

To Condemn and Renounce the Employment of Women in Military Combat

Whereas: On January 24, 2013 the U.S. Department of Defense announced its intent to lift our nation's 65-year-old ban against sending women into combat—an exclusion which the Supreme Court upheld in 1981; *and*

Whereas: In 1992 a Presidential Commission re-examined the use of women in combat. It conducted hearings inviting theological input. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod did not contribute or attend. The final report found that no major American religious establishment had adopted a theological position or spoken clearly on this issue. In 1993-4 the Secretary of Defense ordered the military services to permit women to compete for some combat assignments and to open some specialties formerly reserved to men. Regretfully we in the LC-MS must acknowledge: our silence wrongly implied consent to these changes which we did not intend and must extend no longer; *and*

Whereas: We recognize our nation's freedom, prosperity and security as gracious gifts from God's generous hand. These lie beyond the achievement of human capabilities alone. Dependent upon His mercies, we dare not defy His will; *and*

Whereas: God ordered His creation of man and woman in a good relationship with Himself and one another that His order of redemption does not erase, but confirms and fulfills. God designed woman as His vessel for bearing life. To employ a woman as an instrument of death and destruction inverts His design; to ignore His order is damnable abomination; *and*

Whereas: Moses' fourth book (Numbers) established the principle: only men are to be counted for warfare. In cases of aggression, Israel's army was to drive intruders back to their own cities, then extend an offer of peace. If this was not accepted, only men were put to the sword; women and children were to be excepted (Deuteronomy 20:12-15); *and*

Whereas: Advocates of women warriors often cite Judges 4 for support. In fact, this account is incomprehensible without the underlying presumption that men, not women, have the duty to go forth into combat. The Lord exposes the cowardice of Barak through Deborah and shames him by delivering the enemy leader into the hands of a woman, Jael. God sends neither woman into combat. He declares particular scorn for women as warriors at several points in Holy Scripture (e.g. Isa 19:16; Jer 50:31, 51:30; Nah 3:13). From Deuteronomy 22:5 Dr. Martin Luther concludes: "A woman shall not bear the weapons of a man, nor shall a man wear female clothing. ... [S]uch things are not to be done as a matter of serious and constant habit and custom, but due uprightness and dignity are to be preserved for each sex ... Through this law ... [Moses] seems to reproach any nation in which this custom is observed" (*Lectures on Deuteronomy*, AE 9:219-220); *and*

Whereas: Christ confirms and fulfills this Old Testament pattern, as the New Testament makes clear. Just as Jesus gave up His Life, died, for His Bride, so also husbands should give up their lives, die, for their wives (Ephesians 5:25); *and*

Whereas: The common sensibility of "gentle-men" includes a special and particular responsibility to guard, protect, and defend women. People of every nation and any faith should counsel and encourage men to obey their innate impulse and outward duty: put "women and children first." For men to employ women in their own physical defense and in killing can only be considered among the most profound abuses of women; *and*

Whereas: The spilling and shedding of human blood is far more than a "job" offering legal "employment." To escape condemnation as mercenary murder, the call to arms for the taking and risking of human lives must only be conducted as a moral enterprise against evil threats, toward just ends, by just means. Among the fundamental principles of Just War is the need to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants; women have always been presumed as the latter. America must not ignore this basic presumption, and dare not attempt to overrule it. To employ women in military combat is intrinsically immoral and barbaric. *Now, therefore, be it*

RESOLVED: As pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, we confess as sin our failure clearly and boldly to speak to this issue of women in combat. We repent. We seek now to state our clear theological position on this issue and sound the clear trumpet of God's warning (1 Cor. 14:8). *Therefore, be it further*

RESOLVED: From Holy Scripture we are convinced: God does not sanction and will not bless the purposeful exposure of women to any hostile environment which compromises His own created order, good design, and high and holy callings. We hereby declare our conscientious objection to any policy or practice which considers women eligible for assignment into combat situations or conscription. *And be it finally*

RESOLVED: To all who defy God's clearly-expressed will in this matter, we declare His warning (Ezekiel 33): Hear the Word of the Lord and repent, lest you incur His condemnation, for on the final day you will face His judgment.