

THE MANHATTAN DECLARATION

May 20, 2010

Our Vision Statement as a congregation reflects four core values. We encourage our members to be Gospel-driven, disciple-making, faith-integrating and culture-engaging. Our fourth core value is derived from Micah 6:8...

*He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

In an effort to engage our culture as the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a city on a hill (Matthew 5:13-16), we are often called to take a Biblical stand on moral and social issues. Recently three Christians, from both an evangelical and a Roman Catholic background, have written a document calling for the sanctity of life, the integrity of marriage and the support for religious freedom in America. Messrs. Timothy George, Charles Colson, and Robert George have drafted *The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience* (October 20, 2009). This declaration was released on November 20, 2009, and has already been signed by over 447,000 Evangelical, Catholic and Orthodox Church members.

Over the past few months, your session has examined and discussed *The Manhattan Declaration*. They have voted to both endorse this statement of conscience and to recommend it to our congregation for review and action. As your senior pastor, I have affixed my signature to this document, as have other members of the staff and our leadership. I encourage you to read *the Manhattan Declaration* and act as your conscience shall lead you.

This Declaration is **not** a political document. It calls for no government action or legal policy. **Nor** is it a theological statement. The Declaration does not call for ecclesiastical unity, agreement on the definition of the Gospel or actions deemed missiological or ministerial. *The Manhattan Declaration* is what it declares itself to be: a statement of the historic Christian conscience on the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage between a man and a woman, and the God-given right to religious freedom. Its sole purpose is to declare to all who read it what are the will of God, the Word of God and the work of God concerning life, marriage, and religious freedom. The Declaration calls us to the convictions and actions of justice, mercy and truth set forth in Micah 6:8.

Your elders encourage you to access *The Manhattan Declaration* via this website: <http://manhattandeclaration.org/home.aspx>. Once you have read the Declaration, we ask you to pray about what God would have you do, and to pass on this Declaration to others in your circle of family and friends.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act... One act of obedience is better than a hundred sermons." May the Lord guide you in what to do and to speak concerning the sanctity of life, the integrity of marriage and religious freedom.

On behalf of the session,

Michael F. Ross
Senior Pastor