

Signing Onto a Pack of Lies  
*Manhattan Declaration Betrayal – Part 2*  
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We resume this Lord's Day talking about the problems of the Manhattan Declaration that we spoke about two Lord's Days ago. And I hope that I will only take a little bite size piece of what it is I want to say. So we will be coming back to it again in future Lord's Days.

But if you recall the substance of what we had said two weeks ago, the Manhattan Declaration brings together Catholics and Evangelicals to stand against abortion and gay marriage and attacks upon religious liberty, all horrible things. But in so doing, the identity of Bible Christianity and of Christ's true Church is confused by the Manhattan Declaration, and the enemies of the cross are given aid and comfort by true believers. Our culture has corrupted the true meaning of the terms Christian and Church so that now they have become cultural and political categories.

True Christians trust in Christ's gospel for their eternal salvation. All true believers make up Christ's body the Church. That Church appears in local congregations of called out believers.

But carnal men long for temporal organization, and power and structure. This desire, first witnessed at Babel, has corrupted the concept of Church; so that now we call "churches" those institutions which men have constructed. There is no scriptural warrant for the structure and organizations, such as denominations, the Roman Catholic system, or the various state churches which have grown up since the time of Constantine.

The Roman Catholic system preaches a false gospel, and it substitutes ritual and good works for the true righteousness that only comes from Christ. That system also usurps the offices of Christ and promotes rank idolatry in the blasphemous mass. Every Roman mass, every Roman baptism and confession, is a false gospel, a preaching of a false gospel that God said is accursed. And such persons as popes and bishops and priests who deny the imputed righteousness of Christ in exchange for a false righteousness according to the keeping of the law are, the Scriptures say, enemies of the cross of Christ.

Now if the Roman Catholic system, for example, is not a true church, but is a false church, if it preaches not the true gospel, but declares and promotes a false gospel; and if it usurps the prerogatives of the Savior as our priest and as head of the Church and

thereby strips him of his prerogatives, at least in their organization, and therefore they promote another Jesus; then it is wrong for Christians to include that system and claim it is part of Christ's Church, or portray its adherents and leaders as Christians.

It is wrong primarily because it is a falsehood. It is a lie.

To say that the Roman Catholic system is a part of the Church, or that the preaching and teaching of the Roman Catholic system is Bible Christianity, or that the adherents of the Roman Catholic system's doctrines and practices may be fairly described as Christians, to say those things is to say a lie, to say a falsehood.

What does it do when we say that those systems and those teachings are legitimate parts of the Church and legitimate expoundings of Christian doctrine? What it does is, it validates and promotes this whole secular, cultural, and political meaning of the word church. It says that a church is not what the Scripture says a church is, but rather the Church is this large monstrosity which society has agreed upon, these collections of institutions which we will call the Church. For no matter how apostate they may be, no matter how much false gospel they may promote, no matter how few Bible believing Christians they may contain, we call that the Church, and we validate the secular and cultural and political meaning of the word, rather than attempting to limit our use of that term, church, to the Scriptural meaning of the term.

And by doing that, those institutions become Trojan horses to bring into the true Church all sorts of false gospel, all sorts of false notions, all sorts of corrupt leadership, all sorts of anti Christian and anti biblical procedures, to say that these institutions—the Roman Catholic system in particular and one could think of other institutions as well, lesser known and less important ones—to say that what they preach is the true gospel and that what they contain are true Christians.

To say that they are part of Christianity is, again, to validate and to promote and to embrace the secular, cultural and political use of the Word Christian, that whole nations can be Christian because their population was born in them, or they were all christened as little infants and therefore they are Christians. Or they were converted because their leader was converted in the case of Rome and Constantine, or their society is culturally aligned with some vestiges of Christianity, or their country has a state church that is so-called Christian.

And therefore we just sweep up this large mass of people under the term of Christian and it becomes a secular and a quasi political category rather than to be limited to what the Bible says about a Christian -- and that is a person who follows and believes in the true gospel of the Lord Jesus.

And to say that the Roman Catholic system is a part of Christ's Church and is truly Christian is also to promote a false gospel as the basis of a false union under the false labels of church and Christian.

You see, this is because everyone knows or thinks they know that the purpose or the basis of Christianity and of the Church is to find a way of salvation, a way to be right with God. This is supposed to be the purpose of Christianity and of the Bible and of the Church. And everybody has a concept of that. But the problem is that, if you embrace and promote and validate a false Church and a collection of false Christians who teach a false gospel, then, you see, you will draw from the institution and the category that you have accepted, you will draw from that the false gospel that it teaches. And you will conclude, "Oh, that must be what the gospel is. That must be what the Church stands for. It must be what Christianity stands for."

In other words, people infer. They deduce the gospel from who we denominate to be churches and Christians. And whatever falls within the pale of Christendom, whatever falls within the pale of what is socially and politically accepted as a church, whatever falls within the pale of what we call Christians, why then what those people believe and preach and teach must be Christianity, must be Bible truth. And the gospel they proclaim must be the true gospel. They must be telling us their view of what the Church and what Christianity teaches about the way of salvation, about how one can be right with God.

So, you see, it is like back flow in a sewage system. If you elevate these worldly institutions, and you acknowledge and accept and embrace these worldly definitions, these false definitions of church and of Christianity, then what you will end up with is a promotion of and the acceptance and embrasure of a false view of the gospel, whatever those institutions and those people that you have said were Christians, whatever they teach and preach will become so.

And largely what we have today is that Christianity has been corrupted, and the Church has been corrupted, to the point where we have accepted a gospel that tends towards works righteousness, tends towards often even a social gospel. That the way a man is made right with God is that he engages in all of this progressive social and political activity, and that these are the works, these are the good works that make him right with God. This is the world's view of the gospel and they got it from the world's view of the Church and the world's view of Christians; and it is wrong for true Christians to embrace those world views, because they lead to that false gospel, that perception of a false gospel that the world has embraced.

You see, the proper way to go about defining the Church and Christianity is to start with the true gospel, which the Scriptures lay down, and then find out who believes it, who preaches it, who trusts in it. Those will then be the true Christians and their assemblies will be the true churches, and all of those people who have trusted in the true gospel and trusted in the true Jesus collectively make up the body of Christ, Christ's true Church.

So, you see, you can either start with a socially acceptable, culturally acceptable definition of Church and Christian, and draw from it a false gospel; or you can start with the true gospel laid down in the Scripture, and deduce the true identity of Christians and of the Church.

But, you see, this goes against the whole idea of the ecumenical council and so forth, because the true gospel is not decided by collecting together churches and Christians and then seeing what we can agree to. The gospel is not determined by what the churches or the Christians so-called agree upon. No, God's Word declares the true gospel, and we collect the people who agree with and trust the true gospel and we say they are the only Christians and they are the only Church.

And this is the fundamental problem with the Manhattan Declaration. It doesn't start with the true gospel and thereby discover true Christians and the true Church. It starts with the socially accepted model of the Church and of Christians. It starts from that set of people which actually, in truth, is a collection of believers and unbelievers. It brings all those believers and unbelievers together that are called by the world and by modern, loose minded "Christianity," and it calls all those people Christians. It draws together true congregations of believers and false churches and it calls all of those the Church.

At the heart of the Manhattan Declaration is this false conceit, this lie, if you will, that we, the people who signed the declaration are all Christians, and we are all the Church or we are representing the Church and we take this public stand as Christians and the Church when, in fact, this is false. The people who signed it are not all Christians. They are not all the Church, not in the true Bible sense, because they don't all agree on Christ's gospel.

So, you see, the Manhattan Declaration is founded on the worldly, corrupt, false notion that there is the Church and there are Christians and those are widely, culturally defined, politically defined, sociologically defined structures that we can draw people together from, and assume that they are all Christians and that they are all the Church, and we can make our political statements based on that.

Now there is nothing wrong with drawing people together to make political statements just like there is nothing wrong with drawing people together to start a business or to run a restaurant or shop at a grocery store; but if you are going to draw people together and call them Christians, and call their organizations and their institutions the Church, you see, you need to start where the Scriptures start with what the true gospel is and not just assume and not just wave the magic wand and agree that the culturally and sociologically described institutions that we falsely call the Church and Christianity are really so.

Now there is proof, of course, in the Manhattan Declaration, that it declares that the people have signed this declaration, and their institutions and the religious orders that they come from, are true Christians and are the Church. And you can go through the Manhattan Declaration and pull out the statements where they describe themselves in that manner. For they describe all the signatories as Christians, where they describe them as coming from the Christian churches or the Christian Church, if you will.

First of all, there is this litany that the Manhattan Declaration starts out with, this litany of good and noble social action that has happened in the last 2000 years, that the writers and

signers of the Manhattan Declaration claim are the actions of Christians like themselves. They claim the heritage of all of these actions.

Now, most of them are very good and noble actions that have taken place. Of course, all the people who engaged in them were in no way Christians – only some of them were. And in two particular points, they lay a claim that certain actions by certain people were actions of Christians, actions of the Church when, in fact, they were no such thing.

But first, to state the obvious, the fact that one performs all these good works and engages in them doesn't prove one is a Christian by any means, unless you believe in some sort of works based salvation which, of course, some of the signatories we will soon find out do indeed believe.

But look at these two examples. I will read to you two of the statements ascribing social actions to Christians when, in fact, those people were not Christians.

“It was Christians who combated the evil of slavery:”

Now, there is no doubt that a lot of people who combated the evil of slavery were Christians. Then follows a colon in the text. In other words, the Declaration is going to now give examples of Christians who combated the evil of slavery. Now later it says that John Wesley and William Wilberforce combated slavery. And sure enough they did and sure enough they were Christians. But it puts this in first:

“Papal edicts in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries decried the practice of slavery and first excommunicated anyone involved in the slave trade.”

Now there you have, you see, the equating of Christians who combat slavery with the papacy of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries combating slavery. Now it may well be that the papacy did combat slavery. I am not here to argue that point at all. There were some Jews who combated slavery. There were some Agnostics, even Atheists who combated slavery.

But the question is: Was the papacy of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Christian when it combated slavery? And the answer, of course, is no, it was not. Those were the very times, were they not, if you remember your history, when the papacy and the Roman Catholic system were at the height of their opposition to Christ's gospel! You remember they persecuted Luther. They had just gotten through persecuting and even having killed the followers of Huss in Bohemia. They were in the midst of concocting the toxic Council of Trent, anathemas against Christ's gospel. Whoever says that a man is declared righteous for Jesus' sake and on account of his righteousness imputed to him, let him be accursed, they declared.

This is the same papacy, the same Roman Catholic system, that the Manhattan Declaration writers and signers say is Christian. And yet at the very same time they claim it was Christian, it was opposing the gospel. It was advocating and cheering on and

orchestrating the martyring of countless true believers by being burned at the stake, by being drawn and quartered, by being hung by the neck until dead, by being drowned in the sea, and all sorts of unspeakable barbarities.

They were killing Christians, killing true Christians at the same time the Manhattan Declaration says they were Christians fighting the evil of slavery! And, of course, not only were they opposing the gospel and calling down curses upon Christ's gospel, not only were they killing and cheering on the killing of many, many, many true Christians because they wouldn't engage in the idolatry of the mass, for example, or because they wouldn't submit to the false rule of the pope; they were also suppressing God's Word.

Do you remember that this was the time, the early 1500s which was of course, the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which is the same period they refer to here, that the Roman Catholic system had people who translated the Bible like William Tyndale and others burned at the stake for the audacity of translating God's Word and having it published so that the common people could read it and understand it.

This document is a lie if only for this statement that claims that the Roman Catholic system and the papacy in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were Christian, were a part of Christ's true Church while they were burning Christians at the stake, suppressing God's Word and denouncing with the vilest curses Christ's gospel. So, you see, it is a lie that this document has included that the papacy's alleged opposition to slavery was an act of Christians, an act of Christ's Church. It may have been a good thing they opposed it. That doesn't make it Christian. That doesn't make them Christian. The truth of history proves otherwise.

And then here is another example of something that no doubt will upset a lot of people, but I will have to say it anyway. It says in the Manhattan Declaration:

“the great civil rights crusades of the 50s and 60s were led by Christians claiming the Scripture and asserting the glory of the image of God in every human being regardless of race, religion, age or class.”

Now here is a problem, of course. There were plenty of Christians involved in the civil rights struggles. And much of what was done there was noble, consistent with the principles of our country's founding, and consistent with the Scriptures. But it is certainly not true to say that all of the leaders or even the most prominent leaders were Christians, for they were not.

For example, one of the most important leaders of the civil rights movement is widely acknowledged to be Martin Luther King, Jr.. He was not a Christian. He preached a lot. He talked a lot about the Bible. He talked a lot about God. He talked a lot about Christ, but he didn't believe in the resurrection. He didn't believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus. He didn't believe in the deity of Christ. He adhered to all that old liberal false Christianity that he was taught when he went to Boston University and got his PhD. He may have done a lot of noble things. Some things he did I wouldn't agree with, but that

is beside the point. But he wasn't a true Christian. He was a Christian like the Manhattan Declaration calls people Christian. He was in what they call the Church, and he claimed to preach from the Scriptures a lot, and he used a lot of God words and a lot of Christian language and imagery. But he didn't believe the gospel and he wasn't a Christian.

And for them to say he was a Christian means that they don't know what a Christian is, or rather it proves that they are using the term Christian in the sociological, cultural meaning of the term and not in the truth of the term, not in the Bible meaning of the term. And, therefore, they are corrupting the meaning of the words, and they are participating in the corruption of the meaning of Christian, the meaning of the Church, that cannot but lead to the undermining of the true gospel.

But there are a lot of explicit claims in the Manhattan Declaration that we people who signed this are Christians, all of us, that we are all a part of Christ's Church.

That should be disturbing to people who read them. For example—I think we read this last Lord's Day—there is this little sentence:

“We as Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Christians have gathered together beginning in New York on September 28, 2009 to make the following declaration which we sign as individuals, not on behalf of our organizations, but speaking to and from our communities.”

So, you see, that statement includes a lot of things. It says that there are people who signed this and who have met at this meeting to sign this who are Catholics. And we call those people Christians. And it says that they are speaking from and to their communities, implying that the communities that these Catholic Christians, so called, come from, that those communities are part of Christ's Church, are part of the Christian community.

Well, how could this be? The Roman Catholic system, indeed, is not a Christian system, and its members are not broadly Christian, and it is not a part of Christ's Church, and yet the Manhattan Declaration says that we, that is the signers, are some of us Catholic Christians who come from our communities and speak to them as if those communities are Christian.

Of course, there is a little ambiguity in the statement. Does it mean that Catholics we denominate in general as Christians, that their system is part of Christianity? Or does it merely mean that just those of us who sign who happen to be Catholic, we also affirm that we are Christians? What does it mean? Well, there is an ambiguity there, isn't there?

We will talk about that a little later as to whether that gives them any escape from the problem that we are pointing out.

And then there is another example later on in the paper. They say this:

“We are compelled by our Christian faith to speak and act in the defense of these three common principles....”

“We are compelled by our Christian faith.” So, you see, there they have declared that all the people that signed this are united by a Christian faith, by a common Christian faith.

Now if Christian means this sociological, cultural collection of people, and is not limited to true Bible Christianity, then perhaps they have a point. But are they really united in their faith, in their Christian faith? Is it right for them to lump all these people together, and claim they all share the same faith, whether they be Roman Catholics, whether they be Evangelical Christians, or whether they believe Christ’s gospel, or they believe a false gospel? Why, there is a problem, isn’t there?

And then going on a little further:

“We are Christians who have joined together across historic lines of ecclesial differences to affirm our right and more importantly to embrace our obligation to speak and act in defense of these truths.”

Now anybody has a right, in fact anybody might have an obligation to defend the truth and to speak in favor of it, but you see here again, “We are Christians.” No distinction is being made.

Either all these people agree with Christ’s gospel and are truly Christians, or the Christians amongst them have signed on to a lie, because they have included people who are not Christians except in the cultural, sociological and political sense which spreads confusion, does it not?

And then, again, later on in the document they say: “In the Christian tradition we refer to marriage as holy matrimony.”

So now you see, not only do we all share the same Christian faith, now we all share the same Christian tradition about the subject of marriage. So there is unity of faith. There is unity of tradition. There is, in short, a statement here in this Manhattan Declaration that all of us are Christians, whether we be Roman Catholic or Evangelical or whatever -- that we all have the same faith. We all have the same tradition. And it cannot be so. It cannot be true.

Most revealing, I am afraid, is Chuck Colson’s commentary that he delivered shortly after this declaration was announced and began to circulate. Of course, Mr. Colson is a well known ecumenical person who has been beating the drums now for almost two decades to wash away the differences between the Roman Catholic system and true Bible Christianity. He was the driving force behind the Evangelicals and Catholics Together, monstrosity, if you will, where they claimed to come to an agreement about what the



gospel was. Almost all true Christians refused to sign on to that ecumenical document. But he is the main organizer of this Manhattan Declaration. Listen to what he said:

“As I hope you know by now, last Friday, 20 some Christian leaders stood before the microphones of the National Press Club in Washington, DC. There we announced the release of the Manhattan Declaration and we proclaimed to the Church and put our nation’s leaders on notice that we would protect the sanctity of life, that we would uphold the sacredness of marriage as a holy union between one man and one woman, that we would defend religious freedom for all people.

“There, in front of all those cameras and lights, Christian leaders lovingly, winsomely, and firmly took a stand. I will never forget the picture. I stood between Archbishop Wuerl of Washington and Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia. I looked over at Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Jim Daly of Focus on the Family, and Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action. To my left was the brilliant Bishop Harry Jackson, a man who has mobilized African American churches in the District to oppose gay “marriage.” And there was Fr. Chad Hatfield, chancellor of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary. I was missing only one man, my dear friend, the late Richard Neuhaus.

“It was a foretaste of what we’re all going to see in heaven, when those of us who can truly trust the Bible, who love Christ with all our hearts, minds, and souls, are re-united in the presence of our gracious and loving God.”

And then he goes on.

“Just as important, I believe the Manhattan Declaration can help revitalize the Church in America. One of the greatest weaknesses of the Church today is its biblical and doctrinal ignorance. This document is, in fact, a form of catechism for the foundational truths of the faith.”

Now look at what he is saying here: he is saying that all of these people are Christian leaders whether they be Roman Catholic or whether they be saved or not, whether they preach Christ’s gospel or preach another gospel. They are nevertheless Christian leaders. They are speaking to the Church.

You see, he has embraced that societal, quasi political social definition of the terms. They are all going to go to heaven together whether they believe Christ’s gospel or not. They are going to help revitalize the Church in America because the Church is doctrinally ignorant, and their Manhattan Declaration is like a catechism -- what does he call it -- of “fundamental truths of the faith.”

Now, how can anybody be so naïve as to believe these things? I mean, first of all, you have men there who are heads of the anti-church that preaches a false gospel and proclaims another Jesus. He calls them Christians! He embraces the Roman Catholic system as part of Christ's Church. He claims that his Manhattan Declaration is a catechism of foundational Christian truth, when it doesn't have anything in there to say about how a man is to be saved, about the true gospel. It doesn't have anything in there to explain how Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, how he was a substitute for the sin of his people, how he has made our redemption in his own body on the tree, how by faith in the Lord Jesus alone men who come to him are promised everlasting life. None of that is explained in the Manhattan Declaration. Yet he is going to use it, he claims, as a catechism for foundational Christian truth!

Now, as we have alluded to, this Manhattan Declaration has been signed by and includes many Roman Catholic leaders, not just the lowly priests. I went through the list of the original signatories and found the names of over 30 bishops of the Roman Catholic system and 16 Archbishops of the Roman Catholic system:

Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fargo, ND  
Most Rev. Paul G. Bootkoski, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen, NJ  
Most Rev. Robert H. Brom, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, CA  
Most Rev. Robert A. Brucato, Retired Auxiliary Bishop, Roman Catholic Archdioc. of New York, NY  
Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis, IN  
Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, NC  
Most Rev. William Patrick Callahan, Auxiliary Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Milwaukee, WI  
Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Denver, CO  
Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Salina, KS  
Most Rev. George W. Coleman, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fall River, MA  
Most Rev. Salvatore Joseph Cordileone, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland, CA  
Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn  
Most Rev. Timothy Dolan, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of New York, NY  
Most Rev. Kevin J. Farrell, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas, TX  
Most Rev. John C. Favalora, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami, FL  
Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria, TX  
Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO  
Most Rev. Victor Galeone, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, FL  
Most Rev. James H. Garland, Bishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Marquette, MI  
Most Rev. Joseph J. Gerry, O.S.B., Ph.D., Bishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, ME  
Most Rev. Joseph Hart, Bishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Cheyenne, WY  
Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, LA  
Most Rev. Daniel R. Jenky, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Peoria, IL  
Most Rev. Peter J. Jugis, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, NC  
Most Rev. Donald J. Kettler, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fairbanks, AK  
Most Reverend John F. Kinney, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint Cloud, Minnesota  
Most Rev. Edward U. Kmiec, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, NY  
Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville, KY  
Most Rev. Paul S. Loverde, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Arlington, VA  
His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida, Archbishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit, MI  
Most Rev. Richard J. Malone, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, ME  
Most Reverend Dale J. Melczek, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Gary, IN  
Most Rev. Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop, Roman Catholic of Burlington, VT  
Bishop Robert C. Morlino, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Madison, WI  
Most Rev. John J. Myers, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

Most Rev. Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Kansas City, KS  
Most Rev. John Nienstedt, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Saint Paul / Minneapolis, MN  
Most Rev. Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD  
Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, AZ  
Most Rev. Richard E. Pates, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Des Moines, IA  
Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN  
His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PA  
Most Rev. Thomas J. Rodi, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mobile, AL  
Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe, NM  
Most Rev. Michael J. Sheridan, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs, CO  
Most Rev. Donald W. Trautman, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie, PA  
Most Rev. Allen Vigneron, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit, MI  
Most Rev. John G. Vlazny, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, OR  
Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billing, MN  
Most Rev. Thomas Wenski, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Orlando, FL  
Most Rev. Donald W. Wuerl, Archbishop, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.  
Most Rev. David A. Zubik, Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, PA

So, you see, there are quite a number, not just of rank and file, common ordinary members of the Roman Catholic system, rather there are many leaders, dozens of leaders of the Roman Catholic system. And these are the men who are leaders of a false religious system that preaches a false gospel that deposes the rights and prerogatives of the Lord Jesus. And they have signed on to this document in a public sort of way with their titles and their organizational affiliations.

And yet men who claim to be true Christians have signed on with them and have agreed that they are Christians, and that they are a part of Christ's Church, and that by implication they are in agreement in matters of the Christian faith and in matters of Christian tradition with these leaders of the apostate Roman Catholic system!

Now some people have said in defense of the true believers who have signed this document, that it only asserts that the individuals themselves are believers, not that the systems that they are associated with are necessarily Christian or necessarily Christ's Church. In other words, that they may all be private Christians, in fact, even though the institutions that they are leaders of are antichrist and pronounce a false gospel. Some people have actually said that in defense of this document.

There are several problems with that defense. One, of course, is that it attempts to subvert the purpose of these type of public manifestos. This is not a manifesto that is put out there by nobody, that is signed by nobodies, where the benefit of it is just the whole mass of the anonymous public that signs on to it. No, these are people who have signed on as star signers, as initial signatories, as people who are going to be presented at press conferences as representing the thrust and purpose of this Manhattan Declaration. They have signed with their affiliations and their titles listed so that we can know what institutions they represent and presumably what institutions they speak for.

You know, I was thinking of analogies that one might consider to this Declaration, how unspeakably wrong it is that true Christians should sign on to a document that asserts that all the signatories are Christians and are of Christ's Church, when they know full well,

based on the document itself and based on the initial signers, that the people involved are not, in fact, true Christians, and they do not preach Christ's gospel, and they are not really part of Christ's Church.

Think of this: what if you were starting a petition to advocate fair and honest elections. Let's suppose you were going to do that, and you put in there, "All of the undersigned people, we have a great history and we believe that there should be fair elections and there shouldn't be any coercion, shouldn't be any fear, shouldn't be any cheating, shouldn't be any of that."

And then you go out and you solicit maybe David Duke to sign on, or some Ku Klux Klan leader; and then you go and get you some leaders of ACORN, maybe, get them to sign on.

And people will say, "Wait a minute. You can't claim these people are for fair elections. Why ACORN -- they cheat! They register people illegally. They go out and do all sorts of nefarious things! And, look, you can't have Ku Klux Klan members sign! Why, they use violence and force and threats to try to keep people from registering to vote. You can't do that!"

And your defense is, "Well, it doesn't really matter what those institutions do because they are not signing for the institution. They are just signing based upon their own beliefs. And they have all personally assured us that they are big supporters of fair, free elections."

You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't do that because it would discredit the petition, wouldn't it, to know that these people that signed it didn't really meet the qualifications and couldn't really be fairly said to believe the fundamental truths that you claim you were trying to promote.

If you were going to start a petition denouncing torture, you wouldn't go and try to get the head of the CIA to sign on to it, would you? The head of the Mossad, the head of the SAVAK, the head of the KGB -- you wouldn't get those people to sign because their institutions are notorious for torturing people. And it wouldn't be any good to say, "Well, they all personally oppose torture. Trust us on it."

No, the purpose of a petition is not just to have some private interpretation that you can justify to your friends. It is supposed to proclaim to the whole world what these people stand for, and that you stand in solidarity with what they stand for. And if it is well known that they stand for institutions that hate Christ's gospel and that overthrow Christ's reign in the Church, you don't have any business including them in your petition that declares that we are all Christians and we all agree with the same faith and we all have the same tradition and we all promote the same gospel.

And then there is the need for honest communication, that is, what does this actually convey to the public? It conveys quite straightforwardly that these men are all Christians.

They all represent institutions that are part of the Church and that all the signers agree that they are all Christians and they are all a part of the Church.

The Scriptures do not allow us to call Roman Catholic leaders fellow Christians, fellow believers. They just don't allow that. Paul wouldn't have done it. The teachings of the Scriptures are opposed to it.

What does Paul say? We read it, what, two weeks ago. We will read it again. What does he say in Galatians one? He says it is another gospel that these people preach:

But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.<sup>1</sup>

The Scriptures say that men who preach another gospel other than the gospel of the Lord Jesus, other than the gospel of salvation through the blood and righteousness of Christ, then they are preaching another gospel and they are accursed of God. That is what the Scriptures say.

You think that somebody would come to Paul and say, yes, but, oh, they are believers. They are fellow Christians.

Paul would never get to that point. He said, "No, they are accursed of God." It is not what they believe in their hearts that this curse is based on. It is what they preach publicly.

The question is not what do any of these people believe. The question is: Are they preaching a false gospel? If so, God cuts them off right there. They are accursed. You can't be calling them believers. You can't be calling them Christians. God's curse is upon them.

And then in Philippians chapter three, a text we read before. Paul describes the gospel, the true gospel, and he describes the corruption of it by the addition of the law and of works and of rituals, the judaizing corruption of the gospel.

Then he says in Philippians three and verse 17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."<sup>2</sup> That is, he walked—if you read the prior verses—he walked in the pattern of trusting in Christ's gospel alone and repudiating all the works of the flesh and all the works of the law as the basis of his righteousness. He said he wanted to be found "not having mine own righteousness,

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 1:7-9.

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 3:17.

which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Then he says, “Follow after me. Follow after my example.”

And then he says, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

You see, people who don’t walk the way Paul walked -- repudiating righteousness by the works of the law, by the rituals of men, but clinging to and embracing and exalting only the righteousness which is by faith in Christ -- people that walk contrary to that are the enemies of the cross of Christ. And it may be a sad thing. Paul says this to them weeping, but they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

So when a man comes from an institution and leads an institution, and proclaims a false gospel, a gospel of works righteousness, a gospel of righteousness according to the rituals of the Church, you see, Paul would say that he is an enemy of the cross of Christ -- not that he is a Christian, not that he is a believer -- that he is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

And we have to consider the cold hard fact that these Roman Catholic leaders whose names I read off to you, that all these men are engaged in daily and weekly the promulgation and preaching of a false gospel. Every time they say a mass, every time they hold a mass, they have preached a false gospel. They have held out to the people that by receiving this mass, your sins may be forgiven, atonement may be made, propitiation is made for your sin. And by the receiving of this mass your salvation is advanced.

That is a false gospel they are preaching. Every time they hold a mass, every time they perform a baptism, they are preaching a false gospel. What do they teach at their baptism, that by this baptism this infant is justified. Now they don’t mean justified like the Bible means, because he can lose it the first time he commits a really bad sin, but they are preaching a false gospel. They are calling on people to put their trust in the baptism for part of their salvation.

Every time they offer to hear confession -- and this is their job, understand. They are archbishops and bishops. They have to do this week in and week out, to hold masses, to do baptisms, to hear confessions and order penance, to deliver the last rites. All of these are proclamations of a false gospel, of an anti Christian gospel.

You see, it doesn’t matter what they believe in their heart or what you claim they believe in their heart. What matters is they fall under Paul’s curse, under the curse of God. They are called what Paul says: they are enemies of the cross of Christ, not because of what they have tucked away secretly in their heart, but because of their public actions, their

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<sup>3</sup> Philippians 3:9.

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 3:18.

public statements, their public teachings, their public dogma. It makes them cursed of God and enemies of the cross of Christ.

So, you see, we are not allowed to say these are fellow believers, these are fellow brothers. The Scriptures force us to say otherwise, to say contrary to that. And yet the Manhattan Declaration explicitly calls the Roman Catholic system a part of the Church. It explicitly calls dozens and dozens of Roman Catholic leaders fellow Christians. And that means that the Manhattan Declaration promotes an explicit falsehood that should not be agreed to by true Christians.

Now why is that? Well, because Christians are told not to lie. If you sign the Manhattan Declaration and you know that it calls Christians people that God says are accursed, calls Christians people who God says are enemies of the cross of Christ, then you have signed onto a lie. You have signed onto a lie. And Christians are supposed to be honest and forthright and truthful in their public dealings.

And it is not just a lie that won't hurt anybody or hurt anything. It promotes this confusion about what the Church is and about what Christianity is and about what the true gospel is. It promotes and reinforces this old false corrupting notion that the Church and that Christianity is this broad sociological, quasi political institution rather than what the Scriptures say. And it provides validation, by signing on to something like this, onto this falsehood, it provides a validation of the anti gospel and the anti Christian teachings of all the people that it calls Christians that are not. And it gives aid and comfort to the preaching of the false gospel of these institutions and of these signers.

You know, "church men"—I put that in quotation marks—hate to be told that they are not right with God. I was thinking of that when I read this text this morning, Christ's interaction with the people in Nazareth at the synagogue.

Do you remember? He stood up and he read this glorious text from the prophet Isaiah. What did it say? This is verse 18.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

Now, if you read those words and you come to them with a modern, liberal, non Christian point of view, they seem to be so gracious, don't they? Put your own meanings to all the words. Freight them all in the context of your liberal social agenda and your tolerant egalitarianism and your multi culturalism. They seem so nice, don't they?

In fact, that is what the Jewish people said, didn't they? They marveled at his gracious speech, didn't they? They said they marveled at it. It was amazing to them.

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 4:18-19.

And then he started to sort of explain how it didn't mean what they thought it meant, did it, that it didn't just mean he was going to come and just perform a bunch of good works to satisfy their carnal desires, even though that is what they would call upon him to do. He said, "That you will say, 'Physician heal thyself. Do all the mighty works here that you have done in other places that we have heard about.'"

And then he talks about the fact that just because you are in the people of Israel, just because you are Abraham's seed, just because you are regular folk here, and think you are pretty good, it doesn't mean that the blessings of the Lord are going to come to you.

Look at the history, He said: "There were no lepers healed in Elisha's day except some foreigner from Syria named Naaman. And there were no widows fed by a miracle during the three years and six month's famine in Israel except for that widow in Sidon."

And then they hated him for it, didn't they? It made them really angry, and they all got up and tried to run him off a cliff somewhere. They didn't like to hear it, they were filled with wrath it says. They didn't like to hear that their assumption was false that they were all God's people, that God was favorably disposed towards them, and even that Messiah, God's anointed one, was automatically favorably disposed towards them because they were kinfolk and because they were of the tribes of Israel, because they were Abraham's children.

They weren't necessarily the people of the Lord, the people whom the Lord had come to redeem. They couldn't count on that. Their membership in this social and political institution that had grown up, Judaism, the land of Israel that was God's people after the covenants with Moses and so forth, all that didn't make them right with God. They didn't necessarily have God's smile, and his anointed one, the Messiah, wasn't necessarily going to just perform a bunch of miracles for them and satisfy their curiosity and do what they required. Rather, Christ intimated that there were some distinctions there, there were some problems for these people.

And so they got angry. They thought that he would do good things for them, since they all did good things, they stood for the truth. But you can do all those things and still not be right with the Lord.

You see, the problem is an assumption of Christianity -- that if a person is a Christian, if a person is saved, then all these good social works will proceed from them, and if good social works proceed from them, then it must be Christianity. It must be God's truth.

And yet if you leave aside the critical things, which are Christ's gospel and the only way to eternal life, then what good is it really to call what you are doing Christian? You might call it doing good works. You might call it being politically effective or politically responsible or even socially responsible. But is it really Christianity if all it does is focus on the social gospel and doing good works and standing up against oppression and trouble, but it leaves off the gospel? It leaves off the way of salvation.



The most important thing is left off, and we focus and major in this -- what is a religious statement, the Manhattan Declaration -- we focus and major on the subsidiary things, the minor things, leaving unsaid and undone the preaching of the gospel and the seeking of salvation of sinners and reconciliation of people, not towards their fellow man, not towards the political system they are in, but towards the mighty, glorious God who is offended at their rebellion, at their sin and unrighteousness, and calls on them to repent and to trust in the Savior for their salvation.

It is good that the Lord's Table brings us back to the foundation of Christianity, to what it truly is based upon: that there is no salvation apart from Christ's substitutionary death at Calvary.

You know, the Bible is not full of social and political proposals. There are many political and legal and moral principles in the Scriptures that one can either find directly stated or can deduce by good reason and logic. And yet it is not fundamentally a social and political tract, is it? It is fundamentally a proclamation of salvation by the grace of God brought to sinners, a proclamation of salvation only by faith in the finished work of the Savior, the Lord of glory who gave himself a ransom for us.

And that is what the Lord's Table reminds us of. It reminds us that we are not to see Christianity as a social gospel organization, or as some great political enterprise, or as some political or philosophical or moral set of values by which we will address all the ills of society; but rather, first and foremost, it is the preaching of the gospel of salvation to lost sinners through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus.

And while we are on the subject of talking about political misconduct and outrageous behavior—which the Manhattan Declaration seeks to stand against, but in the name of a false Christianity—our minds are drawn, are they not, to the fact that our Lord Jesus wrought our salvation in the midst of and despite grotesque political and moral miscarriages of justice, did he not?

He was falsely accused. There was no respect or toleration for his religious views, was there? There was a great oppression. There was a shedding of innocent blood, was there not? There was an acceptance of payoffs and corrupt practices and mob rule and mentality, and false accusations and unnecessary degradation of a poor, condemned victim by the Roman soldiers, and a public scoffing and taunting of the Lord Jesus, and a rejection and a fleeing away of all of his so called followers in shame and in fear. And all those are things that we seek to remove from society by our social and political actions.

And I am not saying those are wrong to work against. But all those things were present at the death and in the death of the Lord Jesus. And yet the fact is that God used all those things, all that misconduct, all that injustice, all that cruelty, all that oppression -- he used all those things to consummate the salvation of his people by the death of his Son at Calvary!

In Acts chapter two Peter confronts the people of his day, the very people who had participated in this outrage; he confronts them with the irony of this fact, that God used their misconduct to exalt and to glorify his Son. What does he say at Acts two at verse 22?

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”<sup>6</sup>

You see, he had performed all of these good things. He had not harmed anyone. Rather, he had gone about doing a great deal of good, and helping poor and downtrodden people, people with no hope, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, feeding the hungry, loosing people from the prison of disease and of mental infirmity. You remember all that. He had done all those good things.

And what was the world’s response?

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.<sup>7</sup>

We ought not to allow our distress at political outrages and at injustice and in oppression and cruelty, we cannot allow our outrage at those things to take us away from the fact that God works in whatever we find happening in this world for his glory and for the exaltation of his Son, the Lord Jesus!

And nowhere is this seen better than during the time and around the place and the death that he died. And yet he accomplished for his people eternal salvation and glory and happiness, did he not? In the midst of all that injustice and all that wrong and all that pain, our Lord Jesus laid down his life and made an atonement for his people. And that is what we celebrate at this Lord’s Table.

Let’s give thanks for the Lord’s Table and know that it brings us back to the focus and the core of our Christian faith, the gospel of Christ, how he made himself a substitute for us, laid down his life for us. God help us not to ever accommodate or introduce into that gospel or into that core of Christianity false associations, false statements, lies that would undermine it, no matter how good the cause might be.

It would be more important to be heard defending the true gospel of Christ than it is to be heard opposing the evils in our political and social lives and society.

I would like to ask my father if he would give thanks for the bread that reminds us of the body broken for us.

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 2:22.

<sup>7</sup> Acts 2:23-24.

And the Scriptures tell us that on the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread and he blessed it and he broke it and he said, "Take and eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Let's give thanks for the cup that reminds us of the blood of Christ poured out to make atonement and reconciliation for his people.

*Oh God, our Father, we thank you we can come together and worship around this table. We thank you that our hope does not lie in correction of our political system or of our social injustices or oppression even, as much as we desire those things, as much as they should be sought after. But our hope lies in the glorious gospel of Christ and the promise that he has made, the solemn promise that he will not lose a single one of us, but will raise us up in the last day.*

*All our hope is in the Savior. All our hope is in the gospel that he preached, that if any man believe in him, he will have eternal life and never perish. We thank you that we can gather around this table and celebrate what our Savior did to accomplish this great purpose, how he lay down his life for his people.*

*I think especially of that precious blood that he shed for us, by which we are ransomed and redeemed. We are not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold as so many people seek to be redeemed, but rather with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. We pray that we will preach the only means of redemption for people is the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins.*

*We thank you that he made that pronouncement, connected those thoughts for us when he instituted this table, that it is the blood of the new covenant shed for the remission of sins. We thank thee for that blood,*

*by which our peace is made,  
our victory is won,  
great victory o'er hell and sin and woe!*

*And we pray that you will help us to go forth from this place ever rejoicing in what Christ did, and what we remember here, and looking forward to that day when our Lord Jesus comes in glory,*

*The hour is drawing nigh;  
For the crowning day is coming by and by!*

*Help us to look for it and to gaze upon our Savior, and to love him for what he did for us at Calvary, and to be eager to follow after him and to be obedient to him for his own name's sake. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Scriptures tell us that he took the cup after they had supped and he blessed it and he said, "Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new covenant in my blood for the remission of sins. Do it as often as ye do it in remembrance of me."

The Scriptures tell us as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we do preach the Lord's death till he comes.

Let's sing number 188 in the black book.

When I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the Lord of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.