

The Manhattan Declaration

✖ Last Friday I was privileged to stand with Chuck Colson, Jim Daly, Robert George, Archbishop Wuerl, Tony Perkins, Alan Sears, Cardinal Rigali and over 20 others to represent the first 150 signers of a document called The Manhattan Declaration.

Why the name? The group met a few weeks ago in Manhattan where we read a draft of the document. It was there we concluded that we had to bridge the huge historic chasms separating the major branches of the Christian faith. The famed Chuck Colson along with co-initiators issued a call to all Christians that we must remain true to our core convictions, based upon the scriptures. The group also came together to let the secular community know that increasingly Christians from Catholic, evangelical and orthodox traditions will work together and speak with one voice.

A critical line of the declaration states, “We pledge to each other, and to our fellow believers, that no power on earth, be it cultural or political, will intimidate us into silence or acquiescence.” In our estimation this means that civil disobedience may well be a part of the stony path we must tread. The document lays out the group’s views on the value of human life, the concept and role of the family and religious liberties.

Christianity is not merely a set of doctrines or beliefs; it lives out the ideals set forth in the Bible. This compels us as Christians to commit now, more than ever, to reaffirm the biblical truths that support the common good in our land. We must stand against any pressure that is brought to bear against our Christian ideals in these areas: the definition of marriage, the sanctity of life and religious liberty. I have sought to paraphrase the documents’ major summary statements below, along with an exhortation for Christians everywhere to

join us as signers.

The Definition of Marriage

The institution of marriage has historically been the most important means of sustaining society's health, education and human welfare. Marriage has the terrible risk of being redefined, which will subvert it from its original intent as a covenant between one man and one woman. Traditional marriage has been plagued with infidelity and divorce. The idea to redefine marriage has sprung from the vulnerable state of the institution that exists today. Redefinition is not a cure for these ills; it is a symptom. Studies by noted sociologists show conclusively that when marriage erodes, social pathologies rise. Redefining marriage would enable that erosion to increase by defining marriage through romance and physical satisfaction rather than through covenant relationship. It would produce a loss of understanding of what a healthy marriage is both in our civil laws and religious traditions. We believe that marriage is an objective reality that should be protected by law.

The Sanctity of Life

The weak and vulnerable among our society are also increasingly being threatened. The government should protect those who are unborn, who are disabled, and who are elderly. Yet the government has been enlisted to promote what Pope John Paul II declared as a "culture of death." The declaration asserts that Christians must pledge to wage an unceasing war against any laws that expand acts of abortion, destructive embryonic research, euthanasia and assisted suicide. Human beings have the right to equal protection at every stage of life, from pre-birth development through old age. We must resist any acts of government that would perpetrate the destruction or disadvantage of any human life.

Religious Liberty and Expression of Conscience

Our team believes that fundamental principles of justice are being threatened through a bias against religious liberty and

the expression of conscience. Recent attempts to eliminate the protection of conscience for healthcare professionals and institutions have demonstrated this frontal attack. Religious institutions and charities have been assaulted through anti-discrimination statutes that challenge their beliefs to oppose those things they deem are immoral.

Businesses and service providers are threatened with losing their licenses if they do not choose to accept or facilitate activities they believe do not meet their moral standards. The government and society should be protective of these institutions as they are dependent upon religious institutions and charities to maintain the overall good of society.

Christians believe that we are to render to Caesar what is Caesar's. We are taught to respect the authority of earthly rulers. Our democratic society sprang from the moral laws of Old Testament tradition and we acknowledge the moral claims of the law. It our right as citizens to participate in the political process; this includes doing our part to change unjust or immoral laws. Civil disobedience may be required to stand against laws that do not promote justice.

We must not render unto to Caesar those things that are God's. We cannot comply with any statute that forces us, or the institutions that we are part of, to bless sexual partnerships that are biblically immoral or to facilitate abortions, destructive embryonic research, euthanasia or assisted suicide. We will not violate our consciences through intimidation or any other act of cultural or political power. We will express our religious freedom, regardless of the consequences to ourselves.

Finally I invite you to [click here](#) to sign this important declaration. We are convinced that we can best serve the nation by lifting our collective voice. In signing the declaration you will be celebrating three things:

1. The unity in diversity of the body of Christ
2. The prophetic calling of the body of Christ
3. The urgent need we have to engage the culture in dialogue.

America needs a conscience, an objective voice, which advocates for truth, reason and biblical justice. Historically we Christians have been that voice. We have served the nation in shaping its foundational settlements it's original documents, the nation's great spiritual awakenings, the abolition of slavery and effective civil rights laws. Without the voice of the Church, the nation would not have had its original hospitals and many caring social services institutions of our day. Let's regain the integrity of our mission.

Dare to Declare!