

Grand Canyon University's Disgraceful Cancellation

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An outspoken and hard-hitting conservative, Shapiro has been protested and threatened, as well as disinvited by other schools, but it is troubling that a Christian school, especially one that holds itself out as a Bible-believing institution, caved to leftist thought-police bullies rather than promote the free exchange of ideas in the public square.

In its statement of cancellation, the school hid behind its desire to unite all communities, elevating that "virtue" above all others, including the freedom of academic inquiry and open dissemination of ideas -- not to mention the school's own mission statement. It is particularly objectionable that the university would reflexively acquiesce to the insidious leftist notion that right-wing ideas are inherently divisive rather than recognize that a greater threat of divisiveness emanates from those who demand that politically conservative views be silenced. Has it even occurred to this feckless institution that disunity does not evaporate when you suppress expression or that such suppression may very well exacerbate disunity?

The school stated: "We believe in many of the things that Ben Shapiro speaks about and stands for, including his support for ideals that grow out of traditional Judeo-Christian values and his belief in a free market economy. Our decision to cancel Shapiro's speaking engagement is not a reflection of his ideologies or the values he represents, but rather a desire to focus on opportunities that bring people together."

Excuse me, but how much do you really believe these things if you are not willing to allow people to articulate them on campus because of your fear of vocal opposition? How important are these beliefs to you if at the first hint of conflict you effectively abandon them, thereby lending credence to the protesters' position that these ideas are innately offensive and divisive?

Why not demonstrate the courage of your professed convictions and respond that you will not be intimidated by those who demand censorship? Why not call out the objectors for their intellectual intolerance and affirmatively state that the communication of ideals you believe in is not divisive but healthy?

Our society and its institutions are increasingly falling for this misguided notion that unity and harmony are the greatest virtues and should be promoted at all costs. It is gloriously fortunate that the Black Robe Regiment -- Colonial preachers active at our founding and promoting the cause of independence -- did not suffer from the same type of pathetic indifference to the cause of the American Revolution, or else we wouldn't be having this debate, and you wouldn't be able to even pretend to believe in ideals that flow from the great American experiment in constitutional governance.

If you truly believe that bringing people together is the highest good, then why do you even bother

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to promote the Gospel? Haven't you heard that millions find it offensive and that many of Jesus' and the Apostle Paul's statements are considered hate speech today? It would be bad enough if your mission statement endorsed some watered-down version of the Gospel, but you hold yourselves out as adhering to Christian orthodoxy and expressly embracing the Nicene Creed, which, among other things, does not look favorably on theological heresies. Thank God that the Creed's formulators didn't have a lukewarm attitude toward doctrine. It's one thing to have a strong mission statement; it's another to honor it.

I'm not fond of the practice of "proof-texting," or cherry-picking Scripture in support of arguments, but I think these arresting words of Jesus' are quite applicable here: "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

If you are going to stand for Christ, you have to be willing to stand for his Gospel, which is guaranteed to offend vast swaths of human beings who visit your campus and possibly even students who attend. Does your unwavering priority to foster unity supersede the Gospel truth? Do you -- or will you in the future -- muzzle yourself in service to it?

Preach unity all you want, but at what cost are you willing to pursue this ephemeral aspiration? Indeed, I wonder whether it is actually unity you seek or freedom from criticism from notoriously vocal leftist ideologues. What a regrettable turn of events!