

# The Declaration of Civil Obedience

In the course of human events there comes a time when something must be said and something must be done to bring balance back to the moral center of our society. The concept of civility is somehow become foreign to a society that once prided itself on just how civil it was. There was a time when parents, teachers, and students all understood the important role that civil behavior played in our society and made sure that that was the first lesson taught. That notion today is laughed at as our society continues to spiral out of control

and the greatest minds of our generation have yet to figure out what happened or how and who to fix it. What is needed is a return to the core values that made our society great, an honest recognition of what has failed and a ceasing of the practices, programs and yea even the mind set that contributes to this continuous breakdown. What is needed is a call to or **Declaration of Civil Obedience**.

Two events in the last half of the twentieth century have brought about the instability and out of balance that I speak of. Those two events were the banning of public school prayer and integration. Either one could probably have caused the breakdown in our moral center, but together they assured a knockout punch.

How so? The removal of prayer created an environment where disorder and chaos could flourish and with the introduction of integration, the fears brought on by racial tensions made sure that there would be a collapse of our moral center. By no means was I saying that separate but equal was better, because it was not. What I am saying is, it has taken over forty years for America to realize that diversity is what makes this country strong, but had we still had prayer in public schools to help maintain a spiritual and moral focus we might have gotten here sooner.

What has happen over the past forty years in our public schools is we have replaced prayer with police. We have chosen chaos over peace and compromised the health and safety of our children

for the “benefit of keeping church and state separate.

I have yet to understand who declared our founding fathers wrong when they thought it was our God given right to freedom of religion. Religion was woven into the very fabric of our constitution and our Bill of Rights. Some how someone has convinced our law makers that the absence of a God fearing society is some how better.

The vast majority of people in our country educated or not, can tell you freedom of speech never meant denial of the right to pray. It is time that we as one nation under God let our voices be heard and begin the process of rebuilding our moral center. We must stress the fact that religious

tolerance is one of America's most important core values.

There are still enough of us older Americans who can remember what life was like before prayer was taken out of our schools and we have witnessed first hand the disastrous results since then. It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. No plan, program, or ideology has been developed that has been even remotely successful in replacing what we lost when we allowed prayer to be removed from our public schools. It has been a failed experiment that has gone on long enough and any lawmaker or any judge in any court who disagrees with this truth should be voted out of office or removed from the bench.

How can we expect our children to learn in an environment where their very safety is threatened on a daily basis? There is no such thing as discipline or order or civility when there are no real consequences for the lack of it. The emphasis that is placed on the importance of good behavior or better stated citizenship is woefully inadequate. We must restore civility to its rightful place in our society or our most precious treasure, our children and their future will be lost for generations to come.

It is now very clear to me that prayer in our schools is more than just a nice thing to do. It is greater than just a good idea, it is more than a harmless practice that should be observed. Prayer in our schools is critical to our nation's spiritual, moral, and psychological well being. In the

preamble of our constitution our forefathers indelibly etched into the foundation of our country what we as a people stand for: “We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. The recognition of their creator is what has given rise to what we claim as our God given rights. Our freedom to recognize Him as the giver of these rights is what we have always fought for. Contrary to what some believe,(that might makes right,) faith in God is what has made our nation strong. Unfortunately there are those who still labor under the false assumption that the bigger our army, the more powerful our weapons, and the greater our financial

resources, the more fearful our country will be in the eyes of the rest of the world. But that was never what made other countries fear us or look up to us. We were respected in the eyes of the world not for our might but for our righteousness. It was our fundamental belief that God would be with us as long as we stood on the side of what was right that made us what we were. Alex De Tocqueville the nineteenth century French historian said it best “ America is great because America is good, but she will cease to be great when she ceases to be good”. When America turns away from the very foundation and fundamental principles upon which she was built she will no longer be good. That is the state to which American has fallen. God was at the center of our resolve as a nation and that is what made us



so good and so great. My how the mighty have fallen!

For all of the good things the American Civil Liberties Union has stood for, their stand on public school prayer is derisive. Not only that, they have no moral center beyond their limited interpretation of our constitution. If they could have their way, the name of God would be stricken from every public institution, including our nation's currency. It is that kind of cancer that is eating away at the heart of our country.

Earlier I spoke of our nations resolve, allow me to revisit that thought for a moment. There is a book that is required reading in some Junior High Schools entitled Johnny Tremain by Ester Forbes. Johnny Tremain is a fictional account of a young

boy who lived around the time of the American Revolution. One of the book's central characters, James Otis, makes a statement that clarified in the hearts and minds of the early revolutionaries just why they were fighting. Otis said it was not just for the rights of men in this country, but just so a man could stand any where in the world. "Just so a man could stand." America's resolve has always been that God has given us the strength and the wherewithal to stand; to stand anywhere, anytime, and anyplace. If God is no longer seen as the principle of our resolve, then what do we stand for? There is an old adage that states that a man who will not stand for something will fall for anything. I fear that that is where we are.

“ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land”. America needs healing, but before it can be healed we must first recognize that our wound was self inflicted. We must turn back to our core values and not be afraid to stand on those core values as we face the monumental challenges that face us as a nation. If the men and women who make the laws that govern this country dare not begin their congressional day without prayer, if our president takes the oath of office with his hand on the Holy Bible and swears to protect and defend our country “so help me God” why is it so difficult to

accept the fact that our schools need to invoke the presence of God.

Return prayer to public schools. If there is a conscience among the students and teachers that a greater power, or higher authority is at work amongst them, I believe that this will cause a change for the better in the dynamics of the educational environment. Teach our children that good citizenship is not just a privilege to be taken lightly, but a responsibility that must be live up to in order for our society to fulfill its promise.