogger), though, for obvious reasons, “the curriculum is designed for heterosexual couples.”

Furthermore, he said:



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In recent weeks, we have been accused of being anti-gay. We have no agenda against anyone. At the heart and soul of our company, we are a family business that serves and values all people regardless of their beliefs or opinions. We seek to treat everyone with honor, dignity and respect, and believe in the importance of loving your neighbor as yourself.

We also believe in the need for civility in dialogue with others who may have different beliefs. While my family and I believe in the Biblical definition of marriage, we love and respect anyone who disagrees.

Cathy stated that the company very much supports traditional marriage and provides “resources to strengthen marriages and families.” At the same time, he said, “we will not champion any political agendas on marriage and family.”

The coverage of the anti-Chick-fil-A campaign differs markedly from that which greets protests of corporate activities offensive to Christians. The Chick-fil-A story presents the company’s opponents as enlightened voices of reason and tolerance confronting a benighted bunch of religious fanatics who would persecute gays, lesbians, et al., if only given a chance. Christian protests of corporate practices, by contrast, are invariably treated as examples of crazed religious intolerance — when they are covered at all.

For example, the *Times* reports with horror that Chick-fil-A once distributed CDs of Focus on the Family’s *Adventures in Odyssey* radio show with its kids’ meals. Meanwhile, most other fast-food chains give away toys related to Hollywood movies that are seldom fully appropriate for children, often featuring (mild) cursing or toilet humor, yet one never hears complaints from the press about this practice (except insofar as it [encourages kids](#) to pester their parents to buy the meals).

Multiple reports also note that student groups at the University of Indiana at South Bend managed to get administrators to ban Chick-fil-A from the campus over the chain’s alleged homophobia. Would administrators at any public university kick a business or other organization off campus because of protests from Christians? If they did such an unlikely thing, imagine the howls of indignation from the media and the demands for the heads of those who made the decision!

Whatever Chick-fil-A’s transgressions against the gay rights agenda, they are mild in comparison to other corporations’ routine transgressions against biblical morality. These offensive activities, however, are seldom reported. When was the last mainstream media report on the Home Depot’s extensive support for gay and lesbian causes, including [sponsorship of children’s workshops and parades at gay pride events](#)? What about the [dozens of companies](#) that donate to Planned Parenthood, thereby funding the murder of the unborn?

The problem with Chick-fil-A, in the minds of the modern Left and the mainstream media (but I repeat myself), is simply that it is run by conservative Christians and does not pretend otherwise. The flap over the marriage seminar in Pennsylvania is just the latest excuse to demonize a successful business that does not toe the line.

Expect these fowl attempts at egging the company toward the left wing to continue. Let us hope that Chick-fil-A is not cowed.

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