

'Diversity' at General Motors Excludes Christians



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>

[Private business does not give religion same diversity treatment as other groups. Right or wrong. Employer vs. Religious Rights. Looking for reasoning either stated or implied.] Post Modern

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<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2003/7/18/110736.shtml>

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Friday, July 18, 2003

General Motors' corporate policy of allowing employees to create "affinity groups" is the target of a discrimination complaint after one employee says his request to organize fellow workers for Christian activities was rejected.

[Without reading ahead, let's take this from what it says. GM promotes employee "affinity groups" and then denies Christians to be considered as a valid "affinity group".

Is this right?

Is this an injustice?

What do you suppose is the motivation behind the "affinity groups"?

Do you suppose there is a cost associated with the "affinity groups"?

What do you suppose is the motivation for denying the same to Christians?

Doesn't an employer have the right to operate their business in whatever fashion they desire?]

John Moranski, who has worked at the GM factory in Indianapolis, for three years, filed the discrimination complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on June 20.

General Motors began sanctioning employee-initiated affinity groups in 1999 to promote workplace diversity and improve employer-employee communications. The company's recognition of an affinity group allows that group access to corporate facilities and communications, as well as other benefits for sponsoring activities.

[Now we see GM's motivation. Let's run a test to see if Christian's qualify.

Do Christian groups promote workplace diversity?

Is a Christian different than a non-Christian?

Is a Christian a desired diversity?

Do Christian's make other groups less welcome, thus, reducing diversity?

Why would GM care about Diversity in the first place?

Consequences of a diverse work force?

Do Christians need to improve employer-employee communications?

Is Communications with Christians so good they don't need improvements?

Are Christians part of other groups, so they'd already be covered through a different "affinity group"?]

Moranski complained that he was first denied the opportunity to publish, in the factory's daily newsletter, an invitation for other employees to join him in a lunchtime prayer session on May 2, 2002, the National Day of Prayer.

[Does this seem right?

Why do you suppose they would refuse such a request?

Is this the employer's prerogative?

Is this religious discrimination?]

Moranski said he then applied for formal recognition of a Christian Employee Network as a GM Affinity Group in December 2002. His request was denied, Moranski and GM agree, because the group's affinity was religious.

"They implicitly said that because your group is religious, we're not going to allow it, and it was because they assume for people [who] are religious, that they can't just not evangelize," said Drew Gardner, attorney with the Gibbs law firm in Seminole, Fla. The law firm serves as general counsel to Christian Law Association and is representing Moranski in the filing of his complaint.

[Ah, now were are getting somewhere. Do you believe this is the real reason?

Can Christians get together without evangelizing?

If the only people in the "Affinity group" are Christians, who would they evangelize to?

Is a newspaper invite to pray "evangelizing"?

If a Christian group is noticeable and gets the minimum coverage, is that going to evangelize?

Aside from evangelizing, what might a Christian group attract?

Would that be the Christian groups' fault, per say?]

Gardner noted that Moranski had explicitly stated in his application for the affinity group that "we are an inter-denominational group and will not promote a particular church or religious denomination in the workplace."

A spokesman for General Motors insisted, "GM respects the religious freedom of our employees."

[Do you believe GM's statement?]

However, Brian Akre, GM's director of news relations in Detroit, added that the company "does not recognize religious or political organizations as company-sponsored affinity groups because of the potentially infinite number of such groups and because of the divisiveness inherent in trying to accommodate their widely disparate views."

[Had you suspected up this point political organizations were included with religious groups?

Does this make it better?

Do you see any logic in GM's policy?

Do you agree with GM's policy so far?

Are you on the 'free enterprise' side or the 'individual freedom' side on this issue so far?]

On its Web site, General Motors **defines diversity** as the "collective mixture of similarities and differences" and states "that managing diversity includes race and gender as well as broader dimensions like age, family status, religion, sexual orientation, level of education, physical abilities, military status, union represented/non-represented, years of service, language and many others."

[Conflict with their web site. The web site indicates they have a policy of "... managing race, ... religion, gender...." Some inconsistency?

Have you changed which side you are on yet?]

'Gender' OK; Religion Not OK

But GM's affinity groups, Akre said, generally are limited to those whose focus is based on primary dimensions of diversity, which he claims are factors that cannot be changed or chosen, such as ethnic background, gender or physical disabilities.

[In keeping with GM's goals, do you believe GM is right in drawing the line where they have?

Are there some questions you would like to ask GM?]

Such distinctions are precisely why Gardner views GM's policy as violating Moranski's rights.

"GM's treatment of religious beliefs as different from a 'common social identity' such as race, disabilities, gender or sexual orientation is disparate treatment of religion," said Gardner. GM's rationale for refusing to recognize Moranski's group "we would say is illegal under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act."

[Do you agree religious beliefs are different then these other groups mentioned?

Do you believe each of these groups, other than religion, are involuntary groups?

For the record, although the Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (

<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>) is long and wordy, whenever groups are mentioned, sex and religion are in the group and sexual orientation is definitely never mentioned. I submit this wordy account extracted from the Civil Rights Act.

SEC. 2000e. [Section 701] (j) Nothing contained in this subchapter shall be interpreted to require any employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee subject to this subchapter to grant preferential treatment to any individual or to any group because of the race, color, religion, sex, or national origin of such individual or group on account of an imbalance which may exist with respect to the total number or percentage of persons of any race, color, religion, sex, or national origin employed by any employer, referred or classified for employment by any employment agency or labor organization, admitted to

membership or classified by any labor organization, or admitted to, or employed in, any apprenticeship or other training program, in comparison with the total number or percentage of persons of such race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in any community, State, section, or other area, or in the available work force in any community, State, section, or other area.

Has the crux of the real problem been stated or implied?]

Though complimenting *General Motors* for its overall diversity program and other employee initiatives, Moranski said the denial of his religious affinity group "is inconsistent with the rest of their employee program."

The EEOC has yet to formally respond to Moranski's employment discrimination complaint.



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