



Deace's Daily Diary: November 23rd, 2009

<http://www.whoradio.com/cc-common/mainheadlines3.html?feed=150515&article=6360312>

The Manhattan Declaration: Why I have a lukewarm reaction to such a bold action By Steve Deace

On Friday, a 4700-word document was released called *The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience*. The document is a manifesto calling for Christians to reject secular authority when it attempts to impose an ungodly morality, even to the point of civil disobedience.

You can read it for yourself here:

<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2009/11/manhattan-declaration58-a-call-of-christian-conscience>

The document is an impressive theological and political work, and it comes with an equally impressive list of 140 signatories which include:

- Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals
- Bishop Charles Caput, Archdiocese of Denver
- Chuck Colson, popular Christian author and philosopher
- Dr. James Dobson, Focus on the Family
- Dr. William Donohue, Catholic League
- Jonie Eareckson Tada, popular speaker and evangelist
- Stuart Epperson, Chairman of the Board of Salem Broadcasting
- William Federer, noted historian
- Maggie Gallagher, National Organization for Marriage
- Dr. Richard Land, President of Ethics Commission at Southern Baptist Convention
- Josh McDowell, prolific author and speaker
- Dr. Albert Mohler, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Marvin Olasky, *World Magazine*
- Tony Perkins, Family Research Council
- Ravi Zacharias, prolific author, speaker, and apologist

The document includes the kind of scholarship and boldness that has been sorely lacking in the Christian Church in America for far too long. I applaud its scope, vision, and calling. THE CHURCH has needed this sort of principled leadership for a generation, and it's no coincidence that within that time frame the cultural influence of THE CHURCH has significantly waned without it as well.

Yet my enthusiasm for such a needed theological shot in the arm also includes a couple aspects that also make my spider sense tingle.

The tragic cultural and political dynamics that led to this declaration existed long before Barack Obama became president, so why wasn't such action called for previously? Could it have something to do with the fact several of the most high-profile signatures of the declaration belong to individuals that are power-brokers and activists for the Republican Party?

For example, much time and effort is spent on defending traditional marriage in the declaration. Yet during the reign of President George W. Bush we saw a homosexual activist sworn in as AIDS Czar by Condoleezza Rice while his male partner looked on (<http://www.onenewsnow.com/Politics/Default.aspx?id=390374>). Then there was Vice President Cheney's daughter having a baby out-of-wedlock with her lesbian lover (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,275157,00.html>).

Where was the outrage from these Christian leaders then?

Pro-infanticide Catholic politicians have been receiving communion and the benefits of church membership for years with little fallout. The pre-eminent Catholic University in America recently had the most pro-abortion president in American history give its commencement speech. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is currently working to pass government healthcare, giving the same politicians who kill babies control over the welfare of the already-born, too. Numerous evangelical leaders have fallen for the global warming scam, and then several of them worked to get a Republican elected President of the United States who opposed a constitutional amendment defining marriage according to the Biblical standard.

If we truly want to have a prophetic impact on the culture as THE CHURCH, we must "judged not lest ye be judged, for by the same standard that you judge others so will you also be judged." How in the world can we call the world to a firm moral standard if we're not willing to enforce it upon ourselves?

I'm also uncomfortable with the fact that several of the people on this list have either told lies of omission or commission in the public sphere when it comes to presidential politics. Several of the signers of this declaration recently tried to make Mitt Romney President of the United States despite the fact he had repeatedly and heinously violated the very Christian Conscience the declaration seeks to defend and advance.

Here are some specific examples:

- Chuck Colson: <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2005/0509.sullivan1.html>
- Dr. James Dobson: http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/05/19/conservative_christian_offers_praise_for_romney/
- Maggie Gallagher: <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/gallagher200406250924.asp>
- Dr. Wayne Grudem: http://townhall.com/columnists/WayneGrudem/2007/10/18/why_evangelicals_should_support_mitt_romney
- Dr. Richard Land: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V24PW9gC0wI>
- Tony Perkins: <http://www.tonyperkinstellthetruth.blogspot.com/>

As a young Christian I am struggling with the concept of submitting to the leadership of those who have already violated our trust, and are maintaining that mantle of leadership without first repenting of their previous dishonesty. Shouldn't there be repentance and restitution prior to restoration?

There are many on the signatory list I have great respect for. For instance, if you're a regular listener to my radio show you've probably heard me say before that I want to be like Josh McDowell or Ravi Zacharias when I grow up. Their inclusion gives the declaration greater credibility in my eyes.

Nonetheless, if we truly want our "movement" to have a powerful and prophetic impact on America in this next generation, we must first deal with the plank in our own eye before pointing out the speck of dust in someone else's.

Looking through Scripture and church history, I fail to find too many examples of God blessing a move of His people that included hypocrisy, half-truths, and sellouts on the part of its leaders. The process of cultural renewal is the same now as it's always been: repentance + reformation = revival.

And that process starts with us.