

Somewhere... Hopefully

Chick-fil-A raises morality debate



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This past Saturday, I faced a surprisingly difficult dilemma.

It was nine o'clock in the morning and I was rushing to get to work on time. I had overslept my alarm, and had only barely gotten in a quick shower before I had to race out of my apartment. Needless to say, my need to hurry made me forget a few things. While I could survive without my phone and my iPod, I couldn't help needing to pick up breakfast somewhere.

It was my hunger that created my dilemma. Usually, when I need a quick bite to eat, I, like most people, go to Chick-fil-A. And why wouldn't I?

There's a location only half a mile from my job, it's moderately cheap, not terribly unhealthy, and, most importantly, their chicken biscuits are one of the most addictive substances on the planet. But before I could drive to my usual breakfast haunt, my brain took control of my stomach and forced me to remember the recent interview the president of Chick-fil-A had given concerning his anti-same-sex marriage stance.

So I was left wondering, do I follow my stomach to food or my head and my own opinions to some form of protest (and hunger)?

To those who haven't read about Dan Cathy and the views that he and his company have recently espoused, Cathy gave an interview last week to the "Biblical Press" in which he defended his company against concerns over its seemingly overt Christian values. In the instance of same-sex marriages versus that of the "traditional" family unit, Cathy proclaimed that he and his company were "guilty as charged" in supporting a "biblical definition" of the family. In that he meant marriage was only between a man and a woman, and that a family is constituted by a mother, father and children. Cathy even took his stance a step further by saying that, while Chick-fil-A is not a "Christian business," it is run on "biblical principles."

The idea of Chick-fil-A's "biblical principles" doesn't necessarily bother me, because, as Cathy pointed out, while his position may be unpopular, it is well within his own rights to express such views. But I am unnerved by his proclamation of the restaurant's moral and monetary support for the idea of the "traditional family."

When I say this, I don't mean that I have anything

against Cathy and the restaurant as a whole (he may be a fine man and his restaurant certainly is a nice chain), but I can't get over what I view as an overtly discriminatory standpoint. By publicly announcing his support for only heterosexual marriages, which silently condemns non-traditional relationships in the company's eyes, Cathy has mixed morals, business and personal lives in a way that is tangled, confusing and incitative. He's turned something as simple as a drive-thru into a moral conundrum.

Ultimately, it was Cathy's comments that made me decide to keep on driving, but it wasn't for lack of trying. I had my turning signal on, and I was about to pull over into the parking lot, when I pulled back into my original lane. I couldn't help but think that if I went to Chick-fil-A, then I was in some way tacitly supporting Cathy and his views. I thought my patronage would betray my own morals.

By not going to Chick-fil-A, I didn't change the world, nor (from the looks of the line piled up outside the establishment) did I affect their revenue stream much. But I did do something: I remained true to myself.

I don't understand discrimination. I don't understand why it still exists. There is no point or place for it anymore. That was a demon and a struggle that our previous generations strove to overcome. And yet, instead of lifting ourselves past it, we remain stuck in its quagmire. We live in a modern world, shouldn't our ideologies reflect that?

I disagree vehemently with Dan Cathy, in that I feel the definition of the family is a subjective one. Whatever constitutes a familial bond in someone's life, regardless of gender, is a family. Friends, work, it doesn't matter. Anywhere where love and support can be found is a family.

By not stopping at Chick-fil-A, I don't plan on changing the world. I don't even plan on changing Cathy and his corporation's mind. One individual can't do that. What I am doing, however, is expressing myself and my beliefs in the same way Cathy has. I love chicken biscuits, but I won't kowtow myself to a company run with discriminatory policies in mind to get my fix. Not even the best buttermilk biscuits in the world are worth that.

I'm not asking people to boycott Chick-fil-A, because that would be the imposition of my own beliefs onto someone else. All I can ask, however, is for consideration. Know where and what you're supporting, and don't let complacency be an excuse for laziness. Because that road can leave a bitter taste in everyone's mouth.

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