

LIBERTY PARK INN®

A Syndicated Column

Name: **Chick-fil-A Controversy**

By: David Henry © 2012

"Hi, David," Marcia said as she saw me coming out of my office. "What do you think about the Chick-fil-A controversy over gay marriage?"

Marcia is one of my desk clerks. She is a good reliable employee and we work well together. But I know she's liberal in her political views so I asked, "What do you think about it?"

Marcia answered, "I'm not sure what to think about it yet. But there are people on both sides of the issue who appear to be really hot and bothered by it. Even politicians are making statements about it."

"You got that right," I replied. "I first learned about this controversy while I was on vacation in California recently. My family hadn't been to Chick-fil-A in a while and so we decided to go there to eat. I couldn't believe what happened. The parking lot was packed and there were so many cars that I got stuck in the traffic. I couldn't move forward or backward. At first I didn't realize what was going on but later I found out that people in that community had come out in droves to eat at Chick-fil-A to show their support for the company."

"Really," Marcia asked?

"Yes," I replied. And we were on our way to the beach, so I didn't want to wait 45 minutes to be served. And since the traffic was so bad that I couldn't get out of the parking lot, we just went next door to eat."

"That's interesting," Marcia replied.

"Since that time," I continued, "I have read some articles and blogs about the issue."

"I've been reading them too," Marcia replied. "It appears that the whole controversy started over a comment made by the company president in an interview."

"I read that too," I added. "Of course the fact that this company follows Christian principles is no secret. That's why all their stores are closed on Sundays."

"Oh," Marcia replied. "I always wondered why they were closed on Sundays."

I continued, "When I was a boy growing up in Pennsylvania most every store was closed on Sunday. It wasn't like it is today. Back then a store would stand out if it was open on Sunday, not if it was closed."

"That's interesting," Marcia replied. "So what do you think about gay marriage, David? Is it right or not?"

"You've asked a question that requires a complex answer," I replied.

"Ok," Marcia responded. "I'm listening."

"Well," I explained, "to start with, the Bible is pretty clear on the subject of gay marriage. Yes. It is a sin. However, that fact doesn't explain why people are so angry about this issue."

"Isn't that what your religion teaches," Marcia asked? "Everyone says that Christians are homophobes."

"No. Of course not," I replied. "None of the Christians I know are homophobes. According to the Bible we are all sinners and we all need to be forgiven. There's no Biblical reason that gay marriage should be singled out like it's the unpardonable sin or something. I won't stop being a friend with someone just because he's gay."

"Then why do you think there's such hostility over this issue," Marcia asked?

"I think it's because there are extremist on both sides of the issue who are fanning the flames of this controversy," I answered. "I really don't think that either extreme accurately represents the thinking and behavior of the majority.

Unfortunately, it's the extremists who get the publicity, and so more and more people have gotten riled up over this issue unnecessarily."

"You may be right," Marcia replied.

I continued, "Jesus was called the friend of publicans and sinners while he was here on earth. So I don't see why Christians today shouldn't be friends with the sinners of our day like Jesus was in his day."

"Well," Marcia replied, "perhaps

that's true, but I can't see you being friends with someone who is gay or lesbian."

"You would be surprised, Marcia," I responded. "I don't normally discuss this, but I really do have gay and lesbian friends. Do you remember Budd who used to work here?"

"Sure," Marcia replied.

"Budd is bisexual. In fact that's why he's single. His wife divorced him when she found out he was attracted to other men."

"Really," Marcia replied. "I never knew that."

"Well," I replied, "he doesn't talk about it much, but when I was over at his house for dinner one evening, he shared certain personal things with me that he doesn't usually tell other people."

"Really," Marcia asked?

"Yes," I replied. "And he's not the only gay friend I've ever had. I've been a houseguest and gone sightseeing with people who I knew were lesbians. In fact years ago a former gay boss of mine in a hotel I worked at invited me to travel to England with him."

"That really surprises me," Marcia replied.

"It shouldn't," I responded. "If I'm not willing to associate with and listen respectfully to people who hold different views from mine, why should I think that other people should do the same for me?"

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The author actually did learn about this controversy while on vacation in California. He really did get stuck in a traffic jam in the parking lot and had to eat next door. Also, he really has had a number of good friends who are homosexuals and lesbians.

Liberty Park Inn® is a syndicated column about issues and current events featuring conversations in an imaginary hotel. You may contact the author through his website at www.libertyparkinn.com.