

Advisory Votes and Comments on Peacemaking Affirmations

Affirmation 1: “We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.”

Advisory Vote: 52 For 0 Against.

No Comments

Affirmation 2: “We confess our complicity in the world’s violence even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to ‘unmask idolatries,’ to speak the truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer, and to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.”

Advisory Vote: 48 For 3 Against 1 Abstention

2 Comments:

From one who voted “for:” “Not me personally”

From one who voted “against:” with “our complicity” underlined, an emphatic “No!”

Affirmation 3: “We reclaim the power and authority of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, who proclaims God’s reign, who inspires the prophetic church, [by] forgiving, healing, and undoing violence, and overcomes evil through the cross and resurrection.”

Advisory Vote: 51 For 1 Against

1 Comment: “Would ‘proclaim,’ ‘affirm,’ or ‘claim’ be better than “reclaim” in line 1?”

Affirmation 4: “We seek to understand the nonviolent revolutions and struggles of our time by drawing on the traditions of Christian pacifism, just war, just peacemaking, and active nonviolence, and by cultivating moral imagination through prayer, study, and engagement with friend and enemies. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we affirm our responsibility of continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (USA) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the US military, veterans, and their families.

Note: the presbytery voted unanimously to add the phrase, “and those in the diplomatic service.” to the end of the affirmation. With that addition ...

Advisory Vote: 45 For 6 Against 1 abstention

Comments from those who voted “For”

“Add the phrase ‘and care’ to the second sentence so that it would read ‘continuing the long tradition of support and care by the Presbyterian Church (USA)

“I did not propose an amendment to #4, but I would personally add the words, ‘...and the best way to support our brothers and sisters in the military is to not send them into war’.”

Three comments were made that wanted to be sure that “the military” is also understood to include “the intelligence community.”

“Do we need to specifically include the military? Although the military goes good things, it seems contradictory to ‘just war’.”

(With “Even as...” at the beginning of sentence 2 circled) “As if they aren’t part of the peace process? Working for peace and justice? Can we affirm without separating?”

Comments from those who voted “Against”

“This is an insult and lip-service to all military and their families”

“Perhaps the sentence about support of the military could be placed as a separate affirmation to give greater attention to this issue.”

(With the phrase “Christian pacifism” circled) “Perhaps this can be deleted and still be a strong statement.

“1% of American families serve in the US military; 22 veterans a day commit suicide. Where is our ‘long standing tradition of support’ of veterans and their families?”

(With “Even as...” at the beginning of sentence 2 circled) “Don’t like the implication that the military is not a part of the peace discernment process”

Affirmation 5: “As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves earnestly to seek and promote loving, nonviolent responses to conflict in our daily lives, in our communities, and in our world; to risk call our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to practice boldly the things that make for peace.”

Advisory Vote: 48 For 3 Against 1 Abstention

Comments:

From one who voted “For:” “add ‘and the world’ so that we ‘risk calling our nation *and the world* back...”

From one who voted “For:” “Whose heritage? The nation’s? Or the PCUSA?”

Two who voted “For” noted the phrase “the practices of empire” is not a widely recognized term for most people and needs some unpacking.

One who voted “Against:” “This denies the use of military at every level. You are denying that evil sometimes must be stopped by force.”

An Additional Affirmation was proposed and then voted on by the presbytery as follows: “We confess our complicity in environmental destruction, our need for living in peace

with the environment, and environmental issues as root causes for human violence.”

Advisory Vote: 42 For 1 Against 9 Abstentions