

Jim Daly's alleged moderation

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Dan Schultz [raises a good question](#). Why would NPR give Focus on the Family's Jim Daly a free pass on conflating religious freedom with his desire to impose his own religious beliefs on the broader culture?

I don't know, but it probably doesn't hurt that Daly's a whole lot nicer than James Dobson ever was. Perhaps Focus's friendlier makeover has had a real effect on how its statements are sometimes received. [Writing about this charm offensive](#) earlier this month, Samuel Freedman quotes Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center, which [has classified some antigay groups as hate groups](#) but not Focus:

The public's stance has moved away from these groups. You see that with the rapidly rising acceptance of gay marriage. And when public opinion moves away, they have two choices. They can moderate and move toward the middle, as Focus on the Family has done, or they can grow more shrill and radical.

But "moderate" isn't the opposite of "shrill." [Tony Perkins isn't particularly shrill](#). Is Jim Daly moderate? Freedman himself rightly stops short of arguing that he is, summarizing what's going on in Colorado Springs as a "change in Focus's style, if not its substance." It's a seriously positive thing to see a group this high profile stop acting like such a bully. In the NPR interview Dan highlights, Daly's tone is measured and respectful. That's good! It also says very little about whether Focus's actual views are moderating, which remains an open question.

Elsewhere, [Libby Anne's blog discusses one area in which Focus's views seem as retrograde as ever](#): gender roles in marriage. Here's Jim Daly, alleged moderate: "Find God's way—don't find your own way, like feminism's solution. The feminists didn't stop to think." Sheesh.