



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 15, 2011

Homosexual Activists Force Starbucks CEO to Back Out of Christian Event

Homosexual activists have once again pressured the head of a trendy company heavily patronized by the “gay” community to back out of a scheduled speaking engagement sponsored by a Christian organization. Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz (pictured at left) was booked to speak August 12 at the annual Global Leadership Summit sponsored by the Chicago-based mega-church Willow Creek. “The annual event draws tens of thousands of viewers via satellite,” noted the Chicago Sun-Times, and boasts such past speakers as former President Bill Clinton, General Electric CEO Jack Welch, and rock-star-turned-“humanitarian” Bono.



But when gay activists caught wind that Schultz had agreed to address summit attendees about How Starbucks Fought for Its Life Without Losing Its Soul, they turned to one of their favorite activist tools, the liberal petition clearinghouse website [Change.org](#), to demand that Schultz renege on his commitment. According to the [Chicago Tribune](#), an activist by the name of [Asher Huey](#) had criticized Schultz for agreeing to appear at a church with a long-standing membership in [Exodus International](#), a ministry that believes homosexual behavior is destructive and Christians can grow into heterosexuality.

Ironically, as reported by [The New American](#), Willow Creek had actually cut its ties with Exodus International in 2009, after the church's pastor, Bill Hybels, met with [SoulForce](#), a group of gay professing Christians, which encouraged Hybels to take a softer approach toward the homosexual lifestyle. Nonetheless, Huey marshaled some 700 signatures on the petition targeting Schultz, accusing Willow Creek of having a long history of anti-gay persecution.

The assault on Schultz had the desired effect. As reported by [Christianity Today](#), Gina Woods, director of executive communications for Starbucks, apparently left a message on the Change.org petition page: I work for Starbucks in Communications. I wanted to let you all know that Howard is not speaking at Willow Creek. The conference web site has just not been updated.

While Starbucks refused to confirm that Schultz had backed out of the speaking engagement based on the pressure by homosexual activists, [Baptist Press News](#) reported that Willow Creek had let Schultz out of his contract without penalty after discussing the petition with him.

Hybels said that he and Jim Mellado, a member of Willow Creeks leadership team, spent 45 minutes in a very constructive conversation with the senior leaders at Starbucks explaining to them in no uncertain terms that Willow is not anti-gay. But at the end of the day they decided that the downside business risk was just too high for them.

As to the charge leveled by the homosexual activists, Hybels insisted that Willow Creek is not anti-



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anybody. Its founded on the idea that all people matter to God. We dont check orientation at the door. However, as reported by [UPI News](#), Hybels explained that his church continues to take a biblical approach to the issue of homosexuality. We challenge homosexuals and heterosexuals to live out the sexual ethics taught in scriptures, he explained, which encourage sexual expression between a man and a woman in the context of marriage. He added that the Christian faith has always emphasized the importance of sexual abstinence and purity for everyone. But, he added, Even as we challenge all of our people to these biblical standards, we do so with grace-filled spirits knowing the confusion and brokenness that is rampant in our fallen world. And so we honor the journey of everyone who is sincerely trying to follow Christ.

Even so, Exodus Internationals director, Alan Chambers, has been openly critical of Willow Creeks outreach to homosexuals since the church distanced itself from his group. The choice to end our partnership is definitely something that shines a light on a disappointing trend within parts of the Christian community, Chambers told [Christianity Today](#), which is that there are Christians who believe like one another who arent willing to stand with one another, simply because theyre afraid of the backlash people will direct their way if they are seen with somebody who might not be politically correct.

Starbucks isnt the first company targeted by homosexual activists for partnering with Christian groups. As reported by [The New American](#), in June Blake Mycoskie, founder of the trendy [TOMS](#) shoe company, patronized heavily by gays, was pressured via a Change.org petition to back out of a scheduled speaking engagement hosted by the pro-family group [Focus on the Family](#). That organization has been on the gay mafias hit list for years because of its principled stand for traditional family values an attitude homosexual activists have spun in the media as anti-gay and hateful.

Focus on the Family president Jim Daly warned that it is damaging and dangerous to accuse a person or group of being hateful simply because they think differently about some issues than you do. Believing what the Bible says about human sexuality is a personal conviction, not an act of persecution. Observers note that it is the intent of militant homosexual groups to inflict as much damage as possible on Christian and pro-family individuals and groups that insist on taking a firm stand against efforts to normalize homosexual behavior and force it upon the culture at large.

As reported by Baptist Press News, evangelical leader Ed Stetzer pointed out recently that the issue of homosexuality is not going to disappear and will need to be increasingly addressed and addressed graciously in the Christian community. Even though it is easy to make the case that homosexual practice is incompatible with scripture, Stetzer wrote in his blog, it will be an exceedingly difficult case to make in today's culture given the aggressive campaign to make homosexuality an accepted, and celebrated, lifestyle.

While Christians can try to find common ground with homosexuals in an effort to show grace and tolerance, ultimately, Stetzer wrote, all evangelicals (including centrist evangelicals like those at Willow Creek) will still have to deal with an issue that the world perceives as narrow and bigoted.



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