

How Far Has Obama Gone to Offend Christians? Even This News Outlet Noticed

Monday's *Washington Post* carries one of the most remarkable and surprising op-eds that paper has published in a long time. Note: This op-ed is the paper's own "voice," not a piece by a columnist.

Commenting on the Obama administration's inclusion of "transgender activists, the first openly gay Episcopal bishop and a nun who criticizes church policies on abortion and euthanasia" in the welcoming ceremony planned for the Pope's upcoming visit, the *Post* comments:

What struck us as we read about this small controversy is the contrast between the administration's apparent decision to risk a bit of rudeness in the case of the pope and its overwhelming deference to foreign dictators when similar issues arise. When Secretary of State John F. Kerry traveled to Havana to reopen the U.S. Embassy recently, he painstakingly excluded from the guest list any democrat, dissident or member of civil society who might offend the Castro brothers.

And when Chinese President Xi Jinping comes to the White House next week, shortly after the pope leaves town, it's a safe bet that he won't have to risk being photographed with anyone of whom he disapproves. Chen Guangcheng, the courageous blind lawyer, for example, lives nearby in exile, but he probably won't be at the state dinner. Neither will Falun Gong activists, democracy advocates or anyone else who might, well, give offense.

The Obama administration argues that it will include many

people of every background. Yet according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The presence of these (controversial) figures is especially irritating, (a) Vatican official said, because it isn't yet clear if the White House has invited any representatives of the U.S. anti-abortion movement, traditionally a high-priority cause for the U.S. bishops."

Read that, no one active in the pro-life movement is welcome to greet the head of the world's largest pro-life organization.

There will be some Evangelical leaders present at the event. *U.S. News* reports that they include "the Rev. Joel Hunter, an evangelical megachurch pastor from Florida who is a confidant of Obama on spiritual matters; the Rev. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, which represents about 40 conservative Christian denominations; and the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference."

While it's nice of the White House to include some Evangelicals, the inclusion of persons at overt and public odds with the teachings the Pope represents and the omission of others whose political activities – standing for the unborn and their mothers – are essential to Catholic teaching are startling.

Remarkable: A stinging and blunt calling-on-the-carpet of an Administration far more concerned with advancing an aggressive "gay rights" agenda than defending religious liberty here at home or standing with those being horribly persecuted for their faith in repressive nations around the world. As I have written elsewhere, President Obama "cannot defend abroad what (he and his) administration ... are working to erode here at home."

The willingness of this Administration to affront the leader of the world's largest Christian tradition is an embarrassment

to our country. It demonstrates a moral arrogance so profound as to be one of the few things that still surprises after nearly seven years of the President's diligent efforts to, in his words, "transform the United States of America."

Insulting foreign friends while placating foreign adversaries strikes one as an unusual approach to advancing America's national security and vital interests. Sadly, this Administration seems eager to do just that.