

Citing Chick-Fil-A's 'Homophobic' Beliefs, Town Cancels Leadership Event

Apparently it's a crime to oppose homosexuality in the public square. Or at least that's how some business leaders Nanaimo, Canada feel about it.

Nanaimo City Councilors cancelled an event when they learned that Chick-fil-A was one of the sponsors. The British Columbia town was planning a leadership event but voted against it at the last minute.

"It was moved and seconded that the City of Nanaimo advised the VICC (Vancouver Island Conference Center Events) that as that as the owners of the facility, any events that are associated with organizations or people that promote or have a history of divisiveness, homophobia or other expressions of hate not to be permitted..."

The problem? Chick-Fil-A CEO Dan Cathy.

Cathy made headlines two years ago when he publicly supported traditional marriage. He hasn't changed his mind. But he isn't as bold as he once was in speaking his opinion. As he sees it, Chick-fil-A has no place in the culture wars and that he regrets "making the company a symbol in the marriage debate."

"Every leader goes through different phases of maturity, growth and development and it helps by [recognizing] the mistakes that you make," Cathy says. "And you learn from those mistakes. If not, you're just a fool. I'm thankful that I lived through it and I learned a lot from it."

In summer 2012, Cathy said he was "guilty as charged" in his religion-based opposition to gay marriage. His comments set

off a firestorm; same-sex marriage proponents boycotted the restaurant while thousands showed their support by showing up in droves, setting records for sales.

The company did its best to remove itself from the controversy by repeatedly stating it does not discriminate against homosexual customers or employees

“Probably the elements that were stressful for me most is from our internal staff and from operators and how this may be affecting them,” Cathy says. “The bottom line is we have a responsibility here to keep the whole of the organization in mind and it has to take precedence over the personal expression and opinion on social issues.”

But the CEO added fuel to the fire when he tweeted his disappointment in June 2013 over the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act and to decline to rule on Proposition 8.

After prayer and conversations with co-workers and friends, Cathy says he decided to step away from the gay marriage debate. He has made it clear, however, that his opinion hasn’t changed.

“I think the time of truths and principles are captured and codified in God’s Word, and I’m just personally committed to that,” he says. “I know others feel very different from that and I respect their opinion and I hope that they would be respectful of mine.”

Apparently, Nanaimo, Canada isn’t willing to forgive and forget. Is the town justified in holding a grudge or is this anti-Christian bigotry at its best?

“Councilors took turns defaming the convention, Chick-Fil-A, one of its speakers, its organizers and those in it—all without the burden of facts,” Ezra Levant, a Canadian lawyer and best-selling author, wrote in a *Toronto Sun* column. “They

falsely accused one conference speaker of being anti-gay—even though city staff reminded councilors that the conference wasn't about homosexuality at all.”

Although the minutes of the City Council meeting record their accusations against Chick-Fil-A in black and white, Nanaimo leaders aren't willing to admit anti-Christian bigotry.

Last week, the city issued a statement saying council “regrets that its actions in passing the May 5 resolution has been perceived as being directed at or discriminatory against Christians or any other religious groups.”