

RELIGIOUS CONVICTION REGARDING WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

A Statement Formulated by the Spiritual Council of Immanuel Leidy's Church

Immanuel Leidy's Church confesses, along with all the churches of Christ throughout the ages, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the final authority by which we may know what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

The Spiritual Council of Immanuel Leidy's Church, the final teaching authority of this church, finds that the Bible specifies in Numbers 1:2, 3 that Moses was to "take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel." [cf. Deuteronomy 20]

This passage, and others like it, states the clear and, until recent times, virtually universally accepted principle that warfare is the responsibility of qualified males.

From the Garden of Eden onward God has differentiated the roles of male and female. The primary sphere of responsibility for the women is domestic. This truth is repeated throughout the Scriptures, being especially emphatic in the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [cf. Ephesians 5 and 6, 1 Timothy 2, Titus 2].

This teaching, we believe, has at its center a design intended to protect women, whom the Bible denominates as the weaker vessel [cf. 1 Peter 3:7]. God's holy law continually provides greater protection for the vulnerable. The churches of Christ must insist on this as axiomatic.

Warfare, as a result of sin in the world, is a horror, yet an occasional reality for which every sovereign nation must be prepared. We fully recognize the responsibility of Christian males to take part in just wars on behalf of the nation of which God providentially made them citizens. We regard as an abomination, however, the forced inclusion of women to be among the ranks from which an army is to be mustered. Those who would point to Jael [cf. Judges 4:17-21] as a biblical justification for female conscription fail to note that this exceptional woman performed her courageous and noble deed in the context of fulfilling her domestic duties. She was not at combat in the field when she killed Sisera, but was at home in her tent. The testimony of the Bible remains uniform: warfare, as such, is the responsibility of qualified males.

We are not opposed to policies which permit women to engage in support and ancillary activities appropriate to their sex, outside of combat, and in accordance with the wishes of their

respective covenant heads. Even these, however, must be done in a manner which protects their dignity as women and does not expose them to abuse or unwarranted risk of assault or injury. It is the responsibility of males to bear whatever sorrows may be necessary to protect the women and children of their nation.

The Spiritual Council of Immanuel Leidy's Church, with the authority it has received from Jesus Christ our Savior and the Lord of all, calls on its members, as well as all sympathetic Christians willing to submit to the testimony of God, to think and act with due consideration to the truth noted in the body of this statement. Our daughters may not be subject to draft, may not be regarded as proper participants in any pool from which commissioned combatants are to be drawn, and ought not to be placed in any environment or circumstances which would otherwise compromise their high and holy calling as women of the covenant community.

Spiritual Council
Immanuel Leidy's Church

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