



Native American Inter-Tribal Caucus of the United Methodist Church

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WE ARE WATCHING THIS HAPPEN AGAIN

The United States Supreme Court has made the decision to allow challenges to bans on conversion therapy for children.

A decision made by people who will never meet these children—
Yet now hold power over their lives.
Why would a court decide this is acceptable?
Why protect something already known to cause harm?
This is not confusion.
This is not a debate.
This is a decision made with full knowledge.
Every major medical and mental health organization has already said:
Conversion therapy is harmful.
It does not work.
It increases the risk of suicide.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO CHILDREN

Let the truth be clear.
Conversion therapy is not one single method.
It is a range of practices used on children and youth
to try to change who they are—
their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Children are brought into these spaces—often without consent—
and told:
You are wrong.
You are broken.
You must change.

They are taught to monitor their thoughts.
To suppress their feelings.
To reject themselves.

They are told to act differently.
Dress differently.
Speak differently.

They are trained to become someone acceptable to others.
They are isolated from support.
They are told not to trust people who affirm them.
Not to trust their own thoughts.
Not to trust their own identity.

Religion is often used against them.
They are told:
God does not accept you like this.
You must change to be worthy.
You are failing your family.

This creates a trap:
Be yourself—
and risk losing love.
Change yourself—
and lose who you are.

This is not therapy.
This is coercion.

THE HARM — CLEAR AND UNDENIABLE

This harm is not theoretical.
It is documented.
It is lived.

Children who go through this face:
Depression.
Severe anxiety.
Chronic shame.
Self-harm.
Substance use.
Loss of identity.
Loss of trust.
And a significantly higher risk of suicide attempts.

Let it be said clearly:
These practices are directly linked
to children wanting to end their lives.
Not because of who they are—
but because of what they are told about themselves.

Survivors have already spoken.
They were taught to hate themselves.
They felt trapped inside their own lives.
They believed they were unworthy of love.

Some spent years trying to change.
Some lost relationships.
Some lost themselves.
Some survive.

But survival is not healing.

Healing means:

Unlearning shame.

Rebuilding identity.

Grieving lost years.

Asking:

Who would I have been
if no one tried to erase me?

And some—

never make it out.

THIS IS NOT NEW

Speak the truth.

Not the comfortable version.

The truth.

This country once built systems on the belief:

"Kill the Indian, save the man."

Native children were taken from their families
and placed into institutions designed to erase them.

Their names were taken.

Their hair was cut.

Their language was punished.

Their culture was forbidden.

They were abused—

physically,

emotionally,

spiritually,

and yes—sexually.

Some children died in those systems.

From abuse.

From neglect.

From the conditions they were forced to live in.

Some were buried without their families ever knowing.

Others survived—

but carried wounds that never left.

And that harm did not end with them.

It carried—

into families,

into communities,
into generations.
You can still see it today.

THE PATTERN

So when children today are told:
Who you are is wrong.
You must change.

We know this pattern.
We have lived this pattern.

Name something "wrong."
Justify intervention.
Call harm "help."

This is what happens
when systems claim authority over identity.

This is what happens
when power overrides humanity.

This is not care.
This is harm
allowed to continue.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW

This does not stay in a courtroom.
This moves into the real world—
into schools,
into homes,
into communities.

When systems say a child's identity can be questioned, corrected, or changed—
society hears something else:
That it is acceptable to shame them.
That it is acceptable to reject them.
That it is acceptable to deny who they are.
And that has consequences.

Children and youth already face:
Bullying.
Harassment.
Rejection.

Violence.
Because of who they are.

When protection is weakened—
that harm grows.

Some will carry shame
they cannot name.

Some will spend years
trying to undo what was done to them.

Some will lose themselves completely.
And some—
begin to believe
the world would be better without them.

And some—
act on that belief.

This is not abstract.
This is life and death.

FINAL TRUTH

We see the harm.
We know the pattern.
We refuse silence.

This is not progress.
This is repetition.

We have already seen what happens
when systems decide a child must be changed.

We have buried those children.
We carry those children.
We live with that harm still.

And we will not pretend
this is anything else.

HARM IS HAPPENING. AGAIN. NOW.