

A Session's Statement on Opposition to Women Serving in the Military

Trinity Presbyterian Church of Northern Kentucky in Ludlow, Ky., adopted a resolution on Women Serving in the Military

Charles A. Hickey, Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church of Northern Kentucky (PCA) in Ludlow, Ky., provided this resolution adopted by the Session. He wrote, "The Trinity PCA Session had concerns about women in military service and spent a great deal of time preparing the statement on Women in the Military. We believe it necessary for churches to adopt similar statements and teachings so that when our wives, sisters and daughters are subjected to the Selective Service, they will have the necessary background in making a stand as conscientious objectors. This statement may aid other Churches as they prayerfully consider adopting this or comparable statements."

Trinity Presbyterian Church Of Northern Kentucky Statement of Opposition to Women Serving In the Military

Whereas, on January 24, 2013, the former Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army General Martin E. Dempsey, unilaterally rescinded the policy—in place throughout our national history in the combined armed forces of the United States of America—that women are excluded from combat service; and

Whereas, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army General Martin E. Dempsey, wrote regarding women serving in the military, "We all wear the same uniform and we all fire the same weapons. And most importantly, we all take the same oath," thereby renouncing the distinction between men and women with respect to their service in military combat roles; and

Whereas, Congressional legislation has been proposed that would require women to register with the Selective Service System; and

Whereas, the United States Supreme Court, in a case adjudicating the constitutionality of a male-only Selective Service registration requirement, ruled that registration serves no purpose beyond providing a pool for the draft of potential combat troops;^[1] and

Whereas, the United States Supreme Court rested its decision validating the male-only Selective Service registration requirement in large measure upon the military rule that distinguishes between men and women's service in combat roles^[2]—a distinction the United States military has now repudiated, thus eliminating the Court's principal rationale for permitting Congress to require only men to register with Selective Service; and

Whereas, an impermeable distinction between combat and non-combat troops is not, and has not been, a policy of the United States military,^[3] nor are battle risks and martial readiness training and expectations avoided by those designated as non-combat troops; and

Whereas, women in military assignments have been put in harm's way and will in all likelihood be given increasingly dangerous combat assignments; and

Whereas, the theater of battle carries risks different for women than men, risks from which women should be diligently protected—not intentionally subjected; and

Whereas, in the circumstance of an armed force constituted of both men and women, military exigencies are such as often would make impractical or forbid the separation of men and women otherwise required by dictates of modesty, respect, and protecting women from risks of exploitation and other improprieties; and

Whereas, the shortfalls in recruiting accompanied by the increasing demands caused by numerous deployments and escalating attrition in the ranks of the armed services, together with an international environment of geopolitical instability carrying the potential to trigger numerous additional military conflicts involving the United States, entails that it is reasonable to anticipate a conscription of men and women into military service in this country; and

Whereas, the issue of the service of women in the military generally, and in combat positions specifically, has been an enduring matter of concern in the national discourse; and

Whereas, it is the duty of the Church, as the pillar and foundation of the truth, to declare the will of God on all matters of faith and practice; and

Whereas, the failure of the larger Church to speak clearly on this issue of women in military service places all women, including those of Trinity Presbyterian Church, in jeopardy by not providing them with the Church's declaration on this issue, leaving them to plead only their personal beliefs should they be conscripted;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Session of Trinity Presbyterian Church hereby adopts as its position the statement in the following paragraph, along with the series of affirmations and denials appended hereto (in Appendix A).

The testimony of the Holy Scriptures requires the conclusion that women are ethically forbidden to serve in the United States Military given their policy adopted as of January 2013 that all volunteers and potential conscripts are considered combatants regardless of gender. Additionally, the United States government sins against God in inviting or compelling women to serve in such a capacity; and

Be it further resolved that the adoption of this statement, and any documentation referenced herein, be communicated to the members of Trinity Presbyterian Church and that copies of this statement be kept on file and made available to anyone requesting a copy.

Dated: October 22, 2013

/s/ Shay Fout, Clerk of Session

APPENDIX A AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS

1. We affirm that the Holy Scriptures (the 66 Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible) are God's revealed will to mankind and are the sole rule for faith and practice.
2. We affirm that in addition to the explicit teachings and commands of the Holy Scriptures there are normative teachings therein that can be deduced "by good and necessary consequence" from the Scriptures' content (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Paragraph 6).
3. We affirm that woman (Eve) was created by God from the rib of man (Adam) and was created to be a "help mate" for Adam in his God-given mandate to "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28 NKJV)
4. We deny that men and women are products of random chance that have evolved over thousands of millennia in a process commonly designated macro evolution.
5. We affirm there is a revelatory mandate indicating the purpose for which man and woman were created.
6. We affirm that the highest purpose to which woman was created was to bare and nurture the offspring from her marital union in keeping with the God-given mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.
7. We affirm that, in addition to woman's created purpose of "giving life" she was also endowed with a constitution suited and directed to the life-preserving nurture and care of children.
8. We deny that men and women are fungible and that there are no distinctions of ability, constitution, gifts, or purpose between men and women, and we further deny that these distinctions are social constructions rather than being created and inherent.
9. We deny that women should strive to minimize their distinctive abilities, constitution, gifts, and purpose in an egalitarian quest purported to achieve equality with men.
10. We affirm that women should celebrate the distinguishing and God-ordained qualities of their sex, and gladly comport themselves in conformity with His design.
11. We affirm that in Adam's failure to obey God's command not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and his failure to defend his wife against the temptations of the

serpent, he imposed upon the whole of creation the consequences of sin precipitating all subsequent wars throughout human history.

12. We affirm that in all places in the Holy Scriptures where wars are described, only men were called to arms (e.g. Numbers 31:3-4; Joshua 1:14; 6:3; 8:3; Judges 7:1-8; 20:8-11; 1 Samuel 8:11-12 (contrast verse 13); 11:8; 13:2; 14:52; 24:2; 2 Samuel 24:2; 1 Chronicles 21:5; 27:1-15, 23-24; 2 Chronicles 17:12-19; 25:5-6; 26:11-14; 2 Kings 24:14-16; and Nehemiah 4:14).

13. We affirm that a woman should not wear uniforms or other military accoutrements that make her indistinguishable from a man (Deut. 22:5).

14. We affirm that Deborah accompanied Barak to Mount Tabor notwithstanding God's command and promise of success to him as leader of the army of men (Judges 4:6-7) and that it was to Barak's dishonor and penalty that he requested Deborah to accompany him (Judges 4:8,9).

15. We affirm that upon reaching Mount Tabor, which was located above the battlefield where the Israelites engaged the Canaanite army, that Barak with his 10,000 male soldiers went down to the battlefield without Deborah and that Deborah remained away from the battlefield on Mount Tabor (Judges 4:10, 12, 14b).

16. We deny that Deborah took part in the battle between the Israelites and the Canaanites in Judges 4.

17. We affirm that Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite armies in Judges 4, fled the battlefield and took refuge in the house of Heber, whose wife Jael later drove a tent peg through Sisera's temple and into the ground while he slept in her home (Judges 4:21).

18. We deny that Jael's actions were those of a soldier in combat in the army of the Israelites. Rather, her actions were carried out (a) in her domestic jurisdiction, (b) against one who had fled the field of battle, and (c) were carried out through artifice and cunning that facilitated her enemy's incapacity to resist or threaten her person.

19. We affirm that women possess attributes of courage, perseverance, endurance through hardship, the willingness to shed their own blood and give their own lives. These admirable qualities are to be employed in childbearing, acts of nurturing and care, and other callings consistent with these, such as was evidenced by the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:15-26.

20. We deny that women are to use in military service, in or out of the theater of battle, their attributes of courage, perseverance, endurance through hardship, and willingness to self-sacrifice.

21. We affirm that some women are capable of doing many, if not all, activities associated with warfare. However, their mere capacity to perform these activities does not validate the propriety of their participation in them, let alone serve as grounds to compel their participation.
22. We affirm that it is licit for a woman to aid in the care and treatment of soldiers who are ill or injured as a result of the soldier's service in the military.
23. We deny that it is pragmatically necessary for women to become part of the Armed Forces of the United States to serve in a capacity of caring for and/or treating soldiers who are ill or injured.
24. We affirm that the oath of enlistment required of those entering a service branch of the United States military obliges the enlistee to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic and to obey the orders of the President and the officers appointed over the enlistee.
25. We deny that it is lawful according to the Holy Scriptures for a woman to take such an oath, as it both communicates the propriety of and obliges her to take on the forbidden role of military defender of her society, and subjects her to orders to participate in or carry out martial pursuits contrary to her created nature.
26. We affirm that it is a disgrace and a capitulation of responsibility for the men of any nation to place the women of the nation in harm's way or to rely on them to carry out the combat service necessary to protect and defend the society.
27. We affirm that God's teachings in Scripture supersede any edict of the civil authorities that is in opposition to God's teachings.
28. We deny that any institution of man, civil or otherwise, possesses authority above the Holy Scriptures.
29. We affirm that in faithfully keeping the teachings of the Holy Scriptures that do not permit a woman to serve in the armed forces of the United States as currently constituted, that such fidelity to the Holy Scriptures could be construed as "civil disobedience" when a woman refuses to serve in the armed forces as currently constituted.
30. We affirm that refusal to submit to any governmental coercion compelling women to serve in the armed forces of the United States is not a violation of the admonition in Romans 13 to obey the civil authorities, because, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29 NASB)
31. We affirm that any civil authority requiring or compelling women to take up arms for any purpose does so in violation of the Holy Scriptures.

[1] *Rostker v. Goldberg*, 453 U.S. 57, 60, 68, 75, 77 (1981).

[2] *Id.* at 78-79.

[3] *See id.* at 81-82.