

SERIOUS TIMES

MAKING YOUR LIFE MATTER IN AN URGENT DAY

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A Culture of Life

In a "Breakpoint" commentary titled "*That They May Have Life*," delivered on September 22, 2006, Charles Colson revealed the latest effort of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," specifically a statement titled "That They May Have Life." As someone who was asked to sign and endorse this statement, and was glad to do so, I thought I would share Chuck's announcement of it with you as a *Serious Times Update*.

I believe it is a very important joint proclamation on one of the most pressing issues facing Christ followers as we attempt to fulfill not only the Great Commission, but the cultural commission inherent within it. There is a link below that will take you to the full text of the statement itself, along with the names of those who signed it.

Here are some excerpts from Chuck's commentary:

One of the most important things to come out of the so-called culture wars is not a legislative or other political achievement: It is the realization that Christians on both sides of the Reformation divide are brothers in Christ. What has been called the "ecumenism of the trenches" is evidence of the need to seek, as the Bible commands us to do, unity in the essentials of the faith.

This is the vision that drives the effort known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," or ECT. ECT seeks to speak as one Christian voice to a culture desperately in need of the truth of Christianity—especially when it comes to the sanctity of human life.

ECT's latest statement, "That They May Have Life," makes the case for what I and others have called, "the culture of life." When people hear that phrase, they, of course, think of abortion. But "the culture of life" also includes the "protection of care" of "the severely disabled, the dependent elderly, and the dying." In fact, it encompasses all those who, "for whatever reason, are vulnerable to neglect or exploitation by others."

The most significant part of the ECT statement, in my opinion, is its theological implications, implications that affect how we live the Christian life.

In this new document, the defense and respect for the integrity of all life is not simply an ethical and moral concern, as important as those considerations are. This defense of life is what we call "an inescapable consequence of the Gospel."

As a result, the statement says that "churches do not simply support the pro-life movement as a social cause. Because the gospel of life is integral to God's loving purpose for his creation, the Church of Jesus Christ, comprehensively understood, is a pro-life movement continuing God's mission until the end of time."

If defense of the integrity of life is "an inescapable consequence of the Gospel," where does that leave professing Christians who support legalized abortion and other violations of this integrity? The statement pleads with them to "consider whether they have not set themselves against the will of God and, to that extent, separated themselves from the company of Christian discipleship."

Strong words, but words that go to the very heart of what it means to be a faithful Christian in a world that has set itself against the Gospel of Life. Given this reality, the time for polite demurral has long passed.

The essential unity I mentioned earlier is reflected in the impressive cross-section of Evangelical and Catholic leaders and theologians who have signed on to this statement. I hope you will go to our website and read the document and the list of names that signed it. Or call us at 1-877-322-5527, and we will send you a copy.

Everyone who signed this understands that the entire Christian world is under assault from aggressive and hostile secularism and extremist Islam. Those who have us in their crosshairs don't distinguish us according to our theological labels. And I know it will encourage you to see so many Christian leaders in a powerful defense of life as an "inescapable consequence of the Gospel."

James Emery White

Sources

Link to "That They May Have Life" statement, along with those who signed it:
<http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=5616>

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