

I Support A&E's Right to Censure Phil Robertson—But ...

Yesterday Sarah Palin said as only she can, “Free speech is an endangered species; those ‘intolerants’—hatin’ and taking on *Duck Dynasty* patriarch for voicing personal opinion, take on us all.”

This was in response to A&E's decision to censure the chief duckman for controversial, even if biblical, comments on **homosexuality** (and bestiality, adultery and more). They have indefinitely suspended **Phil Robertson** from his top-rated reality cable show, ***Duck Dynasty***.

Conservative, duck hunters, Christians and (secretly) some liberals who can't resist the charm of the Robertson family are stunned. Many are crying, “Censorship” and “Protect free speech.”

However, in our democracy, freedom of speech has to do with the government censoring speech—not the private sector. In other words, President Obama, who is probably not a fan of the duck-shooting, Bible-thumping Robertsons, cannot call up A&E and demand that they remove **Phil Robertson** because of his speech. That would be illegal. Congress cannot pass a law making it illegal to speak against the act of **homosexuality**. That would cross the First Amendment.

However, businesses are free to fire and hire people based on such things, and it happens every day. And to be honest, the language that Robertson used in his *GQ* interview was so graphic that I have to wonder if he was trying to get fired.

(Warning: Graphic quote!)

“It seems like, to me, a vagina—as a man—would be more desirable than a man's anus. That's just me. I'm just

thinking: There's more there! She's got more to offer. I mean, come on, dudes! You know what I'm saying? But hey, sin: It's not logical, my man. It's just not logical."

Before I comment, let me be clear. I love ***Duck Dynasty***, have seen every episode and I actually agree with the papa duck's quote. It is simply way too explicit. And as a pastor, it simplifies male-on-male attraction to body parts. I would guess that even those who work with homosexuals seeking to leave the lifestyle would be shocked at these comments.

As a **pastor** who has ministered successfully *and unsuccessfully* to those engaged in **homosexuality**, his comments hardly describe the problem. Sounds great for a soundbite, but lacks the compassion or understanding that would invite someone who has been raped or molested, as a child, to seek freedom.

Getting back to the topic—is this an attack on **freedom of speech**? The answer is no. Let's suppose that I owned an entertainment business where I had a very successful reality show—a show that was clean cut and attracted millions of viewers. And it was discovered that one of the characters had gone on record strongly advocating open marriages, whereby his wife allowed him to sleep around. It is not illegal, but it is clearly immoral. Should I not be able to fire him? Absolutely I should! And if anyone cried "Freedom of speech!" they would be wrong.

What if a pastor's secretary went on Facebook and proclaimed that she was in favor of **gay marriage**. Should she not be let go? (Assuming the church is not in favor of **gay marriage**!)

Freedom of speech does not equal a guaranteed job! Ask Charlie Sheen. I don't recall conservatives and Christians crying out that his **First Amendment** rights were violated when he was fired from the hugely successful and grossly immoral *Two and a Half Men*. Sheen publically, verbally attacked the show's producer and he was fired. Did he sue? No. It is perfectly

legal to fire people from T.V. shows for their comments.

Martin Bashir and Alec Baldwin, two left-wing pundits, were recently fired from MSNBC (Bashir only after intense public outrage) for comments they made. *Big Brother* contestants were let go for racist statements.

What Can I Do?

As fans of the show who feel helpless, how can we react? Great question! Being a democracy, there is so much we can do. Make no mistake: Their decision to discipline **Phil Robertson** has nothing to do with his views on **homosexuality**—this is not the first they learned of how he views male/male relationships. This judgment call on behalf of A&E *is about money*. They feel it is in their best interest financially to suspend Phil Robertson. It is up to you to change their perspective. They need to understand that this is not in their financial best interest.

1. Stop watching anything on A&E. Now, for those of you who think Honey Boo Boo has any redeemable value, this may be hard. But if A&E feels the pinch in their ratings, they may change course.
2. Go on Facebook and Twitter and say that you will not watch A&E until they reinstate **Phil Robertson**.
3. Find out the names of the top 10 advertisers on A&E and refuse to use their products.
4. Contact those sponsors and inform them of your decision. Post on their Facebook page and use hashtags on Twitter with the name of their products.
5. Take the information from #3 and tell everyone you know—use social media.

This is how we get things done in America. The only reason A&E caved is that the LGBT community is very, very loud. Be

louder. While I support A&E's right to hire or fire **Phil Robertson**, I don't agree with it, and I will let people know!

Having said that, let's keep in mind that the Big Duck himself may be the least concerned. I mean, he just blew off Barbara Walters to go duck hunting. My guess is that when he heard he would not be on the next few shows, he probably said, "Great. I goin' hunt'n!"

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