**RESPONSE TO J. HERBERT NELSON, PC(USA) STATED CLERK, ON THE PERSONHOOD OF CHILDREN IN THE WOMB**

By Marie Bowen, Administrative Director

On October 15, 2020 the Presbyterian Church (USA) posted, "[Stated Clerk says Black lives still matter in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)](https://www.pcusa.org/news/2020/10/15/stated-clerk-says-black-lives-still-matter-presbyt/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Presbyterian+Church+USA+Weekly+News&utm_campaign=Weekly+News+-+Oct+14+-+20%2C+2020). I read the article and watched the [video statement](iframe%20title%3D%22vimeo-player%22%20src%3D%22https%3A/player.vimeo.com/video/467787032%22%20width%3D%22640%22%20height%3D%22360%22%20frameborder%3D%220%22%20allowfullscreen%3E%3C/iframe) of J. Herbert Nelson, II, PCUSA Stated Clerk. He affirmed that black lives matter and affirmed the personhood of every human being. I agree wholeheartedly with the Stated Clerk’s message. The personhood of every human being is indeed “something that God has done” and has “affirmed for everyone.” God does not put any group of people in a “2nd class.”

I too have witnessed the anger and prejudice he describes. The difference is that I have heard those reactions from blacks and whites alike when I have spoken out to stand up for the value of black lives in the womb. I hear a huge discrepancy in the way the Nelson perceives the innate God-given personhood of every human being when responding to racial injustice and the way he ignores (maybe even denies) the innate God-given personhood of children in the womb when he speaks on behalf of the PCUSA on abortion. (Granted, it is his job to interpret the policies of the PCUSA and those policies are the source of the discrepancy).

Presbyterians Protecting Life continues to affirm with Nelson that black lives matter and we too affirm the personhood of all people. We take our stand not from the policy of any denomination but from God’s Word written and revealed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we affirm that the life of every human being matters to God from the moment of fertilization until the moment. of natural death. God affirms personhood of all human beings. Scripture records the moment of Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit--revealing Jesus was both fully God and fully man—affirming that his redemption is effective for our whole life, even the time we spend in the wombs of our mothers.