



ADVOCACY COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN'S CONCERNS

NOVEMBER 30, 2018

Dear Presbyterian Leaders,

Transgender people cannot be erased. No matter what policy is put into place, we are all humans created in the imago Dei. The recent request of the current administration to the United States Supreme Court to issue a ruling on their policy against our transgender siblings regarding military service is just another attempt to erase our siblings.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) stands in solidarity with our siblings who are trans and/or non-binary. We call upon our national church leadership to use their voices to denounce the proposed policy changes, whose sole purpose is to wipe away a segment of our nation's population.

Two actions of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) speak specifically to the current political agenda: [11-12, "On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities,"](#) and [11-13, "On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church."](#)

From Item 11-12 (bold ours):

"Standing in the conviction that all people are created in the image of God and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for all people, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms its commitment to the full welcome, acceptance, and inclusion of transgender people, people who identify as gender non-binary, and people of all gender identities within the full life of the church and the world. The assembly affirms the full dignity and the full humanity of transgender people, their full inclusion in all human rights, and their giftedness for service. **The assembly affirms the church's obligation to stand for the right of people of all gender identities to live free from discrimination, violence, and every form of injustice.**"

Recently, the Rev. Dr. Dianne Moffett wrote in her weekly email to PMA staff, "I cannot tell you how sad and concerned I am about the state of leadership in our country. From pipe bombs to the migrant caravan to transgender issues, it has been a discouraging week." Grateful for her acknowledgment, we note further how acutely discouraged transgender folk have felt during this time. If she was discouraged, can you imagine how a young transgender person felt?

A sibling shared these words on Facebook, based on Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of trouble..." These were words they needed to hear in these days of uncertainty:

Though the mountains shake

and the earth sinks down
and the waters foam and roar,
though the world burns dry
and creation groans--
I will not be afraid.

Though the nations seethe
and the wars churn on
and the people cry in vain
though the bullets fly
and the hatred reigns--
I will not be afraid.

Though they cut me out,
and erase my name
and refuse to hear my voice,
let them do their worst--
I am held in You.
I will not be afraid.

Though they cut us out
and erase our names
and refuse to hear our voice
let them do their worst,
for You made us, too.
We will not be afraid.
We will not be afraid.

- Slat's Toole

Again, from Item 11-12 (bold ours):

“Accordingly, the General Assembly **empowers, authorizes, and directs** the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, **to advocate for the rights of transgender people and for legal protections to ensure and protect the full humanity and dignity of people of all gender identities**. Specifically,

the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Office of Public Witness) are authorized to support the right of transgender individuals to

- serve in the military, and every type of government and public service;
- full access to public accommodations, including gender-inclusive restrooms;
- full legal protection against discrimination, particularly with regard to employment, housing, education, and health care;
- title IX protections for transgender students against violence and bullying;
- other legal protections that guarantee and safeguard the full rights of transgender individuals.”

Slats Toole’s poem says it well:

Though they cut us out
and erase our names
and refuse to hear our voice
let them do their worst,
for You made us, too.
We will not be afraid.
We will not be afraid.

Again, we the people who make up the ACWC for the PC(USA) stand with our siblings who are trans and/or non-binary. We call upon our national church leaders to use their voices to denounce the proposed policy changes whose sole purpose is to wipe away a segment of our nation’s population and unique reflection of God’s very image.

Your partners in ministry,

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

