

Hispanic Evangelicals Speak Out on Immigration Reform

President Obama is facing pressure from Hispanics—including evangelical Hispanics—to do more for their population.

The New York Times is reporting that many Latinos don't believe Obama's immigration policies are driving the results he promised during his 2008 campaign.

"People are saying, 'What gives?'" Clarissa Martínez de Castro, director of immigration issues for the National Council of La Raza, told *The New York Times*. "Immigration is deeply personal for many of our voters, and there is disillusionment out there."

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference is the Hispanic Evangelical Association, America's largest Hispanic Christian Organization, issued the following statement:

"Justice will on occasion march, on other occasions protest and yet on other occasions sing. But Justice will always speak for those that cannot speak for themselves. We are Evangelicals. We stand committed to the Good News. We stand convicted by the mandate to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly before God. We stand in covenant as Rev. Samuel Rodriguez frequently states, 'Not to the Agenda of the Donkey or the Agenda of the Elephant but to the Agenda of the Lamb.'"

"Why? Because in the absence of immigration reform, millions of immigrants live in fear of being separated from their families. As evangelical churches minister to the immigrants in their midst, we persistently confront the dysfunction of our current immigration legal system, a system that mocks the rule of law; only selectively enforces laws against both immigrant workers and employers; invites unjust working conditions, and even human trafficking; divides families

through deportation and backlogs for lawful family reunification; and stifles the full flourishing of people made in God's image.

"Accordingly, our evangelical optics require us to see the Imago Dei, the image of God in every human being; poor and rich, white and black, citizen and immigrant. Today, collaboratively we raise a clarion call as leaders of faith and followers of Jesus for all Christians and people of faith to repudiate political expediency and embrace a prophetic posture of compassionate justice.

"Finally the question arises, can our generation reconcile Billy Graham's message with Dr. Martin Luther King's march? Can our generation of evangelicals stand up with a compassionate and biblical solution to the immigration dilemma? Or will evangelicals stay silent on the sidelines as millions live in the shadows of disillusionment and fear. Today, this gathering says, Evangelicals will marry righteousness with justice. Justice that will secure our borders, our families, our values, hard working God loving immigrants and the image of God in every human being."