
POSITION OF CALAVERAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CONCERNING THE DRAFTING FOR MILITARY SERVICE OF WOMEN AND CONCERNING THEIR ROLE IN ARMED COMBAT

Because of our awareness of God's distinction between the sexes and the expression of that distinction in the general application of divine declarations about mustering men to fight, Calaveras Presbyterian Church finds that the evidence of the Bible is to exempt women from being drafted into the military and from serving in military combat. Furthermore, we conclude from the testimony of both Old and New Testaments of the Divine Scriptures, as summarized in our Westminster Confessional Standards, that men alone are charged with the responsibility of combat in just warfare.

Distinctions between men and women are raised throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and are cited as proof texts by the Westminster Confession as still governing us today. The Old Testament passages dealing with various aspects of God's revealed will concerning personnel in combat¹, the New Testament's teachings on the validity of Old Testament passages as providing timeless general moral instruction and application in the New Testament age², and the specific hermeneutical use of the Old Testament by the framers of our Westminster confessional standards provide a sufficient basis for our position.

We therefore declare that there is firm biblical protection for military chaplains, pastors, elders, and other communicant members considering or seeking to enter military services to declare their adherence to the sincerely held beliefs of their church, to wit:

1. That Calaveras Presbyterian Church is conscientiously opposed to any possible future drafting of women into combat service, in time of war or peace, under any and all circumstances, for the reason that such governmental actions would be contrary to the Word of God.
2. That Calaveras Presbyterian Church is unswervingly opposed to the inclusion of women in combatant military units, or in units which during wartime have a high degree of potential involvement in combat and possible capture and potential risk of rape, even if their command is not designated a combat element, and that such inclusion is contrary to the Word of God. (This does not rule out, however, non-married female personnel serving in non-combatant assignments, such as field medical units or on hospital ships, which can come under hostile fire.³)
3. That no chaplain who is endorsed for military service by his church shall be required to advocate, support, or agree with any philosophy and effort to include women in military combatant units, nor can he be required by any superior officer to teach or advocate such a philosophy and effort, nor shall he be forbidden to provide biblical counsel consistent with his church's position.

Our position is consistent with those of other Presbyterian and Reformed churches and denominations, namely that the Bible forbids women serving as warriors or being called to such service. We, with others of our like confession and faith, also make an explicit declaration that registering young women for the draft, or they being compelled to comply with a draft order, is evil and unbiblical. We hold that our position provides a valid argument for conscientious objector status for our daughters, granddaughters, and other women of our church. Among the statements of sister churches and denominations, we cite these:

- "Therefore, be it now resolved: That, while recognizing the right and duty that women have to self-defense, which may involve physical violence (Judges 9:53), it is our conviction that Biblical teaching does not give warrant to employ women for military combat" (Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America 168th Synod, 1998).

- “That the 68th GA declares that the use of women in military combat is both contrary to nature and inconsistent with the Word of God” (Orthodox Presbyterian Church 68th General Assembly, 2001).
- “This Assembly declares it to be the biblical duty of man to defend woman and therefore condemns the use of women as military combatants, as well as any conscription of women into the Armed Services of the United States” (Presbyterian Church in America 30th General Assembly, 2002).
- “The Word of God gives no warrant expressed or implied that women are to be conscripted into military service or required to participate in military combat. Therefore, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church opposes the registration of women for Selective Service and the assignment of women to combat duty or to duties which involve a significant risk of engaging in combat” (ARP General Synod, 2016, Index 20).

Calaveras Presbyterian Church recognizes that the individual conscience, guided by the Word of God and responsive to the counsel of the Church, must decide concerning the general propriety of voluntary service in the military. We believe that military service is a just and godly calling but that it presents special and difficult moral challenges in light of the integration of women into the armed services. The single women of the church are warned of the many difficulties and moral and physical dangers involved in serving in the military in secular America, due to their inherent greater vulnerability. Individual believers as citizens are urged to exercise their godly influence to bring about authentic spiritual and moral reformation in the military services.

¹ Old Testament citations revealing a historical pattern:

- Only men were counted to go to war (Numbers 1:2–3).
- Only sons were chosen for war (1 Samuel 8:11).
- Only men went to war (Genesis 14:14–15).
- Daughters served in domestic roles (1 Samuel 8:13).
- Wives and children did not go to war (Deuteronomy 3:19–20).
- Women welcomed men back from war; never did they return with them (1 Samuel 18:6–7).

² The New Testament admonishes that the church should consider what the Old Testament taught (2 Timothy 3:16–17) and the writings of the early church fathers confirm the Old Testament pattern.

³ We hold particularly that married women must not serve in the military because of the possibility of a deployment, which would result in the neglect of their highest biblical responsibilities—caring for and nurturing their children and home. Single women with particular conscientious convictions about a given just (defensive) war may voluntarily serve in non-combatant roles in the military if given that limited choice by military command.