

## Business Exchange: Is "Gay" the "New Black"?

Written by William Reed

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Ordering lunch just got a lot more complicated than deciding, "Do you want fries with that?" All of a sudden, biting into a fried chicken sandwich has become a political and economic statement.

The Chick-fil-A fast-food chain is standing firm in its opposition to gay marriage since company President Dan Cathy said the company "backs the traditional family unit." Gay rights groups have called for a boycott of the chain and politicians in Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C. told the company that they intend to use zoning laws and local regulations to let Chick-fil-A executives know that it's not welcome in their locales. The current campaign may well turn out to be a bridge too far and evolve into a horrible setback for homosexual activism.

Nowadays, the type of fast-food bag you carry can put you on one side, or the other of this hot-button social issue. Since President Barack Obama threw Black values and emphasis under the same bus as he did the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, "Gay" has been allowed to become the civil rights issue of our time. The vile attacks on Chick-fil-A and its owners should make clear that the "gay rights" movement is not about refining and advancing American freedom, but about rewriting American values and advancing, not freedom, but the homosexual political agenda.

This type of social activism is a straight menace to Black values and American free enterprise. Some proponents of same-sex marriage want to boycott Chick-fil-A and disrupt the chain's 1,615 locations and \$4.1 billion annual revenue stream. Chick-fil-A is in 39 states and Washington, D.C. In July, the company's 59-year-old president was asked by a Southern Baptist Convention news service, whether he opposed gay marriage, to which he responded: "Guilty as charged. We are supportive of the biblical definition of the family unit," he said. Cathy emphasized that "the biblical definition of a family unit doesn't include Adam and Steve."

"Eat mor chikin" is the chain's prominent advertising slogan. Chick-fil-A [referring to "filet"] specializes in chicken entrées and has long been associated with the Southern United States, where it is a cultural icon. It all started in 1946, when Samuel Truett Cathy opened his first restaurant, The Dwarf Grill, in Hapeville, Ga. Credited with inventing Chick-fil-A's boneless breast of chicken sandwich, Mr. Cathy founded Chick-fil-A, Inc. in the early 1960s and pioneered establishment of restaurants in shopping malls with the opening of the first Chick-fil-A Restaurant at a mall in suburban Atlanta in 1967. Since then, Chick-fil-A has steadily grown to become the second largest quick-service chicken restaurant chain in the U.S. The business is family-owned and has become a multi-billion dollar operation. With 44 consecutive years of positive sales growth, the company is known for being methodical about opening new restaurants, but opening them with fanfare, including giving the first 100 customers free chicken sandwiches for a year.

Dan Cathy has been the Chick-fil-A chief executive since 2001. On August 1, at Chick-fil-A locations across the country, people voted with their wallets by coming out on Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day to express support for the chain and to Cathy for his stance on "traditional marriage."

Blacks should be aware that the gay movement has eclipsed them in political potency. Politicians are swooning to take up gay causes. Sources inside the Democratic National Committee have confirmed that the party will include gay marriage as part of its platform. It will

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be the first time in history that either the Democratic or Republican Party has supported anything other than the traditional definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman.

We find no reason to be mad at Cathy and his traditional values. But, beware gay is not the new Black, and we are foolish to allow conflation of the two issues. Sexual disposition does not parallel race. And it's difficult to watch a coordinated, well-funded, well-connected propaganda strategy undermine thousands of years of history. It's especially disconcerting to watch the use of the civil rights struggle as the vehicle for the strategy.

(William Reed is available for speaking/seminar projects via the Bailey Group.org)