



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

J. HERBERT NELSON, II
STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT BY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) STATED CLERK
The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II

June 16, 2018

As Presbyterians gather for the meeting of our 223rd General Assembly, we are mindful of the many issues of justice, peace and compassion we face, both as citizens of the United States and members of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we face issues of peace on the Korean peninsula, tragic injustice in the Middle East, and the spectre of climate change in our nation and our world, there is nothing of more urgency than the tragedy that is unfolding at our borders, where children are ripped from their parents and placed in holding cells, while their frantic parents scream in agony at the separation.

What has this nation become? How have we wandered so far from Jesus' kind admonition, "Let the little children come to me ... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs"? How can this be happening in a nation in which so many claim the traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and the critical importance of families to the fabric of our lives together?

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of this policy is the willingness of the highest legal official of our nation to suggest that if a mother has fled violence in her own country to save herself and her children but has not had a chance to make a proper petition for safety in the U.S., she should be taught a lesson by having her children taken from her. It is almost incomprehensible that these acts should be used as a warning to others who would come.

What makes matters worse is the audacity of quoting the Apostle Paul's admonition to believers in Romans 13:1 to obey the law (presumably whatever the law says), while ignoring the higher scriptural demand that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

The crisis of tens of thousands of desperate people coming to the United States for relief seems almost overwhelming. But as the officials of our government attempt to address the crisis, we cannot afford to tarnish the highest values of our nation. We must not punish desperate parents

by tearing their children away from them, leaving the parents without access to the children or assurance of their welfare.

In the name of God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stop!

In the faith we share,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Herbert Nelson, II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "II" at the end.

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)