



# For You Were Once a Stranger

Immigration  
in the U.S.  
Through the  
Lens of Faith



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*For You Were Once a Stranger:  
Immigration in the U. S. Through the Lens of Faith*

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# How to Use this Handbook

by *Hollen Reischer*

You are invited to work through this resource on your own, with your family, or as part of a study group.

## **This handbook is organized in the following way:**

- **Sections:** Ten sections move through an introduction to immigration, fact-based research, suggestions for good public policy, faith perspectives on immigration, a “how-to” guide for action, and worship and action resources.
- **Perspectives on Immigration:** The text includes the perspectives of four different writers on the issues surrounding the struggle for comprehensive immigration reform. Each article includes discussion questions and may be used as a conversation starter.
- **Sidebars:** Sidebars feature stories, important historical events, remarkable holy text, and other key highlights in each section. Remember to read the sidebars!
- **Reflection Questions:** Throughout the resource, you will find *Reflection Questions*. The questions invite you to critically reflect on the ideas and your personal and community experience, alone or with others. Reflection questions provide a starting point for study and dialogue. We invite you to think about and jot down your own questions as you read.
- **Resources:** There are 13 resource sections, which include a wealth of worship resources, a chronology of immigration in the U.S., detailed guides to organizing various actions, immigrant family stories, in-depth background pieces, a glossary of terms used

in this handbook and links to other organizations and resources.

We suggest that you read the sections in the order presented and read them in full. If you are accessing this electronically, you can download the entire text or you can download individual sections.

## **Other suggestions for using this primer:**

- If you are a religious leader, use this resource as a **study guide** when preparing to deliver a sermon or facilitate a discussion related to immigration. Read this handbook to prepare to lead your community through the process of deciphering and understanding the barrage of information and misinformation about immigration.
- Organize an **immigration study circle** with peers at your church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Read one or more sections of the resource each week, and use the *Reflection Questions* to start the discussion. Add your own questions and seek out additional sources (from the resource list or on your own).
- Work with the leadership at your place of worship to host an event, such as a **round-table discussion** or **day-long conference** on immigration. In addition to reading and discussing this resource, invite speakers who are able to discuss immigration from the perspective of just and humane immigration reform.
- Read this resource with your place of worship, organization, or group of friends as you prepare to organize or take part in an action that supports just and humane immigration reform! See “Faith in Action” for ideas.

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# Maria's Story<sup>1</sup>

*Maria has lived in Chicago since 1977.*

...When I came walking my son got sick. We were in the desert on the border and all night he had a fever. There was no one there who I could ask for help. I wanted to turn back, and forget about it. It is very difficult when your child is sick and you cannot ease his pain. In the morning, the person who was to help me cross the border helped me get some medicine for my son's ear infection. I still wanted to go back to Mexico.

Then we were in the airport at El Paso. My son was following these men. It had been awhile since he had seen his father, so he thought these men were possibly his dad. He started calling to them, "Papa, papa!" So these two men turned to look at my little boy. They were immigration officers. They looked to see who the boy was traveling with and realized it was me. I was detained. My son was hungry. There was only soda and I didn't have any water to give him. It was horrible. Horrible.

I phoned my husband in Chicago. We discussed our choices and he urged me to try again. I agreed since I was already there on the border. And so I tried again and I made it across.

My husband came to the U.S. in Sept., 1976. I came in Feb., 1977. After this we were ok for a few years. Then I was arrested at work with another woman. Handcuffed, detained for five hours, and released. Then my husband and I hired an attorney.

I received a letter from immigration to appear at their offices.... [My attorney] told me not to worry about it. This happened several more times and each time...he told me not to worry. Then I received a "date for deportation

notice" in the mail. It was an appointment for me to appear in court before a judge. I called the attorney again. He said that everything would be fine...that he would file for a suspension of deportation. I asked him what I should do. Should I pack a suitcase? Do I need to make arrangements for my children? He told me not to worry, that he, too, was going to be there for my court date and that it would be fine. When I arrived, the attorney wasn't there. There was a van outside waiting to take me to the airport.

I didn't know what to do.... I had \$50. I was handcuffed and put inside the van and taken to the airport. In the terminal I saw a pay phone and requested to make a call to my house to let them know what was happening. They uncuffed me so I could call.

All I could say to my family was that I was being deported. I didn't have any money and I did not know where they were taking me.

Today I am scared to go out and get the mail. It worries me the situation that we are living in right now. There are some people who look at us with distrust. It bothers me a little bit.... Today I am here. I do not know if I will be tomorrow. I hope in God that there is a solution for people like myself.

Some people make me feel like a criminal. The only thing that I have done is to make a better life for my family. This has been my only crime. I am conscious of the laws of this country. But I want to know what any other woman would do to be back with her children....

*To read the rest of Maria's story, turn to Resource G: Stories of Immigrants, page 71.*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Maria left Mexico?

Imagine living with the constant fear that you may be separated from your children and family. How would this affect daily living? How would it impact what you could or couldn't say or do at work?

# 1

## Introduction

by Kim Bobo and Ted Smukler

On December 12, 2006, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents simultaneously raided six Swift & Company meatpacking plants in five states. Approximately 1,000 ICE agents, some in riot gear, detained 1,282 workers at gunpoint, many shackled with chains between their legs.<sup>2</sup> In a case of blatant racial profiling, workers who appeared to be Latino were separated from non-Latino-looking workers and interrogated.

The raids were conducted on a day of enormous religious and family significance. Earlier that day, many families had gathered in church services to pay tribute to the Patroness of the Americas, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*. The United States is a country of strong religious values. Targeting Latin American immigrants on such an important religious holiday contradicts the American principle of respect for religious belief and provokes outrage from all who respect the dignity of workers as children of a just God.

We understand that many people of good will are troubled about the issue of immigration, given the problems many native-born workers face in today's workplace, including job insecurity and a downward push on wages and benefits. Interfaith Worker Justice is dedicated to organizing the religious community to support the rights of all workers, particularly those earning low wages. When our government actively generates fear and havoc among immigrant workers and their families, fuels the fires of bigotry and turns groups of workers against each other based on race, ethnicity and immigration status, we are all diminished.

### The Problem

The economy isn't working. Jobs are bleeding out of the country. U.S. corporations are moving production facilities and jobs throughout the planet in an effort to minimize labor costs and maximize profits, respecting no national borders. The American working class now includes the people of Mexico, China, India, and Vietnam—people who are working directly or indirectly for U.S.-owned corporations.

People in other countries, whose economies are in disarray, partially as a result of U.S. trade policies, migrate to areas and countries where they believe they can support themselves and their families, as people have done throughout history. American workers find their standard of living threatened, and many low-wage workers have seen whole sectors of the job market change. African Americans previously made up a majority of hotel workers in Miami, Florida, but have been largely replaced by Latinos—reflecting both demographic changes and employer choices. Many U.S. born workers have been led to blame immigrants for making their jobs insecure. Immigration has become the hot button issue of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Anti-immigrant organizing, vigilantism and even local, state and federal immigration legislation blur distinctions and place all people of foreign origin or non-white appearance under suspicion. Though three-quarters of all immigrants have legal status to live and work in the U.S., media reports and political posturing would have us believe that most immigrants are law breakers or even terror-

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is your immigration story?

Why did you or your family members leave their homeland and come to the United States?

Was it a story of welcome or hardship?

ists. Legal permanent residents, visa holders and naturalized citizens are victimized by widespread racialized hysteria.

There is no denying that the immigration system in the U.S. is broken. The legal status of immigrant workers must be addressed, with 12 million undocumented people living and working here. Without legal status immigrant workers are victims of every kind of

labor abuse and cannot protect their rights without fear of deportation. The continuation of a debased class of workers, whom employers can and do underpay, overwork, and exploit in legal and illegal ways, contributes to a downward push on wages and working conditions for all workers in the United States.



## The Solution

The answer is comprehensive reform that protects the rights of all workers.<sup>3</sup> Comprehensive immigration reform must aim to provide full and equal protections of employment and labor laws, civil liberties and civil rights for all workers in the U.S. Reform should work to remove economic incentives for the exploitation of immigrant labor and strengthen requirements to fairly consider hiring native-born workers. A reform package must include:

- A plan to regularize the status of most undocumented workers in the U.S.
- Halting deportations that separate parents from children and husbands from wives.
- Strong enforcement of all employment and labor laws.
- Elimination of guest worker programs—programs that bring in temporary workers with few or no rights—unless they include full workplace protections or provide a path to permanent residency and citizenship.

- Addressing structural issues created by trade and aid policies.

## The Call of Faith

While immigration issues must be analyzed in the context of today's political landscape and economic challenges, the religious community can and must inject the dimensions of justice and morality. People and communities of faith have struggled with the question of what our obligations are to people who are outsiders to our communities—strangers.

The foundation story of the Jewish people is God's liberation of God's people out of slavery in Egypt. The Hebrews were strangers in Egypt, whose ancestors had come there to escape drought and famine in their land. The basic worship credo of ancient Israel begins with, "A wandering Aramean was my father." (Deuteronomy 26:5). Therefore, God's Torah has constant reminders that the Israelite community must not mistreat foreigners residing among them. "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 22:21).

At the core of Christian belief is the profoundly radical vision of God lifting up the poor, the destitute, the homeless and the reviled over the comfortable and wealthy. Immigrants—strangers—are included in the vision of those that need mercy and justice. Jesus was homeless, ate with lepers and sinners, and taught in the Sermons on the Mount and on the Plain that the last shall be first. In the Book of Matthew, Chapter 2, Jesus' family flees to Egypt as refugees from persecution and the threat of death in their home country. In Matthew 6:21-36, Jesus said to his disciples:

...Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; *I was a stranger and you made me welcome*; naked and you clothed

## WORDS & SYMBOLS

### How Do We Speak of “The Stranger Among Us?”

Throughout this handbook, different words are used to describe people who come to the U.S. from other countries. Words have political implications. Some we use interchangeably, some we stay away from. These terms are defined in the glossary. Here we look at their deeper meanings and purposes.

1. What is the distinction between **immigrant** and **migrant**? At times these words are used interchangeably. All immigrants are migrants—people who have left their homes and traveled to a new place. Immigrants have all crossed national borders, whereas migrants may move from one part of a country to another. The word immigration implies the intention of permanently settling in a new country.

2. How do we refer to the people who came to the United States surreptitiously or came holding temporary visas and stayed after their visas expired?

■ We use several terms interchangeably in this primer. **Undocumented immigrants** refers to the roughly 12 million people, 7 million adults and 5 million children, who are in the U.S. without documents attesting that they are authorized to be here. **Undocumented workers** refers to the adults in this group who are in the workforce. **Unauthorized immigrants** or **unauthorized working adults** are synonymous terms to **undocumented**. So is the term **people without documents**. These are the preferred terms used in this handbook. They describe without judgment, and are used in respect, without inflaming passions.

■ **Illegal immigrants, illegal aliens, and unlawful workers** are widely used terms and appear frequently in legislation and newspaper accounts of immigration issues. IWJ steers clear of any term that implies that a human being is illegal. While we recognize that many people have crossed our borders or overstayed their visas without legal authorization and have therefore violated immigration laws, they are human beings entitled to internationally acclaimed human rights, and they are not in and of themselves illegal.

me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.” Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?” And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me”.

Muslims believe strongly that God commands justice, including for those who seek refuge among us. We should “serve God... and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing].” (Quar’an 4:36).

A dramatic development in faith communities is the New Sanctuary Movement, an effort by congregations throughout the country to provide sanctuary to immigrant families that have worked hard, have American citizen children, and are facing deportation and family separation. The New Sanctuary Movement aims to expose the inequity and immorality of our immigration system and change the terms of the debate, allowing the possibility of progressive and comprehensive immigration reform.

Other faiths—indeed all religions—believe in justice. We are one people, one community. We are all kin.



A delegation from Interfaith Worker Justice supports workers at the Congress Hotel.

# 2

## Immigration: An Economic, Political and Moral Framework

by José Oliva and Ted Smukler

Immigration to North America has been a primary source of peopling the continent ever since European sailors “discovered” the New World. But it has not been a constant stream. Historically important waves of migration have altered the make-up of North American society and changed the face of the nation that is now the United States. Immigration has rarely occurred without racist or *nativist* reaction, even though the only true native Americans were American Indians.

Immigration waves included:

- English pilgrims and those that followed, including Germans, Scotch, Dutch and Africans brought to North America as slaves.
- 19<sup>th</sup> century immigrants including Irish Catholics arriving on the east coast and Chinese workers on the west coast.
- Waves of internal migration include a large numbers of African Americans migrating north after the Civil War and into the 1960s.
- In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, rural southern black migrants were joined in the burgeoning industries of the North by Eastern and Southern European immigrants, who were considered and treated as racially and religiously inferior to those of Northern European ancestry.<sup>4</sup>

Today’s wave, with large numbers of Latin American immigrants, is one of unprecedented numbers and is unique in that it is the first time in the history of the United States that a huge mass of immigrants lack the status to legally work in this country. When the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

of 1986 passed, there were between three and four million undocumented people in the U.S.; by 2006, estimates of undocumented people in the U.S. have soared to 12 million.<sup>5</sup> In addition, this wave of newcomers has come to parts of the country that have traditionally seen little to no immigration. Latin American immigration to the United States<sup>6</sup> accelerated over the last decade.

In December of 2003, several immigrant workers from a local restaurant in a Chicago suburb met with clergy and lay leaders. The workers were not being paid overtime for their work in excess of 40 hours per week. They were also being harassed and insulted, and in some cases outright physically attacked by their employer. They asked the congregations to stand with them to demand a change in their working conditions. A local pastor asked the workers why they chose to come to the United States, and received a response that surprised him. “We come here because of horrible economic conditions at home,” the worker said. “We are not here by choice. Who in their right mind comes here knowing they will be insulted and looked at as a threat? Who risks their lives crossing a militarized border and leaves their family, their culture, their life behind, unless they *have to*.” The answer was simple yet profound. It provided the clergy and community leaders the insight they needed to stand with these workers. In the end a combined effort led by religious leaders got the workers the changes they needed in their workplace.

Since 2000, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has markedly increased its activity in nearly every corner of the U.S.<sup>7</sup>



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Why did the Chicago restaurant workers feel they had no choice but to come to the U.S.? Have you ever been in a situation in which you had to make an “impossible” decision?

What impact do trade agreements have in severely limiting the choices of people? How do trade agreements impact American workers?

What does big business stand to gain from creating a class of workers with limited rights and temporary status?

The heightened level of enforcement was exacerbated by the sharp anti-immigrant backlash to the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Unethical employers saw this as an opportunity to create fear on the shop floor among workers demanding improvements in their working conditions. Immigrant workers, particularly those without proper work authorization, became increasingly fearful of taking action to challenge unjust working conditions in their workplaces lest they be subject to worksite enforcement and possible deportation. Workers’ centers and unions throughout the U.S. became inundated with complaints from workers about abusive bosses who used immigration authorities as a threat, either overtly or subtly, to intimidate workers.

On December 12, 2006, armed ICE agents raided Swift & Company meat packing plants in Colorado, Texas, Utah, Minnesota and Iowa, arresting more than 1,000 workers, some chained like animals. Widespread racial profiling led to the arrests of many legal permanent residents and citizens. Family members were blocked from bringing documents into the plants to prove their loved ones’ legal status. Worst of all, families were separated, as U.S. citizen children lost parents and bread winners to incarceration right before the Christmas holidays. In January, 2007, 21 Smithfield Packing Company employees were arrested in an ICE raid in North Carolina, during a union organizing campaign of the United Food and Commercial Workers, a move that can clearly be read as intimidation

of workers taking collective action to improve their working conditions.

Despite the massive mobilizations in the spring of 2006 that put millions of immigrant workers and their allies on the streets of every major U.S. city, anti-immigrant forces remain in control of the discourse that frames the issues. The critical issues, we are told, center on the need for border security and other law enforcement measures to stem the tide of illegal immigration to the United States—yet the enforcement-only approach has always driven immigrants further underground and compromised the safety and standards of work for immigrant and native-born people alike.

The administration and most congressional Democrats and Republicans favor increasing the sanctions on employers hiring “illegal aliens,”—yet employer sanctions have never slowed immigration, but have led to increased discrimination and racial profiling. Business forces and the Bush administration clamor for a controlled number of disposable workers—immigrant guest workers, with temporary status and limited rights.

Instead of seeking a realistic and comprehensive solution for the millions of workers in the U.S. without legal status, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR4437 in 2005, the Sensenbrenner bill, which would have criminalized undocumented workers and those who aid them. Similar proposals are pending in the new 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Instead of recognizing the contributions immigrants are making to this society, we are building a wall



.....  
ICE arrest in 2006. Photo courtesy of ICE.

to keep Mexicans and Central Americans out at a cost to taxpayers of over \$70 billion. Instead of creating an atmosphere of tolerance and respect, we have passed laws that make English the only legal language, denying others the right to receive court, hospital, or other services in their native language.

For workers' rights advocates and clergy working in immigrant communities, it has always been of paramount importance to create trust, not just with individual immigrants but with the broader community. This is especially true in the post-9/11, post-Sensenbrenner United States. As soon as Congressman Sensenbrenner introduced his bill making felons of undocumented workers and those who assist them, civil rights organizations such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the National Council of La Raza were poised to file lawsuits challeng-

ing its constitutionality. The bill never made it through the Senate, in great part due to mass actions throughout the country from March until May 2006. But it was enough to spur a slew of local Sensenbrenner wannabes from Maine to California. A California measure would have made it illegal to provide medical service to undocumented immigrants, regardless of the injury or illness. In Wisconsin, a law was passed which successfully denied immigrants their right to get drivers' licenses.<sup>8</sup>

This is the backdrop to the national debate on immigration. When workers are pitted against each other over immigration status, race, ethnicity or country of origin, the spiritual health of the nation as well as the economic and social well-being of working people are depleted.

.....  
Approximately 700,000 people march in Chicago to demand immigration reform.



# 3

## Unraveling the National Debate 1: The Problem

by Ted Smukler and Elisabeth Solomon

Since September 11, 2001, there has been much talk about immigration and national security, with people of Middle Eastern descent the target of increased surveillance and racial profiling. But the underlying causes of immigration and of backlash against immigrants have everything to do with labor markets, not national security. Immigration is an issue that vitally concerns American workers.

Anti-immigrant animus is of course not solely driven by economic concerns. A large factor in the backlash against immigrants is fear of the “other”—of immigrant communities that retain their language and culture and don’t disappear into the American “melting pot.” This has been true throughout U.S. history, even against Irish immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who were ostensibly “white” and spoke English, but were feared as purveyors of an alien, Catholic culture. See “A Perspective on Immigration” by the Rev. José F. Morales Jr., page 42.

Many native-born American workers fear their economic standards are compromised through competition with immigrants willing to work for less money and under worse conditions, fears that are often manipulated by demagogues in times of economic downturn. But the fear contains a kernel of truth. As long as workers remain undocumented and outside the full protection of U.S. employment and labor laws, in a status that makes them vulnerable to employers and afraid to speak out when their rights are violated, they can become a subordinate labor class, which helps companies depress wage and benefits standards throughout entire industries.

### **When is immigration voluntary and when is it forced?**

Clearly, Africans brought to the Americas as slaves were not immigrants seeking better lives and futures. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, migrants throughout the underdeveloped world leave their homes and families for the possibility of earning a living in developed countries or escaping war-ravaged regions. Algerians and Moroccans now live in the suburban slums surrounding Paris. Koreans, Chinese, Taiwanese, Malaysians and Indonesians have settled in Japan. Latino migrants have uprooted themselves from their families, communities and cultures, clandestinely crossed militarized borders, and become targets of immigration police and venomous anti-immigrant reactions from individuals and organized groups, all for a chance to work on the bottom rungs of the U.S. job ladder. This does not reflect voluntary immigration, but rather the desperation of the poor left with no possibility of supporting themselves and their loved ones in an economy decimated by “free trade.” Many of today’s immigrants are pushed out of their countries by poverty or violence more than they are attracted to the U.S. by opportunity.

Immigration from Mexico and other countries decimated by “free trade” has risen dramatically in the past decade. Fifty-six percent of the approximately 11-12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today came from Mexico.<sup>9</sup> Trade policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) benefit neither American nor Mexican workers. Rather, NAFTA has helped elites in both countries. The rural economy in

## MAQUILADORAS

“The maquiladoras, or maquilas for short, attracted large numbers of jobless people to cities that did not have the housing or infrastructure to support them. This situation was especially true in Nogales where an estimated 80 percent of the workers were new arrivals.

Between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, the populations in Nogales, Sonora, tripled to some 350,000 — at least 15 times the population of Nogales, Arizona, which remained steady at about 20,000.

More than half the entire workforce of Nogales, Sonora, toiled in the factories, a higher percentage than in any other city on the border. Most of those coming to work were teenagers and young adults from southern Sonora and the nearby state of Sinaloa.

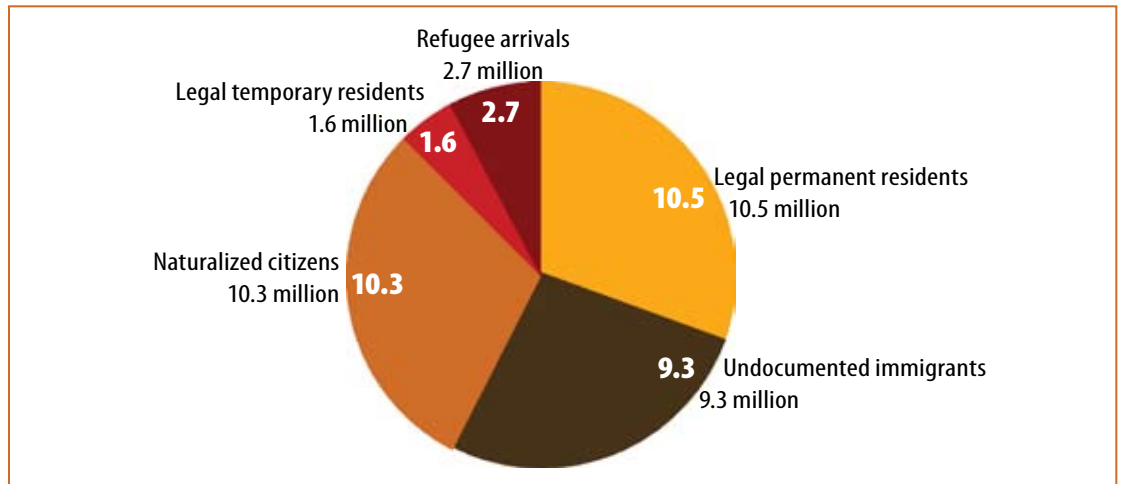
They found that though maquiladora jobs were plentiful, salaries were so low — about \$35 to \$45 for a 48-hour week — and costs so high that they could not afford to pay rent or utilities. They lived, for the most part, as squatters in shacks constructed from tin, wood pallets, plastic sheets, and cardboard boxes salvaged from the factories and the dump. Few had indoor plumbing; some had no water or electricity. Crime, disease, and family breakdown were rampant in the squatters’ camps.

But it was a reflection of the depth of the poverty in Mexico that most of these workers felt they were better off in Nogales than they were in hometowns.”<sup>10</sup>



Maquila worker in Nogales, Mexico

## 34.5 Million Foreign Born in U.S. (2002)<sup>11, 12</sup>



Mexico has been impoverished through direct imports of staple products like corn from the U.S., while the displaced rural population seeks work in cities or across borders. Even in the northern border regions of Mexico, the *maquiladora* industries have seen large spikes in unemployment, as American corporations outsource production to even cheaper labor markets in China and Vietnam. Those working in maquiladora industries are paid between 60 cents-\$1 per hour. Yet costs for groceries and other goods in the maquiladora towns remain as high as in U.S. cities.

### Where are U.S. Immigrants coming from?

While popular perception may hold that the majority of immigrants are in the U.S. illegally, the chart above shows that undocumented immigrants represent only slightly more than one-fourth (26%) of the foreign born population. Anti-immigrant laws and ordinances along with raids by immigration

police lead to discrimination against anybody who looks or sounds foreign, including U.S. citizens and *legal permanent residents*.

Where do immigrants to the U.S. come from today? The answer is dramatically different when

comparing legal permanent residents and undocumented immigrants, who presumably have much greater obstacles to entering and working in the U.S. legally. Seventy-eight percent of undocumented immigrants come from Latin America; 13 percent from Asia; six percent from Europe and Canada; and three percent from Africa and other.<sup>13</sup> However, only 14.4 percent of legal permanent residents are from Mexico, as opposed to 56 percent of undocumented immigrants. The four next largest sources of legal permanent residents are India (7.5 percent), China (6.2 percent), the Philippines (5.4 percent) and Cuba (3.4 percent).<sup>14</sup> National origin and social class are clearly factors in the ability to attain legal status.

### Myth or Reality? The Costs and Contributions to U.S. Taxpayers of Undocumented Immigrants

A large body of evidence concludes that undocumented immigrants are net contributors to the U.S. economy, providing much more in taxes paid and work provided than they receive in public benefits. A recent paper of the National Immigration Law Center, “Paying Their Way and Then Some,”<sup>16</sup> reviews studies from disparate sources that reinforce this conclusion, including:

- David Ellwood, Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do U.S. and international trade policies create conditions that benefit corporations while undermining the ability of local economies to sustain themselves?

What is the relationship of capital mobility to the migration of peoples across borders?

Are U.S. workers winners or losers of globalization and free trade policies? Why?

## MOHAMMED'S STORY

Mohammed Hassan and his family fled the war in Somalia in 1992, when Mohammed was four. He and five older sisters came to the United States with their father, but were separated from their mother during the war. She and her oldest daughter, Sadia, went to a refugee camp in Kenya, where Sadia's baby, Ruqia, was born.

In November of 1996, after four long years, Sadia and Ruqia joined the others in Chicago. Mohammed, his sister, Mulki, and his mother Amina Ahmed, told their stories several months later when Mohammed was in fourth grade and Mulki was a freshman in high school.

To read the rest of Mohammed's story, turn to Resource G: *Stories of Immigrants*.<sup>15</sup>

- Pew Hispanic Center
- A 2006 Open Letter to President Bush from 500 economists and social scientists of varying political persuasions
- The National Academy of Sciences
- The U.S. Social Security Administration
- The U.S. Internal Revenue Service

Yet many people opposed to creating a path to legalization and citizenship argue that undocumented immigrants cost U. S. taxpayers huge sums of money because of their alleged high use of taxpayer-funded programs. Various studies have attempted to show that both undocumented workers and legal permanent residents (green-card holders who are legally in the U.S.) drain the Medicaid, Food Stamp and education programs. Undocumented people's use of health care services is purportedly the biggest drain on U.S. taxpayers, followed by educating undocumented children.

But "a lack of understanding about the economic and fiscal benefits of immigration has led to misguided public policies that discriminate against immigrants despite their contributions," according to the National Immigration Law Center.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to invaluable, and often poorly compensated labor, what do undocumented immigrants contribute to the public welfare? The U. S. Social Security Administration estimated that undocumented immigrants pay approximately \$8.5 billion in Social Security and Medicare taxes annually.<sup>18</sup> And the U.S. Internal Revenue Service determined that undocumented immigrants paid nearly \$50 billion in federal taxes from 1996 to 2003.<sup>19</sup> Yet undocumented workers are ineligible to receive a number of benefits that their tax dollars subsidize:

- Federal cash assistance payments such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid and Food Stamps.<sup>20</sup> (An exception is made for undocumented pregnant women who can be covered at hospitals by emergency Medicaid.)<sup>21</sup>

- Legal advocacy services provided by the federally funded Legal Services Corporation.<sup>22</sup>
- Post-secondary education benefits.<sup>23</sup>

So immigrant workers pay taxes, including social security withholding taxes, but are unable to claim many public benefits their tax dollars support. But anti-immigrant forces argue that they are a major burden on other hardworking taxpayers.

Undocumented immigrants are much more likely than other workers to lack health insurance and therefore avoid medical care in many instances. The RAND Corporation found that in 2000 only a small fraction of spending on health was for services to undocumented immigrants. The study estimated that \$1.1 billion in federal, state and local government funds was spent annually on health care for working age undocumented immigrants or about \$11 in taxes for each U.S. household. This represents only two-tenths of one percent of local, state and federal governments total spending on health care.<sup>24</sup>

But all the research in this area, including that undertaken by organized opponents of immigration, must rely on estimates and faulty data. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) agree that data available from local governments and federal agencies on hospital use are insufficient to reliably quantify the costs of health care for unauthorized people in the U.S.<sup>25</sup> This is also the case when trying to estimate the cost of educating undocumented children.<sup>26</sup>

Immigrants contribute in other ways to the economic, social, and cultural life of the nation, through creating businesses, expanding consumer markets, and enriching the cultural life of a nation of immigrants.

## Problems with the Current Immigration System

In the latest wave of immigration, when much focus is placed on undocumented workers from Mexico and Central and South Ameri-



Outsourcing of jobs has led to the closing of factories in the U.S.

can countries, conflicting interests and fears are expressed.

■ **Many businesses want access to pools of immigrants as a cheap and reliable source of labor.** Undocumented workers, who fear being reported to immigration authorities, are less inclined to complain to their employers or to authorities

about labor abuses than are workers who are legal residents of the U.S. Therefore, they are more likely to accept sub-standard wages.

■ **Native born U. S. workers have seen their standard of living decline steadily since the late 1970s**, for a host of related reasons: the decline of the manufacturing sector and outsourcing of jobs, falling rates of unionization, and the widening of the income gap between the wealthy and the rest of us. Many blame their problems on immigrant workers, who have become more prominent in many industries—services, hospitality, construction, garment manufacturing, agriculture—as wage levels and standards have fallen. In fact, research has shown that low-wage workers are negatively impacted by competition with undocumented immigrants.<sup>27</sup>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do immigrants contribute to your community?

Have you hired immigrants? What work or services have they provided?

Are immigrants part of your faith community? What contribution do they make?

## Undocumented Workers' Share of Selected Occupations, 2005<sup>29</sup>

| Occupation   | Share |
|--|-------|
| Total, Civilian Labor Force (with occupation)                | 4.9%  |
| Insulation workers   | 36%   |
| Miscellaneous agricultural workers                           | 29%   |
| Roofers  | 29%   |
| Drywall installers, ceiling tile installers and tapers       | 28%   |
| Helpers, construction trades                                 | 27%   |
| Butchers and other meat, poultry and fish processing workers | 27%   |
| Pressers, textile, garment and related materials             | 26%   |
| Grounds maintenance workers                                  | 25%   |
| Construction laborers  | 25%   |
| Brick masons, block masons and stone masons                  | 25%   |
| Dishwashers  | 23%   |
| Helpers—production workers                                   | 23%   |
| Maids and housekeeping cleaners                              | 22%   |

The current immigration “system” reflects these contradictory interests. On the one hand, workplace raids by ICE are sending a message that the U.S. is getting “tough” on undocumented immigrants and employers who hire them. (In fact, unscrupulous employers call ICE on themselves as a way to avoid paying their workers).<sup>28</sup> But outside of a radical fringe such as the Minuteman and some talk show hosts, there is not a clamor for wholesale deportation. Some industries would collapse if unauthorized immigrants were removed from the workforce.

Undocumented workers make up less than five percent of the U.S. workforce. The following table shows that these workers are heavily concentrated in occupations that demand hard labor and are often poorly paid.

Increased enforcement activity results in family separations and it drives immigrant further underground. But ICE raids and border patrols cannot stop the influx of undocumented immigrants, which is part of a global phenomenon created by trade and foreign policies that push people from their homes and countries and pull them to areas where a livelihood can be eked out. A new system is needed that can help immigrants gain legal status and can protect native-born workers from unfair competition.

■ **Undocumented workers compete with legal permanent residents and native-born and naturalized citizens on an uneven playing ground.** This harms all workers and lowers standards for everybody, to the advantage of unscrupulous employers. Because undocumented workers are under constant threat of deportation, they accept inferior wages and conditions and cannot effectively assert their rights in the workplace. **The problem isn't with the workers, who live, work and pay taxes in the U.S., but with their legal status.**

■ **Guest workers and work visa programs replace permanent jobs with benefits with temporary jobs without benefits or the legal protections guaranteed to most U.S. workers.** Importing workers form

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Can you design a fair immigration program that protects the human rights of immigrants while addressing the concerns of U.S. workers whose standards have steadily eroded over the past 30 years? What spiritual principles need to be kept in mind?

various countries is nothing new. During World War II, the U.S. developed the Bracero program to bring Mexican workers for temporary work all over the country, mostly as agricultural laborers. Although the Bracero program ended in 1965, the importation of temporary workers under various off-shoot programs has continued. Guest workers come from many countries and are employed in multiple industries and professions, from farm labor and meat processing plants to nurses and high-tech jobs.

Guest worker programs create a second-class workforce with fewer rights and lower wages. Large guest worker programs give corporations the ability to bring in a new, low-wage workforce while undercutting recent immigrants and native-born U.S. workers. Some guest workers such as those in the *H-2A* (agricultural) and *H-2B* (non-agricultural) visa programs are not allowed the freedom to leave abusive employers and secure other jobs. Employers can fire and deport *H-2A* workers if they demand freedom of association for higher wages or better working conditions. *H-2A* workers are not entitled to disclosure about job terms when they are recruited. Even *H-1B* visa holders, who have college degrees and specialized training, are exploited, fre-

quently working for lower wages than their American counterparts. But American citizens and legal permanent residents are not even allowed to apply for *H-1B* advertised jobs. What ever happened to the American concept of equal opportunity?

The myth behind these programs is that there are jobs that American workers won't or can't do. Just as U.S. corporations claim they cannot find American workers to work in shoe or electronics factories and must move operations overseas, so companies import workers rather than pay prevailing wages and allow full labor and workplace protections. Employers who advocate for guest worker programs want a workforce that can be paid less than one hired from local communities in the U.S.

Guest worker programs have the support of many political leaders in the U.S., including President George W. Bush and many Congressional Republicans and Democrats, who believe that passing a limited guest worker program is the only way to attract support for a path to regularized status for undocumented workers. For more information about guest worker programs, see Resource C, *Unraveling the Guest Worker Programs*.



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Guest workers come from many countries and are employed in multiple industries and professions, from farm labor and meat processing plants to nurses and high-tech jobs.

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## Perspectives on Immigration



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### Let's Discuss Immigration by Bill Fletcher, Jr.

Immigration to the USA, particularly Latino immigration, has become a point of debate within Black America. This has been heightened by the momentous, indeed historic, demonstrations for immigrant rights and dignity over the last few weeks.

Many African Americans are uneasy about Latino immigration. The masses arriving here push the size of the Latino population above the numbers of African Americans (though Latinos are far from ethnically monolithic). Second, we see competition for jobs and political power both where it exists as well as where it does not. At the bottom of the economic ladder there is definitely competition, but it is a competition brought on not by the immigrants but by the employers who constantly search for a low-paid, vulnerable workforce. As we, African Americans, were often used in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, so too are immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and—truth be told—from Eastern Europe.

To put it another way, capitalists always look to cut their costs. They will do that by smashing unions, hiring undocumented immigrant workers, using robots or by subcontracting. For the capitalists it is nothing personal; just strictly business.

So, my first point is that we in Black America must come to grips with who are our friends and who are our opponents. As long as there are weak unions and even weaker laws protect-

ing workers' rights, businesses will hire who ever are willing to accept the least. We, African Americans, came to that recognition in the 1930s and 1940s, which is why we unionized so actively and played a central role in the building of a new union movement!

Here is my second point, and this is a point directed not only at Black America. To borrow from a slogan popularized in the British immigrant rights movement, *immigrants from the Third World are here in the USA largely because the USA has been there.* . . . that is, has been mucking around in the Third World overthrowing governments, distorting economies, forcing governments into bankruptcy, etc., etc. Think about it. Asian immigrants to the USA, particularly from Southeast Asia, can be directly tied to US military adventures in that region. A similar point can be made about Latin America. Immigration from Central America to the USA can be directly linked to US activities during the 1980s where it incited and prolonged civil wars, more often than not supporting right-wing tyrants. Added to that, in the case of Mexico, if one leaves aside the fact that the southwest of the USA was once the northern half of Mexico and that there was a long history of people going both north and south, there is the little matter of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA, as its critics had predicted, has devastated both the agricultural and public sectors of Mexico, driving thousands of people north of the border in search of something more than survival.

While it is critical that the immigrant rights movement understand the Black Freedom struggle and the history of race in the USA, and thereby joining with us in the common struggle for justice, we—African Americans—must also extend a hand. African Americans must internalize the understanding that the policies of US businesses and the US government are directly responsible for millions of people leaving their homes and coming to the USA in search of a better life.

So, if we want changes in immigration, then we must address US foreign policy and its horrendous implications. If we want changes in immigration, we have to stop allowing the US to bully the rest of the world. If we want changes in immigration, we must make sure that all workers are protected from economic vulnerability; otherwise none of us will ever be safe.

As long as there is someone out there forced to work for less, unscrupulous businesses will have a field day. As long as countries are ravaged by bullying on the part of the great power in the northern hemisphere, thereby making it nearly impossible for them to determine their own futures, people will migrate in search of a safe haven.

With this recognition Black America should be able to approach the immigration debate on a different basis and with the very real possibilities of gaining millions of new allies in our struggle for political, social and economic justice.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are some of the issues that create divisions between immigrant and African American communities?

What are some of the common concerns and struggles that unite these communities?

# 4

## Unraveling the National Debate 2: The Solution

by Ted Smukler and Elisabeth Solomon

Immigrant workers and major North American unions see legal status as the crux of the problem. If undocumented workers had a clear path to earned legalization, they would no longer be as susceptible to exploitation, and the “push to the bottom” could be reversed. Responsible businesses that pay living wages and benefits would not have to compete with those that pay at or below legal minimums and violate labor laws, with little fear of consequence. A real solution to immigration issues in today’s U.S. must provide a path to legal status, taking away the employers’ power to drive down standards by manipulating workers’ fear of deportation. The problem is not the workers, but their marginalized status.

In addition, existing employment and labor laws must be aggressively enforced. The current situation, in which labor law enforcement is haphazard or non-existent, is a detriment to all workers, native-born and immigrant alike. The U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) capacity to enforce the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage, prevailing wage, and overtime pay) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) has been in steady decline since the late 1970s.<sup>30</sup> A national commitment to adequately fund and staff the DOL and direct it to engage in targeted enforcement actions against industries, markets and employers known to violate labor and employment laws must be made. Outreach to immigrant workers must be made to educate them that the DOL will help defend their rights without turning information over to immigration authorities. Defending workers and enforcing laws

that protect their basic human and workplace rights would benefit all workers, native-born and immigrant alike.

A path to *regularize* the legal status of nearly all undocumented workers would allow them to work alongside other U.S. workers, organize for just conditions, and aspire like every other group in this country to middle class standards—to raise a family in safety and security and develop community roots in the nation in which they live. And it would prevent employers from using undocumented workers to eliminate native-born workers from entire categories of work through depressing standards below which no worker with legal status would accept—or outright displacing American workers by denying them the equal opportunity to even apply for jobs. (See H-1B discussion in Resource C: *Unraveling the Guest Worker Programs*.)

### The Limits of the Congressional Immigration Debate, 2005-2006

Immigration became a huge focus of national attention and debate in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congressional session. While many spoke about comprehensive reform, none dealt with the fundamental needs. The thumbnail descriptions of the bills introduced given below is relevant, as many features are expected to reemerge in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, even after the recent change in party leadership in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

■ **HR 4337, the Sensenbrenner bill**, sponsored by Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), was passed by the House

#### GUEST WORKER PROGRAM

The guest worker program was a trade-off to the Bush administration and the business community to gain support for a process to regularize the status of many immigrants who had been living and working in the U.S. for a long time. Guest workers would have no rights or protections, and would thus continue a trend toward creating a sub-class of cheap labor that employers could exploit and that would replace native-born, naturalized, and legal permanent residents in the workforce.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What group interests were these legislative proposals appealing to?

How are the interests of U.S. agribusiness corporations, hospitals, and manufacturers addressed in these laws?

What would U.S. labor unions want in an immigration reform package? How would the population mix in a state or a city affect how a Congressperson might vote?

## THE VIRTUAL FENCE

In late September 2006, Chicago-based Boeing Corporation received an initial \$67 million, three-year contract from DHS to install a high-tech virtual fence along a 28-mile stretch near Tucson, Arizona and the Mexican border.<sup>32</sup> But earlier failed surveillance efforts managed by DHS raise questions about the agency's capacity to develop an effectively integrated electronic border. The Pentagon already possesses blimps, unmanned aircraft, helicopters, sensors, cameras, and night-vision equipment and has been less than effective with earlier efforts to patrol the border using such technology. Failed DHS border technology programs have cost taxpayers \$429 million since 1998.<sup>33</sup>



of Representatives in 2005. The bill, which criminalized all undocumented workers as well as congregations, agencies and individuals that offered assistance to them, sparked a grassroots movement for immigrant rights that produced massive rallies in cities throughout the U.S. Its elements were simple:

- ▶ Increased enforcement, including turning undocumented status into a felony and making it a crime to assist the undocumented.
- ▶ Increased border security.
- ▶ No path to legalization or citizenship.
- ▶ No guest worker program.

This bill went well beyond what the majority of the business community wanted, by cutting off almost any path to legal immigration. The obnoxious feature of turning undocumented immigrants into felons and criminalizing anyone who provides assistance to immigrants made this bill dead in the water in the Senate, but appealed to anti-immigrant forces that succeeded in winning House passage.

- **S1033, Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (Kennedy-McCain).** The Senate struggled to craft a more “comprehensive” approach than the Sensenbrenner bill. S1033 was a bipartisan proposal sponsored by Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and John McCain (R-AZ). The main elements were:
  - ▶ A path to permanent residency and citizenship for undocumented workers after payment of fines, back taxes and meeting particular citizenship requirements.
  - ▶ Provisions for family reunification.
  - ▶ Huge new guest worker program—400,000 new workers the first year and 20% potential annual expansion. No enforceable labor or workplace protections.
- **S. 2611, Hagel-Martinez bill,** sponsored by Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Mel Martinez (R-FL), was put forward as a

possible compromise between Senate and House measures and passed in the Senate. It included:

- ▶ Increased border enforcement provisions, increased interior enforcement and expedited removal of undocumented workers without a hearing.
- ▶ Various paths to legal status with different requirements for various tiers of undocumented workers. Excluded many undocumented immigrants from the opportunity to regularize their status.
- ▶ English declared the national language. Eliminated entitlement of people to services and materials in other languages.

While Hagel-Martinez' mechanisms would not solve the problem of legal status, and the bill included obnoxious proposals to allow deportations without hearings and to deny immigrants the right to public services in a language they understood, it was too lenient for the House of Representatives. No compromise bill between Senate and House versions was achieved in Congressional conference committee. The House would not accept any legalization provisions or a guest worker program, and so no deal on “comprehensive” reform was possible in the 109<sup>th</sup> congressional session. However, an enforcement-only bill did pass and was signed into law. Mainly symbolic (a separate appropriations bill would need to be passed to fund the proposal), the “Fence” bill calls for a wall of separation between Mexico and the U.S.

- **HR6061, Secure Fence Act of 2006,** sponsored by Peter King (R-NY) and signed into law 12 days before the mid-term elections, was designed to prevent unlawful entry into the U.S. “by terrorists and unlawful aliens.” The bill authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to build and reinforce 700 miles of real fencing and secure the border with electronic surveillance, such as unmanned aerial vehicles, ground-based sensors, satellites, radar coverage and cameras. The low-cost estimate of its construction is \$2.2 billion.<sup>31</sup>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Which of these reform measures would you emphasize, change or add to?

How do they fit with the teachings of your religious tradition?

The Fence Bill represents a boondoggle to large contractors without the realistic hope of results. No matter what the dream of those who would build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration to the U.S. cannot and will not slow down, as long as desperate economic conditions drive people to seek the possibility to survive.

## Key Elements of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Comprehensive immigration reform must aim to provide full and equal protections of employment and labor laws, civil liberties and civil rights for all workers in the U.S. Reform should work to remove economic incentives for the exploitation of immigrant labor and strengthen requirements to fairly consider hiring native-born workers. A comprehensive reform package must include:

■ **A plan to regularize the status of most undocumented workers in the U.S.** Immigration reform must provide a path to legal permanent residence and eventual citizenship, allowing all immigrants to escape from a marginalized existence and enjoy full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the nation.

■ **Measures that ensure family integrity by ending deportations and allowing reunification of immigrants who are parents, children or spouses of permanent legal residents or citizens.** If we support family values, we must value families. Families should be allowed to immigrate together,

to reunify and should never be torn apart over legal status issues. Families with a mix of citizens, legal residents, and undocumented immigrants would gain protection, so that they would no longer fear forced separation or relocation because a family member is detained or deported.

■ **Adequate funding and commitment to strong enforcement of employment and labor laws and measures that deny employers an incentive to underpay and exploit immigrant workers.** Immigrant and native-born workers can join together to advocate :

- ▶ Enforcement of the Fair Labor Standards Act, including minimum wage, prevailing wage and overtime pay requirements.
  - ▶ Enforcement of OSHA health and safety regulations.
  - ▶ Ending wage theft, the growing practice of employers not paying workers the wages they are owed.
  - ▶ Passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, which would eliminate most of the employer threats, harassment and intimidation of workers allowed today during a union election campaign supervised by the National Labor Relations Board and increase fines on employers who violate labor laws.
  - ▶ Reforming the National Labor Relations Act to promote unionization and collective bargaining. When a large percentage of workers in an industry and a market form unions, wages, benefits and workplace protections are strengthened throughout the industry. With collective bargaining and union standing, workers are more likely to find common interest regardless of immigration status, and animus between groups of workers who believe they are competing for scarce jobs will lessen.
- **Eliminate guest worker programs that do not include full workplace protections or provide a path to permanent residency and citizenship.** Guest worker programs assume that there is a shortage of workers in the U.S., and that American workers will not perform certain types of work. In fact, there are no jobs that U.S. workers have not done or will not do. The shortage of workers is in reality a shortage of employers willing to pay living wages, provide



Undocumented workers fall prey to exploitation by employers interested in profits, not safety.

decent benefits and institute safe and respectful workplace standards. Worker visa programs should only be considered if real worker shortages are documented; if U.S. citizens and permanent residents are recruited first for these positions; if all workplace protections are in effect, including the right to organize a union; if prevailing wages are paid; and if visa holders are offered a path to legal permanent residency and citizenship.

- Address structural issues created by trade and aid policies. So-called free trade policies have made it easy for businesses to flee the U.S. and relocate in low-wage centers anywhere in the world—Malaysia, Vietnam, Mexico, China. American workers suffer as corporations lay off workers and force those with jobs to accept lower standards with the threat that their employers could relocate in countries with weaker labor and environmental protections. At

the same time, workers in poorer countries find their livelihoods and communities disrupted as U.S. products flood in and displace local agricultural and industrial production. U.S. plants that had formerly relocated to Mexico and Latin America are leaving in search of even cheaper workers in Asia. While U.S. labor laws are weak, corporations find that they can operate abroad without any restraint in busting unions and extracting maximum hours with poverty wages. The result is massive displacement and migration, as groups of people struggle to survive. Immigration reform must address these structural economic issues and assist U.S. trading partners to develop wealth and generate good jobs. Development strategies that have created economic boons in places such as South Korea should be studied and adopted, and trade agreements must promote high environmental and labor standards.

## IMPACT OF HOFFMAN DECISION ON WORKERS

All workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively in their workplace, according to international human rights and labor standards. However, the basic workers' right to unionize no longer applies to undocumented workers in the United States since the U.S. Supreme Court's 2002 ruling in *Hoffman Plastic Compounds v. NLRB*.<sup>34</sup>

Although the rights of most workers who are illegally fired for engaging in union organizing are minimally protected by court-awarded payments for lost wages, the Hoffman Decision excludes undocumented workers from even that protection.<sup>35</sup>

In a five to four split decision, the Supreme Court majority held that enforcing immigration law took precedence over enforcing labor law. Dissenting justices argued that awarding back pay would help deter unlawful activity and would not interfere with implementing immigration policy.

According to Human Rights Watch, the largest independent human rights organization in the U.S., the Hoffman Decision:

- ▶ Promotes fear and heightens division among all workers when one group of workers is deprived of the right to freedom of association and to unionize.
- ▶ Encourages new and perverse forms of discrimination by creating an incentive for employers to hire undocumented workers because of their new vulnerability in union organizing efforts.
- ▶ Thwarts union organizing efforts by threatening to fire undocumented workers.
- ▶ Advances further worker abuse when employers threaten to fire undocumented workers if they complain about wage theft or health and safety violations.
- ▶ Lends credence to employer arguments before the courts to expand the

Hoffman logic to other compensation or monetary damage awards due undocumented workers.<sup>36</sup>

The Organization of American States charter proclaims that "work gives dignity to the one who performs it." Once an alien is present in a nation's territory and actually working, international law prohibits discrimination, holding that all workers, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to basic rights, including workplace benefits, freedom of association, and the right to form a union.<sup>37</sup>

No meaningful remedies exist for unauthorized workers who are fired since the Hoffman ruling. At best employers who illegally fire undocumented workers might be ordered to post a notice about their violation of law, told to cease and desist, or be subject to penalties for contempt of court. Absence of back pay protection nullifies protections for millions of workers based on immigration status.

# 5

## Immigration in Historical Context

by *Ted Smukler*

The United States has always been a nation of immigrants. The English speakers who established colonies on the Atlantic coast of North America were immigrants who made perilous journeys for a number of reasons, including to flee from religious persecution and economic hardships. With the exception of the American Indians, all of the ethnic, racial and cultural groups in the U.S. are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. (African Americans are mainly descended from Africans who were brutally and involuntarily brought to the Americas as slaves). American diversity has been both celebrated and contested for centuries. Every racial, cultural and ethnic group has contributed greatly to this multi-cultural society. But there have also been many periodic anti-immigrant movements, as groups are pitted against each other in employers' efforts to curtail labor costs and push down standards of pay, benefits and working conditions.

Nativist reactions occurred throughout U.S. history, when economic distress and fears among native-born workers have led to anti-immigrant backlash. The targets in previous eras were often white people from the "wrong" parts of Europe, such as Irish Catholics, Italians, and Eastern European Jews, who were debased and feared as conveyors of an alien culture. Eventually those who could assimilate did so, while people with visible signs of their "otherness" could not. Discriminatory laws were passed for particular groups, such as the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and Executive Order 9066 in 1948 calling for the internment in prison camps of Japanese and Japanese Americans during WWII.

For a historical chronology of immigration in the U.S., see Resource B.



## Perspectives on Immigration

### How Grandma Got Legal: Illegal-immigration foes say today's migrants are different from their own forebears. They don't know U.S. history.

by Mae M. Ngai



**Mae M. Ngai**, professor, is interested in questions of immigration, citizenship and nationalism in United States history. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia and taught at the University of Chicago. She is author of *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton, 2004), which won the Frederick Jackson Turner prize from the OAH and the Littleton-Griswold Prize from the AHA, among other awards.

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#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What do you make of Ngai's assertion that undocumented immigrants today are not different from our ancestors?

Do you think it is true that at the root of this debate is the fact that most of us do not know the history of immigration and immigration policy?

"Made in America—by immigrants" and "We too have a dream" read signs at the May 1 [2006] marches across the country. By invoking an American ideal, today's newcomers are staking their claim as the latest generation of nation-builders. But their critics object to this appeal to history; they resent comparisons to previous generations of immigrants, who were legal.

Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), for example, says his grandparents—Dutch immigrants who settled in Nebraska—didn't try to get ahead by breaking the law. Rather, they made it through "frugality. . . hard work, grit, honesty," he says. "They would be very upset about people who didn't do it the right way."

Such comparisons between past and present miss a crucial point. There were so few restrictions on immigration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that there was no such thing as "illegal immigration." The government excluded a mere one percent of the 25 million immigrants who landed at Ellis Island before World War I, mostly for health reasons. (Chinese were the exception, excluded on grounds of "racial unassimilability.")

What's more, statutes of limitations of one to five years meant that even those here unlawfully did not live forever with the specter of deportation.

In the early 1900s, immigrants from Europe provided cheap, unskilled labor that made possible the nation's industrial and urban expansion. They shoveled pig iron, dug sewers and subway tunnels and sewed shirtwaists. Even then, people born in the U.S. complained that the newcomers stole jobs, were ignorant, criminal and showed no desire to become citizens. The rhetoric was often unabashedly prejudiced against Italians, Jews, Poles and other "degraded races of Europe."

In the conservative climate after World War I, Congress slammed shut the golden door. For the first time, the U.S.

imposed numerical limits on immigration. Congress gave the smallest quotas to Eastern and Southern European countries and excluded all Asians; it also created the U.S. Border Patrol and eliminated statutes of limitations on deportation. It exempted countries of the Western Hemisphere, however, in deference to agricultural labor needs and the State Department's tradition of pan-Americanism.

These quotas created illegal immigration as a mass phenomenon. And since that time, Americans have been of two minds about the problem. We want restrictions on immigration, but we hesitate to execute mass deportations. Congress has thus pursued border control, on the one hand, and legalization of the undocumented on the other.

Our legalization policies recognized that once a person settled here, had a family, a job and a home, he or she became a part of society. Separating families was seen as detrimental to individuals and society, and deportation was likened to banishment.

Here's how hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants—mostly Europeans—became legal:

► The Registry Act of 1929 allowed immigrants who arrived before 1921 but had no record of their admission to register retroactively, for a \$20 fee.

► From 1935 to the late 1950s, to keep families together, tens of thousands of Europeans unlawfully in the U.S. were allowed temporarily to go to Canada and reenter the States legally as a permanent resident.

► In 1940, Congress authorized the suspension of orders of deportation in cases of hardship, which it defined as "serious economic detriment" to the immigrant's immediate family. The guidelines have become less generous, but the principle remains in the law.

In 1965, the U.S. repealed racial restrictions against Southern and Eastern

Europeans and Asians, but the 1965 law also imposed quotas for the first time on Western Hemisphere countries. That created illegal immigration from Mexico and Central America.

The 1986 immigration reforms addressed the problem by legalizing nearly 3 million undocumented workers. It also called for increased enforcement—which didn't stop illegal immigration, it just made it more dangerous.

President Bush wants Congress to provide today's undocumented immigrants with a pathway to citizenship, to establish a guest worker program and to add the National Guard to police efforts at the border. History is only partly on his side.

Providing a route to legalization—even one that is much less generous than we've offered in the past—at least adheres to precedent. But history shows that as long as we restrict the number of legal entries, there will be a parallel stream of unauthorized ones, even with tough enforcement laws. And the European experience with guest worker programs should warn us that guests don't always go home when they are supposed to.

To really tackle the problem, we might consider updating other policies from the nation's past. Reinstating a statute of limitations on deportation would limit the numbers of undocumented people in the country. We could also raise the ceiling on legal admissions—or eliminate it, especially for neighboring countries. This is not such a radical idea: The North American Free Trade Agreement has already lowered barriers to the movement of capital and products, and citizens of European Union states have free movement within the EU.

Legalizing the undocumented is just and humane. But unless we address the restrictions on legal admission that do so much to cause illegal entries, the cycle of enforcement and legalization will continue.

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

**“I feel that I am a citizen of the world, and of a church without borders.”**

Prayer for “Crossing Without Documents,” Migrant Prayer Book sold in Santa Ana de Guadalupe, Jalisco, Mexico<sup>38</sup>

December 18 is celebrated as United Nation’s International Migrants’ Day, commemorating the passage in 1990 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families. The Convention was an attempt to guarantee the human and workplace rights of all migrants, holding sending and receiving countries equally responsible for their well being, and making equality of status between migrant and non-migrant people a goal for all nations. As with many other areas of international law and agreement, the U.S. never signed this U.N. convention. However, the U.S. joined the rest of world in 1998 in the unanimous signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document unequivocally states that basic human rights must be afforded to all, regardless of nationality or migration status:

Article 2: . . . No distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs. . .

Article 13 (2): Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14 (1): Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Article 15 (2): No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 23: Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Interfaith Worker Justice joined with the National Employment Law Project, the AFL-CIO and other petitioners in 2006 to seek a ruling from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against the U.S. government on behalf of undocumented workers in the U.S. The petition seeks a ruling to “ensure that migrant workers in an ir-

regular status are afforded equal rights and remedies under all labor laws.”<sup>39</sup> The petition is based on previous opinions of the Inter-American Court:

In the case of migrant workers, there are certain rights that assume a fundamental importance and yet are frequently violated, such as. . . the rights corresponding to: freedom of association and to organize and join a trade union, collective negotiation, fair wages for work performed, social security, judicial and administrative guarantees, a working day of reasonable length with adequate working conditions (safety and health), rest and compensation. The safeguard of these rights for migrants has great importance based on the principle of the inalienable nature of such rights, which all workers possess, irrespective of their migratory status, and also the fundamental principle of human dignity embodied in Article I of the Universal Declaration, according to which “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. . .”<sup>40</sup>

As of this printing the case is still pending.

.....  
Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.



# 6

## The Local Landscape— Anti Immigrant Legislation and Organizations

by *Hollen Reischer*

**B**roken and misunderstood immigration policies in the U.S. have been exploited by anti-immigrant activists to precipitate a national movement of local anti-immigrant actions and campaigns. In this section, we will explore two case studies which demonstrate how anti-immigrant sentiment has been manipulated by both lawmakers and nativist activists.

### The Hazleton Pennsylvania Story—Legislating Bigotry at the Local Level

In June, 2006, the small northeastern Pennsylvania town of Hazleton came into the national spotlight as its City Council passed two extreme anti-immigrant ordinances. Together the ordinances, introduced by Mayor Lou Barletta, make de facto immigration officers out of local police, landlords and employers, and declare English the “official” language of the city, denying immigrants the right to access important health and safety information in their native language. Some lowlights from the “Illegal Immigration Relief Act”<sup>41</sup> include:

- It is unlawful for any business entity to recruit, hire for employment, or continue to employ, or to permit, dispatch, or instruct any person who is an unlawful worker to perform work in whole or part within the City. Every business entity that applies for a business permit to engage in any type of work in the City shall sign an affidavit, prepared by the City Solicitor, affirming that they do not knowingly utilize the services or hire any person who is an unlawful worker.
- It is unlawful for any person or business entity that owns a dwelling unit in the City to harbor an illegal alien in the dwelling unit, knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that an alien has come to, entered, or remains in the United States in violation of law, unless such harboring is otherwise expressly permitted by federal law.
- Official actions of the City of Hazleton that bind or commit the City of Hazleton or that give the appearance of presenting the official views or position of the City of Hazleton shall be taken in the English language, and in no other language.

These ordinances also detail that if an “illegal alien” or “unlawful worker” is discovered, the landlord or business owner who has provided housing or employment to such a person will face severe penalties if he or she fails to report identifying information to authorities that could eventually be used for arrest and deportation.

The ordinance’s constitutionality is being challenged in a joint lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Puerto Rican

.....  
Community and religious leaders peacefully witness against the Hazleton ordinance.



.....  
**Local governmental bodies in 101 towns and cities have proposed ordinances that severely limit the rights of undocumented immigrants to work or live as productive members of society.**  
.....

Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) and others. In November 2006, Judge James M. Munley, finding merit to the claims of the plaintiffs challenging the legality of the ordinance, placed a temporary restraining order to prohibit the ordinance from being enforced. Munley pointed out the risk to citizens and non-citizens alike to lose “housing, livelihood, and education” if the ordinances were enforced. He found that the city had not supported its “vague complaints about the presence of illegal immigrants” with evidence or statistics.<sup>42</sup>

Mayor Barletta is now in the process of raising money for the expensive legal battle he is prepared to fight all the way to the Supreme Court, and continues to work with legal counsel to tweak the ordinance. As of January 24, 2007, the ordinance had been revised four times, including an amendment added in December, to strengthen its chances in court.

Cesar A. Perales, President and General Counsel of PRLDEF, commented that “Hazleton wishes to take over the immigration policies of this country and distort them to achieve its goal of terrifying immigrants, especially Latinos, into leaving town. This search and destroy mentality has no place in the American justice system.”<sup>43</sup>

Dozens of local governments have mimicked (sometimes word-for-word) Hazleton’s ordinances and have been presented with lawsuits in kind. In fact, several would-be ordinance-makers have merely passed what amounts to ordinance threats—admitting they could not afford to field the legal fees associated with passing such ordinances and waiting to see what happens with the Hazleton ordinance.

As of December 18, 2006, the local governmental bodies in 101 towns and cities have proposed ordinances that severely limit the rights of undocumented immigrants to work or live as productive members of society, or to provide for their families, including their U.S. citizen children.<sup>44</sup> As of that date, 51 of these proposals had passed. For comprehensive overviews and maps of failed, passed, and pending local ordinances go to the Fair Immigration Reform Movement Web site.<sup>45</sup>

While most of these ordinances stalled after being proposed, all of the proposed ordinances have had a chilling impact on people’s lives. Besides the grave potential loss of shelter and employment, undocumented immigrants would be forced to flee to other communities or go deeper underground and place themselves in more dangerous situations in order to survive in such hostile climates. Any and all undocumented and documented immigrants and even U.S. citizens with accents or dark skin could be subject to discrimination by landlords and employers. Business owners and landlords have already experienced increased operating costs and profit loss from having to confirm immigration status, and significant loss of business when customers flee hostile areas.<sup>46</sup> Finally, employers and landlords could choose to avoid hiring or renting to anyone who might appear to be an immigrant.

Many ordinances attempt to empower local law enforcement to carry out immigration enforcement duties that are the responsibility of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Immigration laws have always been the province of the federal government. Local law enforcement has neither the training nor the capacity to carry out such functions. Obligating officers to take on additional responsibilities would greatly reduce the ability of local departments to remain in control of day-to-day law enforcement, protecting their localities from actual crime. Most disturbingly, putting local law enforcement in the position of immigration cops deters undocumented *and* legal immigrants and citizens who don’t appear “white” from coming forward when they have been the victims of or witnesses to crime, for fear or discrimination or deportation.

Some ordinances include penalties for broadly “aiding and abetting illegal immigrants” via the provision of social services, including food aid; restrictive regulations on day laborers; and prohibitions against flying non-U.S. flags. Many city officials have publicly stated that the ordinances are primarily intended to push Washington to fix the country’s broken immigration system.

However, sending a symbolic message by passing extremely harmful and punitive bills adversely affects thousands of residents who will no doubt suffer as Congress continues to battle over immigration reform laws.

States have also joined the anti-immigrant bandwagon. In the November 2006 elections, Arizona and Colorado passed anti-immigrant ballot referenda, hinting at the national trend for state and local governmental bodies to appropriate jurisdiction over immigration law.<sup>47</sup> In Arizona, voters sanctioned denying undocumented immigrants the right to bail, the right to punitive damages in civil suits and the right to receive child care assistance from the state. Arizona voters also voted to make English the “official” language of governmental business in the state while simultaneously voting to prohibit adults who are not citizens or legal residents from participating in Adult Education classes provided by the state – the same classes that would provide newcomers instruction in English language.<sup>48</sup>

## Demystifying the Minutemen

The Minuteman Project wants to remind Americans that our nation was founded on the “rule of law,” not by “the whims of mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders.” The Minuteman Project warns that “future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious ‘melting pot.’”<sup>49</sup>

The Minuteman Project portrays itself as an organization whose ranks are filled by middle-class older folks simply interested in protecting Americans from the “literal takeover of [their] country” and their culture.<sup>50</sup> The Minuteman Project wants you to believe its ranks are thick with volunteers anxious to patrol the border, so many that in April of 2004 then-Minutemen Security Chief James Chase claimed they had to turn away 10,000 eager volunteers. Lastly, the Minuteman Project would like you to believe that their group has neither racists nor white nationalists in

their ranks. How do these claims stand up under scrutiny?

Chris Simcox, former kindergarten teacher turned zealous anti-immigrant militia leader, founded Civil Homeland Defense in 2002 with a call to militarize the U.S.-Mexican border in his newspaper, *Tombstone Tumbleweed*. The small group floundered until 2004 when Simcox joined forces with Vietnam vet and retired accountant Jim Gilchrist to form the Minuteman Project (MMP). The co-founders split shortly after initiating their campaign to attract former border patrol agents, militiamen, and other “patriots,” to serve as citizen “defenders” of the southern border. Gilchrist kept the MMP name while Simcox set up shop operating the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps.<sup>51</sup>

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) branches in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas recently released “Creating the Minutemen: A Small Extremist Group’s Campaign Fueled by Misinformation.” The report details the many media omissions surrounding the true nature of the Minutemen, tracked in a thorough investigation of 581 print articles and editorials that appeared in major U.S. newspapers between January 24, 2005 and February 28, 2006.<sup>52</sup>

Among the myths busted by the ACLU and the American Friends Service Committee of Arizona are the claims that the organization is robust with volunteers from all walks of life, that those volunteers have been screened for ties to racist and criminal activity, and that their actions are not spurred by hate but by love for their country. In fact, legal observers witnessed less than 200 minutemen during the time the Minutemen claimed to boast thousands of patrolmen. In addition, white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups online have openly recruited for the Minuteman Project and have been seen in their regalia at Minuteman rallies and patrols.<sup>53</sup>

The leaders of the Minutemen have often been successful in playing spin doctors to the media. However they haven’t always hidden their true beliefs and goals. Let’s let them speak for themselves:

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What do your religious teachings tell you about welcoming the stranger, and the inherent equality of every human being?

If an anti-immigrant ordinance were introduced in your city or town, how would its introduction and possible passage affect you and your community?

- “We need the National Guard to clean out all our cities and round them [migrants] up. They are hard-core criminals. They have no problem slitting your throat and taking your money or selling drugs to your kids or raping your daughters and they are evil people.”<sup>54</sup> —Chris Simcox
- “So, I think by eliminating this epidemic of illegal alien immigration, we could fend-off that threat to the middle class. We could face the threat to our Social Security program, and the threat to our educational system. We’d stop bankrupting these hospitals and have better medical care for our elderly. And people who are legitimately uninsured can get those services. And we certainly would have a well-deserved reduction in crime.”<sup>55</sup> —Jim Gilchrist
- Former Minutemen Security Chief James Chase launched California Minutemen with a Web site seeking “all those who do not want their family murdered by Al Qaeda, illegal migrants, colonizing illegal aliens, illegal alien felons, alien barbarians, Ninja-dressed drug smugglers” and “cowardly Aztlan punks and Che Guevara pink pantied wimps lower than whale dung who should be fed to the *chupacabra!*” In response to Gilchrist and Simcox’s alleged distancing from him, Chase stated in a June interview with the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, “I keep hearing all these things: I’m a rogue. I’m a Rambo. I want to shoot the heads off people....I’m a flower child compared to Gilchrist and Simcox.” And, Gilchrist was present at the California Minutemen’s first operation on July 16, 2005.<sup>56</sup>

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People of faith gather to stand in solidarity with the immigrant community of Hazleton as the city threatens to pass an anti-immigration ordinance.



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## Perspectives on Immigration

**At the start of this New Year, let us remember that we become what we do...  
Our nation's immigration crisis is a test of our humanity.**

*by Archbishop Charles Chaput of the Archdiocese of Denver*



**Archbishop Chaput** was ordained Bishop of Rapid City, South Dakota, on July 26, 1988. Pope John Paul II appointed him Archbishop of Denver on February 18, 1997.

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### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What do you think of the Archbishop's assertion that the way we treat society's most vulnerable is a test of our humanity?

Part of being a good parent or spouse is the willingness to listen with an open heart to the people you love — their hopes, fears, frustrations, joys and also sometimes their anger. The same skill applies to good pastors.

In a typical week, priests may hear that the Mass is too long; the Mass is too short; the music is good; the music is dreadful; the homilies are too deep; the homilies are too thin; the Church is obsessed with abortion; the Church isn't doing enough to stop abortion; the Church should stay out of politics; the Church isn't doing enough to rebuke this or that political party, candidate or leader.

This kind of dialogue is a normal part of any family. It's human nature. But every once in awhile the conversation takes on a bitterness that we need to examine more closely, and learn from.

Last month, shortly after the arrest of hundreds of unauthorized immigrant workers at Swift meatpacking plants across the country, I got the following e-mail:

"Sorry Bishop: No sympathy (from me) for the illegal alien criminals arrested by ICE. In fact, I hope their offspring starve to death. I do not pray for illegal aliens. I pray for their victims. I have no problem with God, and He has no problem with me. I hope their families

starve to death, and it's crap like this that drives Catholics away from the Church."

The e-mail is real. So is the person who wrote it. So is the coarseness of spirit that inspired it. Something is deeply wrong with the heart and the head of any person who thinks like this. As we begin a new year, it's worth asking ourselves what kind of a God we believe in — the kind that "has no problem" with a person who refuses to pray for others and hopes that families and children of arrested workers will "starve to death"? How can a person continue to consider himself a Christian with this kind of vindictive brutality on his lips?

How we treat the weak, the infirm, the elderly, the unborn child and the foreigner reflects on our own humanity. We become what we do, for good or for evil. The Catholic Church respects the law, including immigration law. We respect those men and women who have the difficult job of enforcing it. We do not encourage or help anyone to break the law. We believe Americans have a right to solvent public institutions, secure borders and orderly regulation of immigration.

But we won't ignore people in need, and we won't be quiet about laws that don't work — or that, in their "working," create impossible contradictions and suffering. Despite all of the

heated public argument over the past year, Americans still find themselves stuck with an immigration system that adequately serves no one. We urgently need the kind of immigration reform that will address our economic and security needs, but also regularize the status of the many decent undocumented immigrants who help our society to grow. A new Congress sits in Washington. Its members have an extraordinary opportunity to act quickly and justly to solve this problem. If they don't, the responsibility for failure will be on them and on all of us who elected them.

The year is young; 2007 is just beginning. The slate is clean. We become what we do, for good or for evil. If we act and speak like bigots, that's what we become. If we act with justice, intelligence, common sense and mercy, then we become something quite different. We become the people and the nation God intended us to be. Our country's immigration crisis is a test of our humanity. Whether we pass it is entirely up to us.

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*Archbishop Chaput's article, "At the start of this new year, let us remember that we become what we do," was originally printed in the Denver Catholic Register, and is reprinted here with permission.*

## 7

# The Prophetic Voice—The Religious Community Responds

by Rev. Jessica Vazquez Torres and Hollen Reischer

## *The New Colossus*

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset fates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.*

*“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”<sup>57</sup>*

The words of the Emma Lazarus poem were engraved on a bronze plaque hung in the Statue of Liberty museum 20 years after her death. To many, the verse expressed the governing U.S. attitude toward immigrants at the time: welcome. The story of our national struggles with immigration is not new. Yes, historically we have welcomed those tired and huddled masses Lazarus refers to in *The New Colossus*. But this welcome is only part of the story.

The 1790 Immigration and Naturalization Act codified citizenship for “free white persons.” This law, which would remain in effect until 1952, defined and circumscribed our national identity for decades. By limiting whose rights would be guaranteed and protected by our policies and constitution, this law created chasms between peoples struggling to sur-

live and thrive: new European immigrants, the Native Americans whose land had been invaded, the African slaves on whose back the economy rested, the Chinese whose labor was used to connect our coasts and every other group who would cross our borders for decades to come.

The religious community was both an active supporter and resister of the anti-immigrant policy that stemmed from the 1790 Act.<sup>58</sup> It would be irresponsible to pretend otherwise. Religious people and communities at times have acted and spoken in ways that exclude, marginalize, and declare to others that the physical and social boundaries of our nation are closed to them. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America articulates this reality in the following manner:

We also recognize the obstacles and difficulties our church and society face in welcoming newcomers. Too often we are slow in, tire of, or even resist foster-



Communities and organizations, motivated by their faith and values, have challenged the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and legislation.

ing a hospitable environment for newcomers. Too often we perpetuate the racism, the fear of, and the animosity toward newcomers to our society. Our country's history exhibits an ugly strain of exclusionary attitudes and

policies toward newcomers who differ from the majority. In times of economic downturns especially—as happened in the early 1990s—this strain becomes more pervasive and leads to laws that unduly restrict immigration and threaten the well-being of newcomers.<sup>59</sup>

But religious communities and individuals have also struggled to ensure that the soul stirring words of Emma Lazarus would remain true for generations to come. The religious community has played an important role in the story of struggle for justice in this nation including:

- John Wesley speaking against the Christianization of Native Americans in 1746, to people of faith who opposed slavery and provided support for the Underground Railroad.
- Actively opposing the Japanese internment camps in the 1940s, to actively opposing the Arab/Middle Eastern internment camps of the 2000s.
- Standing alongside African Americans and other people of color in the struggle for civil rights, to opening up doors in sanctuary for Central and South American refugees.
- Standing with low-wage workers demanding the right to collective bargaining, to

marching with millions demanding just immigration reform.

The religious community has, within its teachings and readings, a profound tradition of welcome and hospitality. In July 2006, interfaith leaders from across the U.S. signed a statement in support of just and comprehensive immigration reform. In the statement's opening they wrote:

The Hebrew Bible tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19:33-34)." In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger (cf. Matthew 25:35), for "what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me (Matthew 25:40)." The Qur'an tells us that we should "serve God...and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing] (4:36)." The Hindu scripture Taitiriya Upanishad tells us: "The guest is a representative of God (1.11.2)."

It is undeniable that as religious people and communities we are called to witness a level of hospitality that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of each person crossing our borders and shores. "We are a nation of immigrants. We have a history of welcoming immigrants. Not always treating them right when they come, but we welcome them because they add value and become an asset to the country," said Hussam Ayloush, Executive Director of Council on American Islamic Relations–Southern California and member of the board of directors of Interfaith Worker Justice.

The language and ideas inherent in our sacred traditions, particularly those of the prophetic tradition, provide us with resources for breaking through the predominant ideologies of our nation to imagine a new day, a more just society. They allow us to question the prevailing beliefs that would have us criminalize people struggling to live.<sup>60</sup> Imam Al-Hajj Talib Abdur-Rashid reflects on the

demands of ministry to remain within the prophetic tradition:



**Kay Berkson's** involvement with the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s motivated her to found Changing Worlds.

.....

The challenge of modern ministry is to reflect prophetic tradition in our actions, to reflect the prophetic voice in these times, and to engage communities of faith in a dynamic application of divine law to modern human problems that are in reality, eternal human problems. Further, it is to stand and to inspire the faith community to stand for true justice, and to comfort those in need who desire to speak truth to power and to organize themselves in opposition to those who would listen to the voice of Satan, counseling...abuse over compassion and selfish individualism over humanity. Our Creator is inspiring people to step forward and.... proclaim truth, proclaim justice in this time.<sup>61</sup>

A principle theme of the prophetic tradition, exemplified in the Exodus story, is that God historically acts on the side of the oppressed, and those who are liberated by God's actions are further expected to practice justice.<sup>62</sup> Walter Brueggemann, in his book *The Prophetic Imagination*, asserts, "No prophets ever see things under the aspect of eternity. It is always partisan theology, always for the moment, always for the concrete community, satisfied to see only a piece of it all and to speak out of that at the risk of contradicting the rest of it."<sup>63</sup>

In this section on **Prophetic Voice**, we will be profiling communities and organizations, motivated by their faith and values, which have resisted and challenged the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and legislation in our country. In reading these stories, we hope that you and your community will be inspired to act, to speak and to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable in our society.

As a prophetic presence, the religious community has the obligation to name and denounce the [material] idols before which we as a nation bow, to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate in hope with poor and powerless people. When religious or secular structures, ideologies, or authorities claim to be

absolute, the religious community must speak.<sup>64</sup>

## A Jewish Story: Sharing Histories, Changing Worlds

*Kay Berkson is the founder of Changing Worlds, an organization whose mission is to foster inclusive communities and enhance cross-cultural understanding through a variety of arts programs. Berkson, a photographer, became interested in the ways stories could connect people from different cultures after her involvement in the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s*<sup>65</sup>.

Around 1985 I started learning about the situations in Central America, and I was appalled by what was going on—death squads, people's inability to speak out in any way. I also learned about the role our government was playing in supporting those governments.

Rabbi Robert Marx of Chicago convened a meeting of people interested in the sanctuary movement. I started working with the social action committee in my congregation, the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC) in Evanston. The committee proposed a resolution declaring JRC's support for the sanctuary movement, and that we would open our doors as a sanctuary. The board approved it even though it meant we would be doing something illegal. It meant that we were supporting political refugees being here, people our government refused to treat as refugees because they were from countries whose governments were being supported and propped up by the U.S., so we were taking a stand against government policies. We formed an active sanctuary committee which attracted Jewish people outside of our congregation to help, some of whom eventually joined the congregation.

A Mayan family from Guatemala came to the synagogue in sanctuary. We found them an apartment, paid the rent, showed them how to take public transportation, hooked them up with a lawyer and medical services and helped them get the kids started in school.

They began meeting with us and wanting to tell their story. They were part of a peasant community in the highlands of Guatemala during the Guatemalan Civil War. The armies were coming in at night and burning down villages all around. Thousands of people, entire villages, fled in the middle of the night. The family stayed in a refugee camp in Mexico, eventually got to Kansas for a year or so, and then learned there was another family in Chicago who spoke their Mayan language.

The family was very eager to share their culture and traditions as well as their story. They formed a marimba band, mom made clay pots and demonstrated her technique, the one she learned from her mother and grandmother. They continued to speak publicly to tell the story of their people in Guatemala. We organized many programs that were educational, political and cultural at the temple and other places.

About two years after they came, I went with the father, Manuel, to the refugee camp in Mexico where they had stayed, and met the people that they had been with there. People there were trying to figure out what they needed to do to be able to return to Guatemala. The first night in the camp, we were sitting around outside under the stars, and the leaders of the community were telling us about the various projects they were doing to survive and strengthen their community. And they wanted to know about us.

One of the men asked, “What is Jewish?” Manuel said, “Jewish people understand our situation because they had their own,” and he told them about Hitler and the Holocaust. I was moved by the refugees’ need to tell their story to preserve and share their traditions and their culture and their values, and by their openness to learning about our culture and our stories.

At the time it was an earlier period of immigrant bashing, and [anti-immigrant] legislation that was starting in the early 1990s was another force that influenced me. I got this idea for a photography and oral history project that I thought would encourage immi-

grants and refugees from many backgrounds to tell their stories.

I initially focused on one elementary school in a neighborhood where people came from countries all over the world. We found families who wanted to tell their stories and with help from translators we interviewed children, parents and grandparents and made a huge exhibit for the school with photos, stories and maps. We found people to translate the stories into thirteen of the languages spoken in the community.

I think the message was welcoming and powerful—that the school values the stories, backgrounds and cultures of its many newcomers. You do not have to drop what you are and blend in. We hoped teachers would bring these stories into their classrooms as well as stories that their students’ families wanted to share. Kids would take pride in their own heritage and learn about people of different backgrounds. We developed activities to make that happen.

There were many different religions in this school. The kids understood that people have different beliefs and different practices. They seemed to respect the idea that although their way was right for them it was not the necessarily only way. I found that refreshing and hopeful.

Exchanging stories helps us realize that differences are interesting, not something we should be afraid of or try to avoid. And then we start to find connections and notice the many ways we are not so different at all.

## **Adalberto United Methodist Church: Extending Sanctuary**

*Elvira Arellano took sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist Church on August 15, 2006. Since then her congregation has rallied around her. This is their story.<sup>66</sup>*

From the periphery it looks like the story of Adalberto United Methodist Church began when Elvira Arellano took sanctuary within its walls. For those at the center the reality is different. Adalberto’s members have been

advocating for just and comprehensive immigration policy for 15 years. Elvira's defiant challenge of ICE's deportation order stands as a testament to the community's spirit. This struggle has defined their ministry and identity.

"Each year, we go through the seasons from Advent to harvest and try to make a case for stopping the separation of families," said Rev. Walter Coleman, pastor of this small storefront church in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood.<sup>67</sup> "La Familia Latina Unida" has been channeling Adalberto's commitment to policy change. This organization began when 37 families came together in 2002 to advocate for the reunification of families. Department of Homeland Security raids targeting "potential terrorists," resulting in the deportation of community members including Elvira Arellano,<sup>68</sup> precipitated its formation.

At Adalberto many families are in the same situation as Arellano. The possibility of deportation and family separation is so real that for the last four years they have lobbied elected officials from Springfield to Washington, D.C. to set an immediate moratorium on all raids, deportations and separation of families "until Congress fixes its broken immigration laws." It is this communal journey that led the 140 members of Adalberto to decide to offer sanctuary to any family facing separation as a result of deportation. "The members struggled together. They gathered in discussion groups and prayed together," said Rev. Coleman. Once the decision was made it was simply a matter of time.

On August 15, 2006, Elvira Arellano, a member of Adalberto United Methodist Church and President of "La Familia Latina Unida" sought refuge in her church after federal authorities ordered her to report to the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>69</sup> Immediately the members of this storefront church rallied around Arellano. "We were keeping a 24-hour watch," remembers Rev. Coleman, "with members taking six to seven hour shifts. Everyone had a task. Some worked security. Others were in charge of bringing

food. We were a community ready for mobilization."

Quickly the news of Elvira's defiant stance invaded the airwaves. Reporters with their microphones and cameras set up camp in front of the church. Politicians came to visit. Religious leaders stopped by to offer support and to pray. Civil rights and social activists like Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers of America came to stand with her. Alice Woodward described the events of last August in this way: "Immigrant families came with their children. Church patrons stayed for hours in support. Students arrived on their own or as part of organizations. Some people settled in to stay for hours, while others were passers-by drawn by the vibrant crowd and a full block of white satellite news vans."<sup>70</sup>

Many came to Adalberto during the first days and weeks of the stand. United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño was among them. After visiting with Elvira and congregational leaders, Bishop Carcaño spoke with CNN reporter Lou Dobbs, stating, "The Adalberto United Methodist Church has given assistance to a young woman who is struggling to keep her family together, to stay together with her young son. It is an issue of justice. This is a young woman who is a leader in that church, who stands out of her Christian conviction that our laws are unjust."<sup>71</sup>

In the months since Arellano took sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist Church this community of working poor has extended more than a place to live. Adalberto offers financial, emotional and spiritual support to Arellano, and continues to be a courageous leader in an emerging New Sanctuary Movement. The church's actions call other communities to open their doors to those who face family separation as a result of unjust policies.

## **Dolores Mission Church, East Los Angeles, CA**

*Father Sean Carroll is associate pastor at the Dolores Mission Church in East Los Angeles. The oldest of five children born and raised in Los Angeles, Carroll is moved to stand in*



Father Sean Carroll, along with his parish Dolores Mission Church, have become advocates for comprehensive immigration reform.

*solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters through seeing the effects of bad policy, and through his understanding of God's word. His community has participated in a number of actions to further the cause of just and humane immigration reform, including fasting and prayer, participating in postcard-signing campaigns, coordinating delegations to meet with members of Congress, marching in the immigrant rights marches in East Los Angeles, and carrying out immigration-themed posadas (see glossary).<sup>72</sup>*

We found that immigration reform is a primary concern for people in our community. We are predominantly Latino, primarily Spanish-speaking, a mix of people with documents and people without documents.

People without documents live in a lot of fear—whether it's being afraid of the police, or fear of being separated from their family. Particularly there is fear of being deported or losing their job. So we see a path to legalization as primary to achieving reform.

After the Sensenbrenner bill was introduced, we met with a coalition of religious organizations and other organizations to discuss the effect it had on our community. We were concerned about the criminalization of undocumented people, but also the provision that would criminalize anyone that provides services to them, whether they are teachers, social workers, priests, ministers or doctors. We asked, what is the contribution that we as a religious community can make?

In January 2006, we spoke at our services about the Sensenbrenner bill. We also did a very basic presentation on Catholic social teaching, which recognizes that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. From that truth, certain rights emerge—the right to work, the right to live in peace and dignity, not fear. Considering these values and the tradition of welcoming the stranger, we had our community consider, if this is what orients us, and this is what's happening, how do we respond?

One way we chose to respond was through fasting and prayer. On February 1 we had a

press conference here at Dolores Mission with members of our community and friends. We committed ourselves to fast publicly and pray for just and humane immigration reform. We had 45 people fasting. At the press conference, one gentleman who lives in our shelter for homeless men, who is undocumented, gave his testimony of why he came here and how this bill would affect him if it became a law. Another girl in grade school, whose mother is undocumented, talked about how she would feel if she was separated from her mother.

We held an interfaith prayer service at La Placita Church, which was the center of the sanctuary movement here in Los Angeles in the 1980s. We broadened our commitment to fasting and praying for just and humane immigration reform until the Feast of Pentecost [seven weeks after Easter].

Years ago, one man related to me the story of his crossing the border from Mexico, and of all the dead bodies that he saw along the way. More recently, men in our shelter have shared with me how they have been taken advantage of by people who contract them to work. One man was contracted to paint apartments in Salt Lake City, and at the end of the week, the person who hired him and his companions told them to come back the next day to be paid. When they returned the following day, the contractor never came.

I see and hear how the current system harms these people and many others, who are among the most vulnerable in our society and in our congregations. I believe that the law has to help us act rightly and to become who we truly wish to be, and who God wants us to be, both as a nation and as communities of faith—people who are hospitable, people who treat the most vulnerable with the dignity and the respect that is theirs, who help unite families that are divided due to immigration status, who respect the right to due process. By striving to pass just and humane immigration laws, we attempt to help make the Kingdom of God a reality, little by little, step by step.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Prayer and fasting are public actions that directly confront oppressive actions and systems. What other responses can you and your congregation take to prophetically challenge evil or misguided policies and actions?

## Muslim Experiences: Building Coalitions in the Struggle for Justice

*Prophets choose to venture outside prescribed paths. Prophetic work refuses to relinquish hope that God's Salaam can be realized in the here and now. The prophetic task will require courage and resolve that cannot be tapped alone but requires the formation of broad and diverse coalitions of committed people of faith. This profile emerges from several interviews with Muslim leaders across the nation. From our conversations we learned about the struggles of this diverse community and the need to build coalitions.<sup>73</sup>*

“The present immigration policy has directly impacted the Muslim community vis-à-vis the hysteria around terrorism,” says Imam Mahdi Bray, Executive Director of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation and member of the board of directors of Interfaith Worker Justice. “The community has been impacted by the relocation of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency into a super-structure called the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This super structure is predisposed to criminalize the administrative processes attached to immigration. These dynamics have resulted in increased deportations of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians under the guise of fighting terrorism.”

Life for the Muslim community in the United States changed dramatically on September 11, 2001. The so called “War on Terror” has insinuated that Islam as a faith engenders violence and all who practice are suspect. These xenophobic and fear-driven insinuations have resulted in round-ups of Muslim men, hate crimes, religious and race-based criminal profiling and subjective application of immigration policy. “Immigration and terrorism are the two hottest issues in America,” says Hussam Ayloush, Southern California Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and member of the board of directors of Interfaith Worker Justice. “The Muslim community has been impacted doubly by the unfortunate

linking of the two. There has been an attempt to paint people from Middle Eastern backgrounds and Muslims as trying to take advantage of illegal immigration to smuggle in terrorists.”

Sadiya Ahmed, Governmental Relations Coordinator for CAIR-Chicago, notes seeing “cases of discrimination on a daily basis. We see cases of local police authorized to enforce immigration laws which gives way to profiling. We had a case of police arresting and taking into custody legal permanent residents. We saw the case of a Muslim woman who was arrested while protesting the Minutemen and the police took off her head cover. We have heard politicians supporting and maintaining through their rhetoric the intentional profiling of Muslim men and propagating the notion that they are a threat to the American people.”

One of the most significant results of current policy has been the lengthy backlogs in the journey to permanent residency and citizenship. “Even those Muslims who are legal or on their way to becoming legal have received unfair delays after applying for citizenship,” says Ahmed. “Quite often people who are Muslim or come from Muslim countries have endured years of waiting for background checks to be completed. These are people who have done nothing. Legally, once a person has been interviewed for citizenship, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) must act on the application within 120 days. But by placing the USCIS within the auspices of DHS, incredible back-logs have been created, placing families in extreme duress.”

The xenophobic nature of our current immigration policy and its biased enforcement function like a catalyst for many in the Muslim community to challenge unjust procedures and actions. Imam Kifah Mustapha of The Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview, Illinois explains that his organization sees “hundreds of thousands of people who are in situations that we believe are ethically and morally wrong. We believe that the law should deal more justly with the issue of im-



Hussam Ayloush leads Southern California CAIR, which advocates for the civil rights of Muslim Americans.

migration. We believe the issue of immigration is not specific and limited to the Latino community. We are committed to a better America for the people who live here. We believe that happens if we relate our solutions to the values that made this country great. We are a land of immigrants,”

Imam Mustapha’s statement provides insight into Islam’s commitment to a world with justice for all. “Islam is a faith open to everyone,” Imam Mustapha continues, “All faiths present themselves as universal entities open to be enjoyed by everyone. Then why shouldn’t our home, our community and our country be open to everyone? The prophet Muhammad says, ‘If a person wakes up feeling safe in his community, feeling healthy in his body, and having food on his table, then that person has obtained life with all that he needs.’ A person cannot survive feeling unsafe, jobless, and sick. We believe that if we want to keep our country unique, these are the values our legislators need to operate from: safety, health, and opportunities for work for everyone.”

Ayloush speaks of his faith in this manner: “Islam looks at all of us as immigrants on the earth. All of earth belongs to God and we are



God’s guests. In that sense, we are all immigrants. We are guided by our religious teachings which declare all human beings are dependents of God and the most beloved to God are the ones that are most helpful towards God’s dependents. In the end what matters is not what religion and faith we claim but how we apply that faith. Someone who claims to believe in God yet treats fellow human beings in disrespectful and unjust ways has just proven their faith is fake, and will be held accountable.”

For Imam Bray, “We are obligated by God to stand and speak for justice. Prophet Muhammad said if you see an injustice you have to correct it with your hands or your mouth or within your heart.”

This call to stand and speak for justice has resulted in faith-driven actions for change. The leaders we spoke with have worked through their respective organizations and faith communities and responded to U.S. immigration policy in the following ways:

- Educated and equipped Imams with talking-points, readings, and updates on immigration issues.
- Joined coalitions to work on immigrant and workers rights.
- Supported and participated in immigration rallies.
- Filed lawsuits demanding an end to the delays experienced by Muslim applicants applying for U.S. citizenship.
- Organized delegations to elected officials to educate them about the realities of their communities and the impact of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim agitation.
- Engaged in voter education and mobilization.
- Set up legal clinics to assist and address issues around family separation.
- Supported direct action campaigns.
- Challenged nativist groups such as the Minutemen.

Imam Bray explains his vision for this struggle. “It is incumbent upon us to form a broad-based coalition across faith, racial and national origin lines. It is crucial that we work together. There is plenty of common ground between communities and we must labor to strengthen this movement by expanding our base. Many will try to destroy our work by arguing that terrorism is only a Muslim issue; that the southern border is only a Mexican issue; that the issues of Haitian immigration only impact the Haitian community. We must close ranks and fight these attempts to divide us, so that justice will prevail.”

*Our faith demands of us concern for the stranger in our midst. Leviticus commands, ‘When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What does your faith or value system teach about justice, welcoming and the human rights of each individual? How have you seen these values carried out or ignored in your faith community or in public life?

Have you ever paid a great cost—for example, loss of friends, privileges or division among members of your community—because you stood up for justice?

Why might some people or institutions move in the direction of rejection rather than welcome?

*you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' [19:33-34]. In an age of increased threats to national security, this teaching reminds us that we must not unfairly scapegoat the foreigners among us because we are fearful and they are vulnerable. —Union for Reform Judaism*

## A Sikh Perspective

*Founded as the Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART) in 1996, the Sikh American Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) is a national non-profit civil rights and educational organization. SALDEF empowers Sikh Americans through legal assistance, educational outreach, legislative advocacy and media relations. We asked Rajbir Singh Datta, Associate Director of SALDEF, to reflect on the three areas this section explores: Impact, Community Response and Faith.*

**On Impact:** “Unfortunately, the media’s portrayal of the immigration debate as one that impacts the Latino community exclusively has concealed the fact that many other communities are being targeted as well. The recent sting operations by the Department of Justice on South Asian-owned drug stores have caused much concern about increased racial profiling of our community. Conse-

quently, the narrow focus given by the media to the immigration debate has resulted in members of our community keeping silent about their experiences of discrimination.”

**On Action:** “SALDEF has been involved in numerous coalitions advocating for the adoption of comprehensive immigration legislation.”

**On Faith:** “Our religion is based upon the principles of equality, hard work, charity and democracy. We understand that it is through these principles that individuals can achieve the American Dream. My parents were immigrants to this country with nothing but an education and developed a very successful life for themselves and their family. This opportunity must not be denied to others.”

*I’m convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin to shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people; the giant triplets of racism, militarism, and economic exploitation are incapable of being conquered.*

—**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**<sup>74</sup>

# 8

## Sanctuary—Communities and Congregations Stand Tall

by Ted Smukler and Hollen Reischer

There is a growing resistance to local anti-immigrant ordinances and hate-based anti-immigrant organizations, along with a swelling movement for a humane and just overhaul of national immigration laws. This section provides information about municipal governments that have refused to cooperate with U.S. immigration police; gives background on the religious sanctuary movement of the 1980s; and provides details about the New Sanctuary Movement that is being organized today.

### Sanctuary Cities

Since 1979, 53 cities in 21 states have passed laws, resolutions and policies limiting local enforcement of federal immigration laws in an effort to continue protecting and serving their diverse communities.<sup>75</sup> These laws have come about for a variety of reasons—most often through local government recognition of limitations in capacity to become surrogate federal agents. In a June 2006 statement by the Major Cities Chiefs, the body that represents major city police departments, the group highlighted two significant priorities for local police<sup>76</sup>:

- Some major urban areas estimate that their immigrant communities comprise 50 to 60 percent of the local population.

- Local police agencies must balance any decision to enforce federal immigration laws with their daily mission to protect and

serve diverse communities. Departments must take into account limited resources, the complexity of immigration laws, limitations on authority to enforce, risk of civil liability for immigration enforcement activities and the clear need to foster trust and cooperation from the public, including members of immigrant communities.

Some cities have established a higher moral imperative to serve and protect all residents. “Sanctuary cities” have lifted themselves up as leaders in promoting and embracing diversity, through non-cooperation with federal immigration law enforcement. A handful of major cities including San Francisco, Chicago, Houston and Seattle have reemphasized existing ordinances, or initiated new ones that protect their immigrant communities. More than 50 cities or counties have enacted some variation of sanctuary, according to the National Immigration Law Center.<sup>77</sup>

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom vocalized his opposition to U.S. House Resolution 4377 in April 2006 by reaffirming San Francisco’s 1989 “city of refuge” ordinance, which prohibits the use of city funds to enforce “the civil provisions of federal immigration law.” Newsom stated that San Francisco is “proud to provide city services and public protection to all people, no matter where they are from, and we don’t ask for anyone’s legal status.” The city “oppose[s] any effort to require public safety officials, teachers, doctors and any other City employee to report the immigration status of anyone seeking help,” Newsom continued.<sup>78</sup>



The New Sanctuary Movement seeks to put a human face on the national dialog about comprehensive immigration reform.

## Sanctuary Movement and the Religious Community

During the 1980s, a broad religious movement developed to give sanctuary to refugees from the wars raging in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Tens of thousands of peasants, workers and indigenous people from these Central American nations were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced in civil wars fueled by U.S. government intervention and support of right-wing politicians, military forces, or in the case of Nicaragua, insurgent anti-government forces. In the U.S., hundreds of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish congregations declared themselves sanctuaries, taking in individuals and families. The sanctuary refugees had lost everything they owned and fled because they would otherwise have been killed. The religious community saw their plight and opened their doors, standing up at the same time to U.S. immigration authorities in response to a higher calling. (See interview with Kay Berkson, “A Jewish Story: Sharing Histories, Changing Worlds” in Section 7: “The Prophetic Voice.”)

### The New Sanctuary Movement

In 2007, a new religious sanctuary movement is brewing, supporting the victims of U.S. trade policies who have come to this country out of desperation, worked hard and contributed to their community and yet nevertheless face deportation.

At this historic moment, Congress is poised to introduce and debate legislation that could bring badly needed reform to the U.S. immigration system. However, given the early signals from the new Congress, including members of the new Democratic majority, it is uncertain whether the political will exists to pass legislation that is both effective and humane. The tide of anti-immigrant sentiment is seriously impacting the commitment and capacity of legislators to achieve truly comprehensive and rational reform.

Immigration reform will not come only from the enlightened actions of our legislators. Rather, a groundswell from below is needed, a sea change in public attitudes and

discourse that will allow political leaders to do the right thing. Religious leaders and grassroots religious and immigrant rights activists are organizing a movement aimed at getting the broader public to see immigrant workers and their families with new eyes.

In March 2006, Cardinal Roger Mahoney of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles issued a national call for civil disobedience if a Senate bill passed which would enact the draconian anti-immigrant provisions of the House Bill HR4437—the Sensenbrenner Bill. Although the massive immigrant marches held that spring clearly had a powerful impact on legislators, Cardinal Mahoney’s statement was also significant in awakening the general public and legislators to the moral and human dimensions of the question—effectively changing the terms of the public debate.

On March 27, 2006, hundreds of religious leaders gathered in Washington D.C. to bear witness and assert their moral authority, asking that the deliberations of the Senate Judiciary Committee take into account the human and moral realities of immigrant families. The resulting Senate bill, however flawed, was somewhat more compassionate and inclusive than the House measure.

In the ensuing months, interfaith leaders across the country sought to define the contributions that clergy and congregational leaders could make in the struggle for a just immigration policy. By the late 2006, borrowing from the spirit of the sanctuary movement of the 1980s, a new national initiative formed.

### Prophetic Hospitality

As an act of public witness, sanctuary congregations will provide hospitality and protection to a limited number of immigrant families. These families, who will have at least one member in deportation proceedings, will highlight cases which reveal the contradictions and moral injustice of the current immigration system. In so doing, the New Sanctuary Movement will provide legal and other forms of assistance to families, while developing a public campaign and aware-

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can the stories we tell become the framework for making social change?

Why do we focus on the lives of individuals and families?

## THE QUIROZ FAMILY<sup>79</sup>

**Martin:** I was born in Michoacan in Ciudad Hildalgo, a small town not far from Mexico City. We were very poor. I started working when I was 10—I did whatever, washing cars, carpentry. When I was 14, my father left for the United States. He had problems getting work here and we continued having economic problems in Mexico. I went to school until the second year of high school. I had to leave school because we needed money. I had five younger sisters and I was the only male. My mother didn't work.

**Maria:** I'm from Ciudad Hildalgo, too, but we didn't know each other there. Our fathers knew each other and his uncle was a friend of my uncle.

I studied until my third year of high school. Then I stopped because there were seven more children in my family who needed to go to school. In Mexico you have to pay for books, uniforms, everything. I thought I should get a job to help my family and let someone else go to school.

My aunt and uncle had gone to the United States. When my grandmother died my uncle came home. I was working and I started thinking about coming to the U.S. to earn more money. My idea was that I would work to bring the others here. My uncle asked permission to bring me back with him. My parents said, "No, no" because I was a woman. It is very dangerous for a woman and I was only 17. Finally when I was 19, they said yes, but I didn't have any money to go. I was working in a purse factory. The owners were very nice. They lent me money and my sister who had just married lent me money she got for her wedding.

The economic situation in Mexico is so difficult. There is very little work and the families are large, with eight or ten children. When people started hearing about success stories in the United States, that there were jobs and opportunities, everybody started to look for how they could come.

**To read the full story of the Quiroz Family, turn to Resource G: *Stories of Immigrants*.**

ness leading to the passage of legislation that would change their situation.

Congregations will not be asked to break the law through harboring or hiding the identities of undocumented people. All families in sanctuary will be publicly identified, both because they are in deportation hearings and because they will choose to take a public stand. A major focus will be on how families are torn apart. In an effort to change the debate and broaden the perspective of U.S. voters and political leaders, the New Sanctuary Movement will work to build public support for families with American citizen children, strong work records and a history of contributing to their congregations and communities.

The New Sanctuary Movement is growing as its leaders have set goals to organize 100 sanctuary congregations in 2007 (including Evangelical Christian, mainstream Protestant, Jewish, Unitarian, Catholic and Muslim). Five hundred additional congregations will be asked to sign a sanctuary pledge and provide resources in support of the movement.

### New Sanctuary Movement Pledge

"The New Sanctuary Movement is a coalition of interfaith religious leaders and participating congregations, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering

of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States.

We acknowledge that the large-scale immigration of workers and their families to the United States is a complex historical, global and economic phenomenon that has many causes and does not lend itself to simplistic or purely reactive public policy solutions.

We stand together in our faith that everyone, regardless of national origin, has basic common rights, including but not limited to: 1) livelihood; 2) family unity; and 3) physical and emotional safety. We witness the violation of these rights under current immigration policy, particularly in the separation of children from their parents due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

#### Therefore, We Covenant To:

- 1) Take a public, moral stand for immigrants' rights
- 2) Reveal, through education and advocacy, the actual suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and proposed legislation
- 3) Protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination and unjust deportation"

To get involved, see Section 9: "Faith in Action."



Martin and Maria Quiroz, pictured here with their children, tell their story of immigrating to the United States.

## Perspectives on Immigration

### Fear, Cultural Idolatry and the Liberating Power of Faith: On Immigration in the U.S.

by the Rev. José F. Morales, Jr.<sup>80</sup>

As I understand the Christian faith, it is clear to me that temples, churches, mosques, and other places of faith should extend sanctuary to immigrants. Period! Yet I go further, for immigrants seeking sanctuary is only a symptom of the disease which plagues this country. To place a topical ointment of something festering deep within will not do much. Going further requires that the liberating power of faith be reclaimed as we seek to comfort immigrants and aggravate immigrant policymakers.

So... what is beneath the surface? What is at the core of the issue? What is the driving force of the immigration debate?

I say: it is fear.

And the fear is not that “Mexicans are taking our jobs.” Quite frankly, it is corporate America, and its loyalty to the bottom line, that is taking our jobs, taking our jobs overseas. Vijay Prasad, a cultural studies scholar from Trinity College in Hartford, frequently reminds us that “the American working class lives in China.” If losing jobs is what we fear, we should confront our governmental and financial “powers that be” that deport jobs overseas, instead of trying to deport millions of Mexicans.

What’s at the core of the debate, in my opinion, is a *cultural fear* that grows out of cultural hegemony, and cultural idolatry. Namely, the fear comes from the “threat” of having large numbers of immigrants who refuse to assimilate easily, in a country where the cultural

majority sees assimilation as a moral virtue and as a necessity for socio-political well-being. In other words, immigration is not a threat to national security; it is a threat to national identity. For since the first rounds of Native extermination, the cultural “norm” has been set by the cultural majority, namely, immigrants of Anglo stock, which is why I am convinced that “white” is a political designation, not a cultural one; and which is why I am even suspicious of the intention of some white liberals who, by using “diversity” and “multicultural” language, are really attempting to maintain cultural control in the guise of diversity “management” so as to avoid the real issue, namely, white supremacism. As these gatekeepers of Anglo-American culture see it, their power to set and sustain the norm is being challenged by backwater, Spanish-speaking, indigenous, Catholic, pre-modern, brown people who are a drag on the economy. Yet what these immigrants are a drag on is the cultural hegemony of white society. Just as post-bellum white southerners feared a black cultural revolution and thus acted in horrific, dehumanizing ways to squelch any inkling of Afro-cultural insurgency, the cultural majority today fears specifically a Latino-cultural revolution which will rob them of their power to set the “norm.”

The sad tale to this saga for me, as a faithful Christian, is that this cultural hegemony has been, and still is, sanctioned and sustained by religion. God-talk is employed to ignore cultural fear and to maintain cultural hegemony, which consequently leads to cultural idolatry by the cultural majority. Below are three ways in which religion is distortedly used for these ends.

1. The dominant culture makes an appeal to “obedience of the law” as a moral absolute without first determining whether the contents and intents of said law, in and of themselves, are morally right and just.



Rev. José F. Morales, Jr., is Associate Pastor at Iglesia del Pueblo in Hammond, Indiana.

2. The nation that concocts these laws is given divine origins and divine purpose. In short, to go against the state is to go against God.

3. The “white” majority, who have written the history of the nation (so as to soften up things like Native extermination, slavery of African peoples, and subjugation of women), are given divine preference and set the “standard” by which all residents of the republic are judged.

The cultural fear of the cultural majority is addressed thusly by appeals to religion—in this country, by appeals to their Christianity. And I will specify—their Christianity. For, interestingly enough, numbers show that the majority of African, Arab, Persian, and Latin American immigrants are Christian; and yet, these forms of imported, un-Americanized Christianity are not good enough for this republic and their religion.

As a Christian, I challenge their cultural-civil form of Christianity because, as I see it, it is not Christianity. The Christian faith is one of liberating power from below, not oppressive power from above. This principle of liberating power is embodied in the Torah, where provisions were made to guard against economic exploitation, political oppression, and religious legitimization. The prophets remind the people of the socio-political mandate of the Law, for they had emptied the Law of its liberating power and had begun to use it for personal gain and exploitive purposes in the name of God—sounds awfully familiar! For Christians, the Christ event is the full embodiment of this liberating power. It

is in the political execution of Jesus on the Cross where he is ironically yet profoundly crowned king, and where God’s liberating power was demonstrated and the culture’s oppressive power exposed.

Least I am accused of theological rambling, I wish to point out how this re-appropriation of the faith is applicable to the immigration issue. First of all, the immigration laws of this country are unjust, and should be declared as such by people of faith. Before we are called upon to adhere to these decrees, we should consider and challenge the racist, classist, ideological and religiously exclusivist demons that inform and shape immigration policy as it now stands. To adhere to an immoral law is, well, immoral. For this reason, I have no problem encouraging churches, synagogues, and mosques to “break the law” and serve as sanctuaries for immigrants. While God in the Tanakh is referred to as “the God of Israel,” God is not an Israelite—nor an American, for that matter. Cultural idolatry diminishes the beauty of the whole people of God and does not allow us to see diversity as a gift of God’s Spirit (cf. New Testament, Acts 2). Providing sanctuary is a bold affirmation of diversity and of diversity’s rightful place in the American cultural milieu. Thirdly, I believe that faith and “values” language—i.e., “God-talk”—has its place in politics, since it is the language of many people who are affected by the political process. Yet, God-talk should be employed only for the common good and not for private or denominational interest. Civil religion used to subjugate workers for personal gains is rebuked by the prophet Isaiah (cf. Tanakh, Isaiah 58). Lastly, people of faith should be at the forefront in naming the fear, and illegitimizing it. For it is, after all, illegitimate fear. In fact, it is fear of the worst kind: fear of the “other.” And it is only by knowing the “other” and by loving them that fear is replaced by compassion and solidarity, which are core values of the sanctuary movement. As it is written, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” (New Testament, 1 John 4:18).

To be clear, love casts out fear, not immigrants.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Rev. Morales asserts that the key to the current immigration debate is fear. Do you agree with him? If so, what do you think we fear nationally?

What do you think of his call to provide sanctuary to undocumented immigrants?

# 9

## Faith in Action

by Rev. Jessica Vazquez Torres

*They came first for the  
Communists,  
and I didn't speak up  
because I wasn't a  
Communist.*

*Then they came for the Jews,  
and I didn't speak up  
because I wasn't a Jew.*

*Then they came for the  
trade unionists,  
and I didn't speak up  
because I wasn't a trade  
unionist.*

*Then they came for the  
Catholics,  
and I didn't speak up  
because I was a Protestant.*

*Then they came for me,  
and by that time no one was  
left to speak up.*

**Pastor Martin Niemöller<sup>81</sup>**

For too long the immigration debate has been shaped by sensationalist media, characterized by disproportionate coverage of nativist groups screaming “alien invasion” and politicians claiming a misguided populist position that preys on the fears of the public. These parties have clothed themselves in the language of morality and patriotism while flagrantly disregarding the meaning of both. They spout language of good and evil, but fail to truly engage issues of morality and ethics. They have failed to exhibit the kind of love for country that recognizes the need for humane borders and the right to work with dignity.

Now, more than ever, an alternative message is needed; one that recognizes both the human dimension of this debate and acknowledges that current and most proposed policies hurt all workers regardless of legal status. The religious community has an incredible opportunity, and is indeed compelled, to become the bearer of this message. Like prophets and teachers such as Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha and Rabbi Hillel, the religious community and people of faith must demand justice. We must oppose criminalizing people for seeking a better life and recognize that no human being is illegal. We must demand the elimination of militarized borders that leave scores of people dead and must fight for the right of every worker in this country to be treated fairly and afforded the protections and wages that allow them to prosper. Ultimately, the re-

ligious community must remind itself of the commitments to justice, human dignity and respect for creation to which their traditions hold them.

Martin Luther King, Jr. in a “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” wrote about the white, liberal religious leaders:

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: ‘I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action’; who pater-



nalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a 'more convenient season.' Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.<sup>82</sup>

Now is the time for people of faith and values to passionately engage in the immigration debate. It is true that many declarations have been issued and statements released. Some religious communities have even taken official positions on the issue. However, the time for concrete action is upon us. Words are important but if the spoken words are not reflected in the actions of the community they are simply words and no more. Articulated positions must be accompanied by actions of solidarity and challenge.



South Florida Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice prays with workers.

United, the religious community in the U.S. has the capacity to change the focus of our nation's discourse on immigration and worker justice. But to do so, we must first come together, laying aside differences that could divide us and thus limit effectiveness. Then, we can strategize together how to respond to these four needs: Understanding, Solidarity, Advocacy and Organizing.

Respond to the need for **understanding** by:

- **Organizing Community Forums:** Forums provide an opportunity for the religious community to create a safe and open space for people to share their stories and struggles with current U.S. immigration policy. Community forums encourage dialogue and offer an opportunity to reframe issues and introduce alternate perspectives and solutions grounded in religious values. When organizing a community forum it is important to reach out beyond one's reli-

gious tradition to ensure broader representation. Resource F provides a good tool kit for organizing a forum.

#### ■ **Joining an Interfaith Worker Justice**

**Roundtable Conversation:** Interfaith Worker Justice will be organizing roundtable conversations to strategize how the religious community, in key congressional districts, will engage the issues surrounding comprehensive immigration reform. The objective is to bring together religious leaders and members of congregations for dialogue, to exchange ideas and to identify ways in which they can engage their communities in reflection about the issue. The goal is that dialogue will lead to action and engagement. For more information about hosting these roundtable conversations in your community, please contact **Ted Smukler**, Director of Public Policy at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 39, [tsmukler@iwj.org](mailto:tsmukler@iwj.org).

Respond to the need for **solidarity** by:

#### ■ **Taking the Sanctuary Pledge and Becoming a Sanctuary Congregation:**

The New Sanctuary Movement is growing and will explode into the public consciousness through a series of events starting in the spring of 2007. The movement seeks humane immigration reform, and believes 2007 can be the year. To become a sanctuary congregation or to get more information:

- ▶ In California, contact **Rev. Alexia Salvatierra** at Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles: (213) 481-3740; [asalvatierra@cluela.org](mailto:asalvatierra@cluela.org)
- ▶ In New York, contact **Juan Carlos Ruiz** at (646) 210-5322; [sanctuary07@yahoo.com](mailto:sanctuary07@yahoo.com)
- ▶ In the rest of the U.S., contact **Charese Jordan**, Deputy Director of Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 37; [cjordan@iwj.org](mailto:cjordan@iwj.org)

- **Organizing an Interfaith Prayer Vigil:** As workers struggle for dignity in their work, the religious community can support them by gathering to pray for change and justice.

In public spaces, with immigrants and workers, religious people can witness to the larger community by praying alongside struggling workers. If your community is interested in organizing an interfaith prayer vigil, consider calling your local Interfaith Worker Justice affiliate for information and support. Visit the Web site at [www.iwj.org/outreach/lg](http://www.iwj.org/outreach/lg) to find contact information for IWJ's local affiliates.

- **Building Interfaith Coalitions:** The religious community is most effective when we come together with other community groups in order to effect change. By building coalitions with labor groups, business organizations and other key members of the community, we expand our capacity to bring about social, economic and political transformation. Additionally, coalition



building provides those struggling against our unjust system of immigration with a broad base of support. If you'd like to organize an interfaith coalition, contact **Charese Jordan**, Deputy Director at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 37; [cjordan@iwj.org](mailto:cjordan@iwj.org).

Respond to the need for **advocacy** by:

- **Initiating a Letter Writing Campaign:** Elected officials respond to direct communication from their constituents. If the official believes you are part of a broad segment of the community or that as part of a faith community you can influence many people, he or she will listen. In a letter writing campaign, we write to our elected officials and remind them of their commitment to justice and equity as they uphold the laws and set policy for this nation. When writing to elected officials, propose alternative solutions that reflect your values on current policy issues. Letter writing can also be used to affirm the actions and votes

of elected officials. The impact of letter writing can be maximized when a community undertakes a letter writing campaign on a specific policy issue or bill. Contact **Elisabeth Solomon**, Senior Policy Analyst at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 42; [esoloman@iwj.org](mailto:esoloman@iwj.org) for the most current information on legislation and how to focus a letter writing campaign in your area.

- **Organizing Delegations to Elected Officials:** **Face-to-face meetings with elected officials are powerful ways to exert influence. (Lobbyists know this too well).** Delegations provide the religious community an opportunity to present concerns, educate and build relationships with elected officials about the issues that matter to the greater community. Delegations are most effective when they reflect the religious, racial and economic diversity of the community. To get started in organizing a delegation to your elected official, please contact **Ted Smukler**, Director of Public Policy at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 39; [tsmukler@iwj.org](mailto:tsmukler@iwj.org).

Respond to the need for **organizing** by:

- **Building Volunteer Public Policy Committees:** You can become a partner in the movement for social change! By forming local volunteer committees to work with the support of the Public Policy Department staff at Interfaith Worker Justice, people of faith can effectively advocate for changes in policies and practices that benefit workers in our country. If you and your community are interested in working with a local committee, please contact **Ted Smukler**, Director of Public Policy at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext. 39; [tsmukler@iwj.org](mailto:tsmukler@iwj.org).
- **Joining or Forming Interfaith Worker Justice Affiliates:** Interfaith Worker Justice has 60 affiliates across the country. Affiliates help educate, organize and mobilize the religious community on worker justice issues. They also support worker-led campaigns and organizing efforts to obtain col-

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In order to sustain activism over the long haul, participation needs to not just be meaningful—it should also be fun.

Which of these suggestions do you think would be most effective? What other ways of responding can you think of?

If you organized or participated in one of these actions, what would be the response from your community? Would your neighbors be supportive, or defensive, of such an action? What are the reasons for taking action in each potential situation?

lective bargaining rights. Visit the website at [www.iwj.org/outreach/lg](http://www.iwj.org/outreach/lg) to find contact information for IWJ's local affiliates. To learn how to become involved with your local affiliate or to develop a religion-labor organization in your area, contact **Charese Jordan**, Deputy Director at Interfaith Worker Justice, (773) 728-8400 ext 37, [cjordan@iwj.org](mailto:cjordan@iwj.org).

■ **Joining, Assisting or Forming Your Local Workers' Center:** Workers' Centers assist and accompany low-wage workers, many of whom are immigrants, through the processes of accessing services, advocating for their employment and labor rights and organizing to improve wages and working conditions. There are 16 workers' centers that are part of the Interfaith Worker Justice network. The network is currently launching a national campaign against

wage theft. For more information, or to get involved, contact **José Oliva**, Interfaith Worker Justice Workers' Center Network Coordinator, (773) 728-8400 ext. 25, [joliva@iwj.org](mailto:joliva@iwj.org).

In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King asked a question that continues to challenge people of faith and values today: **"Has religion become too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world?"** The religious community in the United States stands at a crossroads. The time to act has come; let us move ahead with conviction!

Join Interfaith Worker Justice and its community of affiliates and workers' centers in the struggle to shape a society where people can live and work with dignity. Now is the time to act!

.....  
Trina Zelle from Interfaith Worker Justice of Arizona and Deacon Bill Clower lead a delegation.



# 10

## Closing Word

by Ted Smukler

Interfaith Worker Justice challenges people of faith to act in congruence with their deepest values. The dominant values of the world point to a never ending struggle for security for ourselves and our inner circle. Take care of number one—and maybe your family. However, true self-interest, and the way of God, radiates outward from this inner circle. We become concerned about our extended family—the community we live in, our faith community, the nation we are part of and the larger world.

The world has gotten smaller. Carbon emissions in the United States and China create greenhouse gases that cause our entire planet to warm up, with potentially catastrophic consequences. The HIV-AIDS epidemic has not been a respecter of national borders, destroying lives in Johannesburg,

Bangkok and New York City. The mobility of corporations, which shift capital, production plants, goods and jobs across borders has left economic upheaval behind throughout much of the world and has resulted in declining standards of living in the U.S. People with no means to support themselves leave families, community and culture behind in search of the means to survive.

Every religious tradition calls on believers to see beyond their narrow concerns, love their neighbors, and treat the “stranger among you” as you would your own. We have inherited and created a world that is broken. With God’s help, we can begin to repair the torn fabric and rebuild the world anew.

We call on every person of faith to use this guidebook to study, reflect and act. As Rabbi Hillel said,

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am not for others, what am I?

And if not now, when?



# Glossary

**Administration:** In this document, “the administration” refers to the federal government.

**Alien:** An *alien* is “any person not a citizen or national of the United States” and is synonymous with *non-citizen*. It includes people who are here legally, as well as people who are here in violation of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA). Non-citizen is generally used to describe all foreign-born persons in the United States who have not become citizens.<sup>83</sup>

**Amnesty:** See regularization.

**Asylee:** A person who has been granted *asylum*.

**Asylum:** Permission granted to reside in the U. S. to a person fleeing persecution in another country. Under current U.S. law, to receive asylum a person must be entitled to refugee status.

**Asylum Seekers:** Persons who have fled their country because of personal danger, who arrive in the United States without legal protection, and who must prove a “credible fear of persecution” to receive an opportunity to seek legal protective status or asylum.

**Bracero Program:** A temporary worker program initiated in 1942 by the federal governments of the United States and Mexico to bring millions of skilled Mexican agricultural laborers to the United States to fill gaps in the agriculture labor market and to build rail-ways. The farmers came to the U.S. to improve their economic status. The Bracero Program was described (by a U. S. Department of

Labor official in charge of the program) as “legalized slavery.” Workers were subjected to horrific human rights abuses by employ-ers and communities at large. The railroad portion of the program ended at the close of World War II, but the agricultural initiative lasted until 1964 when many workers were replaced by mechanization.

**Christianization:** As used in this hand-book, Christianization refers to the efforts of missionaries and others to convert native Americans to Christianity, often forcibly.

**Chupacabra:** El Chupacabra literally means the “goat sucker” and it has become a well-know urban legend among the Latino community. However, some would argue that the phenomenon of the chupacabra is also a sociological construction born out of colonization, for it allows communities whose human and material resources that have been siphoned out by trade agreements and de-stroyed by environmental pollution to explain the “sucking out” of their lives and livelihood.

**Foreign National:** An employee who is not a United States citizen, is employed by the United States Government and works outside the United States, its territories or possessions, under a system in which an Executive Agency is the official employer of the foreign national employee and assumes responsibility for all administration and management functions associated with the employee’s employment.

**Free-Trade Agreements:** Treaties between countries that facilitate the free movement of labor and capital that remove certain taxes, environmental laws and worker protections.

Most notably, for the purpose of this immigration handbook, free trade agreements refer to NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement). GATT, created after World War I to negotiate economic recovery mechanisms, was later replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was established in the 1990s. These agreements were instigated by and for the advantage of U.S. elites, with some benefits accruing to trading partner elites as well, to the great detriment of workers in other countries and the U.S. Capital mobility to low-wage markets has decimated the manufacturing sector in the U.S., and unionized, well paid jobs have been replaced by lower paid service jobs.

**Guest Worker:** Temporary workers admitted to the U.S. under one of more than 70 visas categories. Guest workers referenced in this report are mainly workers who came to the U. S. under one of three visa programs: H-2A (unlimited annual number of visas for seasonal farm workers), H-2B (66,000 non-agricultural visas for landscapers, roofers, laborers, meatpacking plant workers and others) and H-1B (85,000 professionally skilled workers, about 30 percent of whom perform work in the Information Technology sector.)

**Green Card Holder:** See *Legal Permanent Resident*.

**Illegal Alien:** Also known as unauthorized alien, a non-citizen who enters the U.S. surreptitiously or overstays the term of non-immigrant visas, e.g., tourist or student visas. The number of unauthorized aliens in the U.S. in 2000 was estimated by demographers at the Census Bureau, the former INS and the Urban Institute to be between 7- 8.5 million.<sup>84</sup> In 2006, estimates were between 11-12 million.

**Immigrant Policy:** How the U.S. treats foreigners living here.

**Immigration Policy:** Policy of the federal government that determines how many

people from which countries can come to the United States. Immigration policy establishes rules and regulations for visas, processes for attaining legal residency and citizenship and enforcement mechanisms to deter surreptitious entry and to police immigration laws.

**Immigrants and Legal Non-Citizens:** A person admitted to the United States as a *legal permanent resident (LPR)*. Permanent residents are also commonly referred to as immigrants; however, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) broadly defines an immigrant as any foreign-born person in the United States, except one legally admitted under specific nonimmigrant categories (INA section 101(a)(15)).

The two basic types of legal aliens are *immigrants* and *non-immigrants*. Immigrants or legal non-citizens are persons admitted as legal permanent residents (LPRs) of the United States. The conditions for the admission of immigrants are much more stringent than non-immigrants, and many fewer immigrants than non-immigrants are admitted. Once admitted, however, immigrants are subject to few restrictions; for example, they may accept and change employment, and may apply for U.S. citizenship through the *naturalization* process, generally after five years.<sup>85</sup>

**Legal Alien:** See *Legal Permanent Resident*.

**Legal Observers:** Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) comprised of more than 80 monitors who have observed actions of the Minutemen. Monitoring is believed to have played a crucial role in preventing abuses and in documenting the activities of Minutemen.

**Legal Permanent Resident (LPR):** A person who has been granted permission to live in the U.S., but who is not yet a citizen. Also known as a green card holder.

**Maquiladora Program:** At the end of the Bracero Program in 1966, the Mexican government was forced to implement this program to alleviate the rising burden of unemployment. The word *maquiladora* comes

from colonial Mexico when “maquila” was the charge that millers collected for processing other people’s grain. Today, the term describe companies that process components imported into Mexico that are later exported, mainly to the U.S. Similar terms include off-shore operation and production sharing.<sup>86</sup>

**Migrants:** People who leave their homes and stay or settle in a different region, either in a foreign country or in a culturally distant section of their native country.

**Nativist:** As used in this document, nativist refers to people who express or organize around anti-immigrant sentiment.

**Naturalization:** The name of the process through which qualifying individuals maintain their status and meet certain other eligibility criteria to become U.S. citizens.

Naturalized citizens gain the right to vote, to petition the government so that certain relatives can join them in the U.S., and to certain government jobs requiring citizenship. Naturalized citizens don’t have to worry about losing immigration status.

All *legal permanent residents (LPRs)* are potential citizens and may become so through the naturalization process, which requires that aliens continuously reside in the U.S. for five years (three years if they are married to U.S. citizens), show they have “good moral character,” demonstrate the ability to read, write, speak and understand English, and pass an exam on U.S. government and history.<sup>87</sup>

**Non-immigrants:** Tourists, foreign students, diplomats, temporary agricultural workers (H-2A visa), exchange visitors, or intra-company business personnel admitted for a specific purpose and a finite period of time. Non-immigrants are required to leave the country when their visas expire, though certain classes of non-immigrants may adjust to LPR status if they otherwise qualify.

**Our Lady of Guadalupe:** The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a religious holiday celebrated on December 12<sup>th</sup>. The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of significant religious

importance to the Mexican identity, and has symbolized the nation since Mexico’s War of Independence.

**Populist:** Refers to political candidates or office holders who appeal to a groundswell of voter sentiment, usually appealing to working class and low-income communities. Populist is also used as an adjective, referring to certain beliefs. Populists can hold progressive or reactionary viewpoints, depending on the historical circumstances. In this document, certain nativist, anti-immigrant beliefs and political tendencies are acknowledged to be populist—they currently are appealing to a groundswell of popular support.

**Posadas: Las Posadas** (Spanish for “The Inns”) is a nine-day celebration beginning December 16 and ending December 24 which is called Noche Buena (“Holy Night”). It is a yearly tradition for many Christian Latin Americans and symbolizes the trials Mary and Joseph endured before finding a place to stay where Jesus could be born. (Luke 2:1-7)

**Refugee:** Under U.S. law, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of nationality by reason of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Under the Refugee Act of 1980, persons whose asylum claim is approved can, after a year, apply for residence.

**Regularization:** Permission granted to reside in the United States to people who once entered illegally or overstayed a temporary visa. People opposed to allowing certain undocumented workers to apply for permanent legal residence refer to the process as ‘amnesty.’ The Government Accountability Office, the research arm of the U.S. Congress prefers this more neutral term to the politically charged term amnesty.

**Seasonal Worker:** See *Guest Worker*.

**Undocumented person or unauthorized worker:** Any person who entered the U.S. without government permission, or having received permission to enter temporarily,

stayed longer than permitted. Since documents are required to prove status, this may include those who are legally entitled to residence, but have lost their papers.

**U.S. Citizen:** Includes everyone born in the U.S., as well as a person born abroad to U.S. citizen parents, or who immigrated to the U.S. and became a “naturalized” citizen.

**Worksite Enforcement:** Actions taken by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) to detain or arrest workers who are suspected of being undocumented.

# Historical Chronology— Changes in U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws

**1790:** Naturalization is authorized for “free white persons” who have resided in the United States for at least two years and swear loyalty to the U.S. Constitution. The racial requirement would remain on the federal books until 1952, although naturalization was opened to certain Asian nationalities in the 1940s.

**1798:** The Alien and Sedition Acts authorize the President to deport any foreigner deemed to be dangerous and make it a crime to speak, write or publish anything “of a false, scandalous and malicious nature” about the President or Congress. An amended Naturalization Act imposes a 14-year residency requirement for prospective citizens; in 1802, Congress reduces the waiting period to five years, a provision that remains today.

**1819:** Reporting Rule adopted. Data begins to be collected on immigration into the U.S. Ships captains and others are required to keep and submit manifests of immigrants entering the U.S.

**1875:** First exclusionary act. Convicts, prostitutes and coolies (Chinese contract laborers) are barred from entry into the U.S. 1882 -The Chinese Exclusion Act suspends immigration by Chinese laborers for 10 years; the measure would be extended and tightened in 1892 and a permanent ban enacted in 1902. This marks the first time the United States has restricted immigration on the basis of race or national origin. In addition, a tax is levied on newly arriving immigrants.

**1885:** Contract laborers entry barred. This new legislation reverses an earlier federal law legalizing the trade in contract labor.

**1891:** To the list of undesirables ineligible for immigration, Congress adds polygamists, “persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous contagious disease,” and those convicted of “a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.” Also, the Office of Immigration is created. (Now known as U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services)

**1892:** Ellis Island opens. Between 1892 and 1953, more than 12 million immigrants will be processed at this one facility.

**1903:** Additional categories are added for persons excluded. Epileptics, professional beggars and anarchists are now excluded.

**1906:** The first language requirement is adopted for naturalization: the ability to speak and understand English.

**1907:** Exclusions are further broadened: Imbeciles, the feeble-minded, tubercular persons, persons with physical or mental defects and persons under 16 without parents are excluded.

**1907-8:** Under a so-called “Gentlemen’s Agreement,” the United States promises not to ban Japanese immigration in exchange for Japan’s pledge not to issue passports to Japanese laborers for travel to the continental United States (although they remain welcome to become agricultural workers in Hawaii). By a separate executive order, President Theodore Roosevelt prohibits secondary migration by Japanese from Hawaii to the mainland.

**1917:** Over President Wilson’s veto, Congress enacts a literacy requirement for all new immigrants: ability to read 40 words in some language. Most significant in limit-

ing the flow of newcomers, it designates Asia as a “barred zone” (excepting Japan and the Philippines) from which immigration will be prohibited.

**1921:** A new form of immigration restriction is born: the national-origins quota system. Admissions from each European country will be limited to three percent of each foreign-born nationality in the 1910 census. The effect is to favor Northern Europeans at the expense of Southern and Eastern Europeans. Immigration from Western Hemisphere nations remains unrestricted; most Asians will continue to face exclusion.

**1924:** Restrictionists’ decisive stroke, the Johnson-Reed Act, embodies the principle of preserving America’s “racial” composition. Immigration quotas will be based on the ethnic makeup of the U.S. population as a whole in 1920. The new national-origins quota system is even more discriminatory than the 1921 version. “America must be kept American,” says President Coolidge as he signs the bill into law. Another provision bans all immigration by persons “ineligible to citizenship”—primarily affecting the Japanese.

**1927:** Immigration Ceiling Further Reduced. The annual immigration ceiling is further reduced to 150,000; the quota is revised to two percent of each nationality’s representation in the 1920 census. This basic law remains in effect through 1965.

**1929:** National Origins Act. The annual immigration ceiling of 150,000 is made permanent, with 70 percent of admissions slated for those coming from Northern and Western Europe, while the other 30 percent are reserved for those coming from Southern and Eastern Europe.

**1943:** To appease a wartime ally, a token quota (105) is created for Chinese immigration. Yet unlike white immigrants, whose quotas depend on country of residence, all persons of “Chinese race” will be counted under the Chinese quota regardless of where they reside.

**1948:** Displaced Persons Act. Entry is allowed for 400,000 persons displaced by World War II. However, such refugees must pass a security check and have proof of employment and housing that does not threaten U.S. citizens’ jobs and homes.

**1950:** The Internal Security Act, enacted over President Truman’s veto, bars admission to any foreigner who might engage in activities “which would be prejudicial to the public interest, or would endanger the welfare or safety of the United States.” It excludes or permits deportation of non-citizens who belong to the U.S. Communist Party or whose future activities might be “subversive to the national security.”

**1952:** The McCarran-Walter Act retains the national-origins quota system and “internal security” restrictions, despite Truman’s opposition. For the first time, however, Congress sets aside minimum annual quotas for all countries, opening the door to numerous nationalities previously kept out on racial grounds. Naturalization now requires ability to read and write, as well as speak and understand, English.

**1965:** The United States finally eliminates racial criteria from its immigration laws. Each country, regardless of ethnicity, will receive an annual quota of 20,000, under a ceiling of 170,000. Up to 120,000 may emigrate from Western Hemisphere nations, which are still not subject to country quotas (an exception Congress would eliminate in 1976).

**1978:** World-wide immigration ceiling introduced. A new annual immigration ceiling of 290,000 replaces the separate ceilings for the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

**1980:** Refugee Act. A system is developed to handle refugees as a class separate from other immigrants. Under the new law, refugees are defined as those who flee a country because of persecution “on account of race, religion, nationality or political opinion.” The president, in consultation with Congress, is authorized to establish an annual ceiling on the number of refugees who may enter the

United States. The president also is allowed to admit any group of refugees in an emergency. At the same time, the annual ceiling on traditional immigration is lowered to 270,000.

**1982:** Stiff sanctions are introduced for employers of illegal aliens.

**1986:** The Immigration Reform and Control Act gives amnesty to approximately three million undocumented residents. For the first time, the law punishes employers who hire persons who are here illegally. The aim of employer sanctions is to make it difficult for the undocumented to find employment. The law has a side effect: employment discrimination against those who look or sound “foreign.”

**1990:** Immigration Act of 1990. The annual immigration ceiling is further raised to 700,000 for 1992, 1993, and 1994; thereafter, the ceiling will drop to 675,000 a year. Ten thousand permanent resident visas are offered to those immigrants agreeing to invest at least \$1 million in U.S. urban areas or \$500,000 in U.S. rural areas. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 is amended so that people can no longer be denied admittance to the United States on the basis of their beliefs, statements or associations.

**1994:** The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is passed by Congress to allow spouses and children of United States citizens or lawful permanent residents (LPR) to self-petition to obtain LPR status. The immigration provisions of VAWA allow certain battered immigrants to file for immigration relief without the abuser’s assistance or knowledge, in order to seek safety and independence from the abuser.

**1996:** A persistent recession in the U.S. in the early 90s, among other reasons, leads to calls for new restrictions on immigration. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act is passed, toughening border enforcement, closing opportunities for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status, and making it more difficult to gain asylum. The law greatly expands the grounds for deporting even long-time law-

ful permanent residents. It strips immigrants of many due process rights and their access to the courts. New income requirements are established for sponsors of legal immigrants. In the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, Congress makes citizenship a condition of eligibility for public benefits for most immigrants.

**1997:** A new Congress mitigates some of the overly harsh restrictions passed by the previous Congress. In the Balanced Budget Agreement with the President, some public benefits are restored for some elderly and disabled immigrants who had been receiving them prior to the 1996 changes. With the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act, Congress provides an opportunity for certain war refugees living in legal limbo to become permanent residents.

**1998:** Congress continues to mitigate some of the nativist provisions passed by the Congress in 1996 by partially restoring access to public benefits for additional groups of legal immigrants. The Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act resolves the legal limbo status of certain Haitian refugees, and allows them to become permanent residents. Responding to the pleas of powerful employer groups, Congress passes the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act, which significantly raises the number of skilled temporary foreign workers U.S. employers are allowed to bring to the U.S.

**2000:** Congress continues to move incrementally in a pro-immigrant direction, passing the compromise Legal Immigration Family Equity Act, which creates a narrow window for immigrants with family or employer sponsors to adjust to legal status in the U.S.; resolves the legal limbo of certain immigrants denied legalization in the mid-1980s; and provides temporary visas for certain family-sponsored immigrants waiting for their green cards. For the second time in three years, Congress significantly raises the ceiling for skilled temporary workers. The Child Citizenship Act grants automatic U.S. citizenship to foreign-born adopted children.

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act provides visas for trafficking and crime victims. Congress modifies the Naturalization law to allow severely disabled immigrants to become citizens even if they cannot understand the Oath of Allegiance.

**2001-2004:** After the attacks on September 11, 2001 Congress enacts that USA PATRIOT Act, which expands the authority to detain, prosecute and remove aliens suspected of terrorism. The executive branch issues a series of new regulations and policies targeting non-citizens. Immigration appeals are restricted, detention policies are expanded and the refugee resettlement system is temporarily halted while new security procedures are implemented.

**Sources:** Ellis Cose, *A Nation of Strangers: Prejudice, Politics, and the Populating of America* (New York: Morrow, 1992); James Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of "English Only"* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992); Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1950* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2d ed. (New Brunswick, N J : Rutgers University Press, 1988); Maldwyn Allen Jones, *American Immigration*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); The Close Up Foundation: U.S. Immigration Policy [www.closeup.org](http://www.closeup.org). Chronology originally prepared by James Crawford for the National Immigration Forum, 2003 and used with permission from Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights.



# Unraveling the Guest Worker Programs

## Part A: A Nation of Guests with No Enforceable Workplace Rights— A Gift to Industry Americans Can't Afford

Over the years the U.S. has periodically created programs to import seasonal workers to fill avowed worker shortages in particular sectors of the economy. These workers, brought on a temporary basis, are referred to as guest workers. Traditionally, guest workers are treated as a second-class workforce, denied rights and used to depress wages and inflate profits. Therefore IWJ is deeply concerned about proposals to expand guest worker programs.



From 1942 until 1964 the Bracero program resulted in thousands of Mexicans migrating to the U.S. to perform farm labor.

Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) recognizes and affirms the fact that America is a nation of immigrants. IWJ supports immigration programs that allow workers from other countries to access temporary jobs where real labor shortages exist, but guest workers must have full rights afforded workers in the U.S. and a path

to achieving legal permanent resident status and eventual citizenship. And companies that claim a labor shortage must prove shortages are not the result of substandard wages and benefits.

A large new guest worker program, driven by the business community, is back on the congressional agenda in 2007. Guest worker programs allow companies with self-proclaimed labor shortages to annually import hundreds of thousands of temporary workers to fill jobs in all sectors of the American economy. Some temporary worker visa programs require companies to formally attest to a labor shortage. However, there is no genuine requirement to recruit U.S. workers.<sup>88</sup>

America's history with guest worker programs is ugly. Post-World War II employer abuse of Bracero workers (1942-1964) is well substantiated. Bracero workers, often brought to the U.S. to replace striking American workers, were forced to sign work contracts that they could not read or understand. Their working and living conditions were horrific. Ten percent of their pay was withheld for retrieval upon their return to Mexico. Once returned, they were never able to collect that pay. Egregious exploitation and workplace violations by employers of foreign-born contingent workers continue to this day.

American workers have become the victims of the transformation of good jobs into temporary ones. Most guest worker programs require companies to at least formally attest that American workers are unavailable to fill the vacant positions. Companies that claim worker shortages really mean they "can't find Americans to work at extremely low wages and under terribly poor working conditions."<sup>89</sup>

Reforming immigration policy to ensure equity for workers is one of the Govern-

ment Accountability Office's (GAO) top 2007 recommendations for congressional oversight.<sup>90</sup> The GAO recently chided the U.S. Department of Labor for the harmful impact (to native and foreign-born workers alike) of its lax oversight of guest worker programs. In another report on the impact of guest workers on the U.S. workforce, the GAO found that federal agencies' failure to comprehensively track the number and job status of guest workers in the U.S. disallows calculating their real impact on unemployed American workers.

Many of the 18 categories of temporary work visas granted in the United States for guest workers have no annual numeric limit.<sup>91</sup> Worker rights advocates assert that guest worker programs too often bypass an available workforce and take advantage of the lack of freedom of guest workers, undermining labor protections for working Americans.<sup>92</sup>

Many U.S. guest worker visas are issued for low-skilled workers. For example, an unlimited annual number of agricultural workers enter under the H-2A program.<sup>93</sup> The annual 66,000 cap in the H-2B program (for nonagricultural workers such as landscapers, roofers, laborers, and meatpacking plant workers) has been virtually ignored since 2003.<sup>94</sup>

Guest worker programs that target skilled professional workers, such as the H-1B program, are not required to substantiate a shortage of available native-born or legal permanent resident workers. Developed at a time when the high-tech industry complained about a huge impending shortage of information technology workers, this program allows companies to import foreign workers "even when a qualified U.S. worker wants the job, *and* a U.S. worker can be displaced from the job in favor of the foreign worker."<sup>95</sup>

Guest workers of all types are vulnerable to wage theft and unsafe working conditions. If they complain about either or try to join a union for protection, they risk being fired and blacklisted. Since their visa status is dependent on employment, once out of work they are subject to deportation.<sup>96</sup> Thus most guest workers have no means of enforcing their

employment and labor rights. For example:

- The Department of Labor continues to approve guest worker applications from employers that repeatedly violate workers' rights, including illegal firings.<sup>97</sup>
- Federally funded legal services programs charged with representing extremely low-income people are prohibited from bringing class action lawsuits and are prohibited by law from representing H-2B workers.<sup>98</sup>
- Few private attorneys are interested in defending migrant workers because no provision exists for winning plaintiffs to obtain attorneys' fees.
- H-2A agricultural guest workers are not even protected by the U.S. Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.<sup>99</sup>

There may be shortages of workers in some sectors of the economy. Yet the massive expansion of guest worker programs under congressional consideration—hundreds of thousands of guest workers imported annually to work in both the public and private sectors—would codify basic changes in American society. A recent statement of the AFL-CIO said, "We are not a nation of 'guests', but a nation of citizens." To create a permanent two-tier workforce, with non-U.S. workers given second-class guest worker status, would be repugnant to our ideals and disastrous for the living standards of working families.<sup>100</sup>

IWJ supports alternatives to hugely expanded guest worker programs, based on addressing the real deficiencies in the U.S. economy in training people for work and valuing workers' contributions and dignity.

- All workers deserve a living wage. Raising wages in sectors where worker shortages are real would eliminate any shortages in the long run.
- U.S. workers made redundant by off-shoring should be guaranteed retraining opportunities.
- Quality education/training programs for youth, particularly targeting historically

underemployed populations, including African Americans, must be tied to real jobs and career ladders.

These important steps would eliminate the supposed need to import temporary workers with no rights to replace permanent workers with rights. Immigrant workers should stand side by side with U.S. workers with full rights and protections.

## **Part B: Guest Worker Programs**

**H2-A:** Issued to people admitted to the United States to perform agricultural work. The U.S. Department of Labor has statutory authority to enforce prevailing wage and working conditions for these workers.

**H2-B:** Issued to people admitted to perform unskilled non-agricultural labor. Worker abuse is rampant under this visa category where employers simply attest that conditions of employment will not adversely affect U.S. workers. No remedy exists for H-2B workers who do not receive prevailing wage or work in unsafe conditions.

**H1-B:** Granted for three years and one possible three-year extension. After that the H1-B visa holder must remain outside the U.S. for one year before another H1-B petition can be approved. H1-B visa holders are permitted to adjust their status to acquire a permanent residence visa. Spouse and children under age 21 are permitted to enter the U.S. with an H-4 visa, which does not permit them to work. U.S. citizens and green card holders (permanent residents) are not permitted to apply for H1-B jobs. Current law limits the number of new annual entrants to 65,000.

**H1-B1:** Issued to applicants to work in specialty occupations that normally require a baccalaureate or higher degree, although there are exceptions. Both the U.S. employer and the intended worker must apply and be approved. This visa was created by Congress as part of its approval of the United States-Chile Free Trade Agreement and the United States Singapore Free Trade Agreement.

**E-3:** Like the H-1B program except it is restricted to 10,500 new Australian professionals annually seeking work in specialty occupations (generally requiring a B.A. or more education) in the U.S. Initially valid for two years with a two-year extension, E-3 visas can be renewed indefinitely.<sup>101</sup>

**Temporary Protected Visa (TPV):** An immigration status that allows persons who are already in the United States from foreign countries approved by the Secretary of Homeland Security to remain in the U.S. as long as the country maintains its designation. People in this category are authorized to work with a permit and to travel in and out of the U.S. with permission. A TPV is granted to people from three categories: countries undergoing armed conflict; countries with environmental disaster or an epidemic; or other conditions that would pose harm to people who return to the country.

*Source: Except for the citation above, the source of information about H1-B, H1-B1, and E-3 visas is the Employment and Training Administration section of the U.S. Department of Labor Web site.*



# U.S. Immigration and Customs Agency: Deportations and Raids

## ICE announces three-fold increase in apprehensions of “illegal workers” in FY2006 as compared with FY2005.

| Estimated Date | # workers arrested | City/State   | Company &/or Type  | Place of Arrest                                     | Type of Work | SPECIAL NOTES (& country of origin)                              |
|----------------|--------------------|--|--|---|--------------|--|
| 12/12/2006     | 1,282              | Greeley, CO;<br>Grand Island, NE;<br>Cactus, TX;<br>Hyrum, UT;<br>Marshalltown, IA;<br>Worthington, MN | Swift & Co.  | 6 facilities  | meatpacking  | Operation Wagon Train—largest worksite enforcement raid to date. |
| 10/3/2006      | 28                 | Barker, NY   | Torrey Farms   | at farm   | agricultural | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 9/1/2006       | 38                 | Caguas, Puerto Rico  | Cue & Lopez Contractors, Inc.  | construction worksite                               | construction | <b>Dominican Republic</b>  |
| 8/30/2006      | 34                 | Tanawanda, NY  | Fortistar Hydroponic Tomato Greenhouse                               | Fortistar Hydroponic Tomato Greenhouse              | unknown      | ICE collaboration with Igs from DOL and Soc. Sec. Admin          |
| 8/30/2006      | 55                 | Tallahassee, FL  | General Building Maintenance, Inc (contracted by State of FL)        | at worksite   | janitorial   | <b>Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala</b>                            |
| 8/29/2006      | 15                 | Roswell, NM  | unnamed military subcontractor - aircraft painting (Lockheed Martin) | arrested while painting on site                     | painting     | <b>Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala</b>                         |
| 8/10/2006      | 41                 | Hamburt, NY  | unnamed cleaning company subcontractor                               | America's Fair - Erie County Fair Facility          | cleaners     | <b>Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, and Honduras</b>                     |
| 8/2/2006       | 51                 | Sulphur, OK  | Billy Cooke's Harness & Saddle Company                               | worksite  | unknown      | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 7/28/2006      | 3                  | Gulf Port, MS  | unknown subcontractor  | Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport                    | unknown      | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 7/18/2006      | 58                 | Ft. Bragg, NC  | unknown  | security entry point at Ft. Bragg Army installation | unknown      |  |

| Estimated Date | # workers arrested | City/State   | Company &/or Type                     | Place of Arrest                              | Type of Work                                | SPECIAL NOTES (& country of origin)  |
|----------------|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 6/28/2006      | 22                 | San Diego, CA  | Burtech Pipeline                      | Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base             | engineering company                         |  |
| 6/14/2006      | 55                 | Washington, DC   | 2 unnamed construction companies      | as bus entered airport security check point  | construction                                | <b>Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Bolivia</b>   |
| 6/8/2006       | 11                 | Wichita, KS  | Kansas Can and American Can Companies | scrap metal yards - 3 sites                  | scrap metal yard                            | <b>Mexican and Cuban</b>   |
| 5/26/2006      | 25                 | Memphis, TN  | Lucite Intl. & Arkema Co.             | Memphis Area Industrial Park—chemical plants | unknown                                     | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 5/23/2006      | 29                 | Oceanside, CA  | Standard Drywall Co.                  | arrested at their homes                      | Worksite = Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base | same day news release pitches increased funding for basic pilot (employer verification program) and investigative agents. <b>Mexico &amp; Honduras</b> |
| 5/19/2006      | 34                 | Buffalo, NY  | unnamed nursery                       | worksite                                     | landscape                                   |  |
| 5/16/2006      | 8                  | Los Angeles, CA  | Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power    | worksite                                     | utility company                             | <b>Ethiopia, Nigeria, El Salvador, Mexico, and the Philippines</b>   |
| 5/11/2006      | 9                  | St. Josephs, MO  | Julio's Mexican Restaurant            | eatery                                       | restaurant                                  | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 5/9/2006       | 93                 | Kebron, Union and Florence KY  | Fischer Homes Construction            | 3 construction sites                         | construction                                | Leading builder in Indiana, KY and Ohio <b>Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras</b>   |
| 4/27/2006      | 12                 | Cedar Falls, IA  | Julio's Mexican Restaurant            | eatery                                       | restaurant                                  | <b>Mexican</b>   |
| 4/20/2006      | 1,187              | 25 states (AL, AZ, AR, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, LA, MA, MI, MN, MS, NJ, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, TN, TX, SC, VA, UT) | IFCO Systems North America, Inc.      | 40 IFCO plants in 26 states                  | pallet services company                     | multiple state and federal agencies. (53% of firm's workers had mismatched soc. Sec #s)  |
| 4/2/2006       | 66                 | Orlando, FL  | unnamed company                       | Construction site - Orlando Courthouse       | construction                                |  |

| Estimated Date | # workers arrested | City/State       | Company &/or Type   | Place of Arrest  | Type of Work  | SPECIAL NOTES (& country of origin)   |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|---|--|---|---|
| 3/13/2006      | 57                 | Philadelphia, PA | Super Bright Car Wash   | 4 car wash sites (PA and NJ)                               | car wash  | Investigation conducted by ICE Identity & Benefit Fraud Task Force (comprised of ICE, U.S. DOL & Soc. Sec. Admin. special agents).<br><b>Ecuador &amp; Mexico</b> |
| 2/22/2006      | 56                 | Carthage, MO     | Reich Installation Services Inc., and Top Flight Construction | Sreiber Foods Construction Site                            | construction  |   |
| 2/10/2006      | 9                  | Kenner, LA       | unnamed subcontractor   | overnight at Dugway Proving Ground 80 miles SW of facility | Chemical military testing site operated by DOD.                               |   |
| 12/13/2005     | 14                 | Kenner, LA       | Golden Seal Restoration Co                                    | Greater New Orleans Industrial Education Council           | Scheduled to repair oil refinery owned by Conoco Phillips in Belle Chase, LA. |   |
| 12/4/2005      | 20                 | Kenner, LA       | unnamed contractor  |  | allegedly provided workers for New Orleans Intl. Airport and VA Hospital      |   |
| 12/2/2005      | 22                 | Albuquerque, NM  | 6 unnamed subcontractors                                      | Kirtland Air Force Base Housing Project                    |   |   |

(Information compiled by Interfaith Worker Justice, Public Policy Department, 1/15/07.) Sources include:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Web site, "ICE arrests 10 illegal aliens working at Chicago restaurant, January 10, 2007, available at [www.ice.gov/pi/news/newsreleases/articles/070110chicago.htm](http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/newsreleases/articles/070110chicago.htm).

ICE reports arresting 4,300 workers during worksite enforcement raids in 2006 compared to 1,145 worker arrests made during ICE's 2005 workplace raids.

Fact Sheet: Select Homeland Security Accomplishments for 2006, December 29, 2006 [http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr\\_1167404984182.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1167404984182.shtm)

# Understanding the Legislative Process<sup>102</sup>

## Part A: Drafting a Bill

Anyone may draft a bill; however, only members of Congress can introduce legislation, and by doing so become the sponsor(s). There are four basic types of legislation: bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions and simple resolutions. The official legislative process begins when a bill or resolution is numbered—H.R. signifies a House bill and S. a Senate bill—referred to a committee and printed by the Government Printing Office.

### Step 1. Referral to Committee:

With few exceptions, bills are referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure.

### Step 2. Committee Action:

When a bill reaches a committee it is placed on the committee's calendar. A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. It is at this point that a bill is examined carefully and its chances for passage are determined. If the committee does not act on a bill, it is the equivalent of killing it.

### Step 3. Subcommittee Review:

Often, bills are referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings. Hearings provide the opportunity to put on the record the views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents of the legislation. Testimony can be given in person or submitted as a written statement.

### Step 4. Mark Up:

When the hearings are completed, the subcommittee may meet to “mark up” the bill, that is, make changes and amendments prior to recommending the bill to the full committee. If a subcommittee votes not to report legislation to the full committee, the bill dies.

### Step 5. Committee Action to Report A Bill:

After receiving a subcommittee's report on a bill, the full committee can conduct further study and hearings, or it can vote on the subcommittee's recommendations and any proposed amendments. The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called “ordering a bill reported.”

### Step 6. Publication of a Written Report:

After a committee votes to have a bill reported, the committee chairman instructs staff to prepare a written report on the bill. This report describes the intent and scope of the legislation, impact on existing laws and programs, position of the executive branch and views of dissenting members of the committee.

### Step 7. Scheduling Floor Action:

After a bill is reported back to the chamber where it originated, it is placed in chronological order on the calendar. In the House there are several different legislative calendars, and the Speaker and majority leader largely determine if, when and in what order bills come up. In the Senate there is only one legislative calendar.

### **Step 8. Debate:**

When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, there are rules or procedures governing the debate on legislation. These rules determine the conditions and amount of time allocated for general debate.

### **Step 9. Voting:**

After the debate and the approval of any amendments, the bill is passed or defeated by the members voting.

### **Step 10. Referral to Other Chamber:**

When a bill is passed by the House or the Senate it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route through committee and floor action. This chamber may approve the bill as received, reject it, ignore it or change it.

### **Step 11. Conference Committee Action:**

If only minor changes are made to a bill by the other chamber, it is common for the legislation to go back to the first chamber

for concurrence. However, when the actions of the other chamber significantly alter the bill, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the differences between the House and

Senate versions. If the conferees are unable to reach agreement, the legislation dies. If agreement is reached, a conference report is prepared describing the committee members' recommendations for changes. Both the House and the Senate must approve of the conference report.

### **Step 12. Final Actions:**

After a bill has been approved by both the House and Senate in identical form, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the legislation he signs it and

it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for 10 days, while Congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill he can veto it; or, if he takes no action after the Congress has adjourned its second session, it is a "pocket veto" and the legislation dies.

### **Step 13. Overriding a Veto:**

If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to "override the veto." This requires a two-thirds roll call vote of the members who are present in sufficient numbers for a quorum.

## **Part B: Visiting Capitol Hill**

Meeting with a member of Congress or congressional staff is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. Below are some suggestions to consider when planning a visit to a congressional office.

### **Plan Your Visit Carefully:**

Be clear about what it is you want to achieve; determine in advance which member or committee staff you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.

### **Make an Appointment:**

When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler. Explain your purpose and who you represent. It is easier for congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member.

### **Be Prompt and Patient:**

When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a Congressman or Congresswoman to be late, or to have a meeting interrupted, due to the member's crowded schedule. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. When the opportunity presents itself, continue your meeting with a member's staff.

### **Be Prepared:**

Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials supporting your position. Members are required to take



Interfaith Worker Justice staff celebrate the passage of the Illinois minimum-wage increase with U.S. Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL).

positions on many different issues. In some instances, a member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is therefore helpful to share with the member information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

### **Be Political:**

Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. If possible, describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him/her. Where it is appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment.

### **Be Responsive:**

Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested.

## **Part C: Congressional Staff Roles**

Each member of Congress has staff to assist him/her during a term in office. To be most effective in communicating with Congress, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of key staff.

### **Commonly Used Titles:**

#### **1. Administrative Assistant or Chief of Staff:**

The Administrative Assistant reports directly to the member of Congress. He/she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The Administrative Assistant is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

#### **2. Legislative Director, Senior Legislative Assistant or Legislative Coordinator:**

The Legislative Director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some congressional offices there are several Legislative Assistants and responsibilities are assigned to staff with particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health issues, environmental matters, taxes, etc.

#### **3. Press Secretary or Communications Director:**

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the member, his/her constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to most effectively promote the member's views or position on specific issues.

#### **4. Appointment Secretary, Personal Secretary or Scheduler:**

The Appointment Secretary is usually responsible for allocating a member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements and constituent requests. The Appointment Secretary may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

#### **5. Caseworker:**

The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the member's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There are often several Caseworkers in a congressional office.

## 6. Other Staff Titles:

Other titles used in a congressional office may include: Executive Assistant, Legislative Correspondent, Executive Secretary, Office Manager and Receptionist.

## Part D: Contacting Congress

Heightened security measures have dramatically increased the time it takes for a letter sent by post to reach the offices of federal or state legislators. More and more, citizens are using e-mails and faxes to communicate their concerns and increasingly elected officials' offices prefer electronic communications for constituent contact. As a general rule, Members of Congress are far more likely to heed your message if you are one of their constituents. The following tips aim to improve the effectiveness of your correspondence, regardless of the means you choose to deliver your message. State your purpose for writing in the first sentence of the letter. For example: As your constituent, I am writing to urge your support for increased funding for health care.

If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it. And make sure that you are referencing the correct legislation to the correct body of Congress. House bills are H.R.\_\_\_\_\_; Senate bills are designated as S.\_\_\_\_\_. It is also important to know the status of the bill.

Be courteous.

If appropriate, include personal information about why the issue matters to you to make your point.

Address only one issue in each e-mail.

Close your letter with a restatement of your purpose and indicate the response that you expect.

*Resources Consulted: Civic Dialogue Facilitator Information Sheet (2005). See [www.wellstone.org](http://www.wellstone.org).*

### Tips For Phoning Congress

Telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment.

After identifying yourself as a constituent, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative [Name] that I support/oppose [S.\_\_\_\_\_/H.R.\_\_\_\_]."

State your reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call.

### Addressing Your Correspondence to a Senator:

The Honorable [Jimmy Stewart]  
\_\_\_\_(room number)\_\_\_\_\_(name of) Senate Office  
Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [Stewart]:

### Addressing Your Correspondence to a Representative:

The Honorable [Jimmy Stewart]  
\_\_\_\_(room number)\_\_\_\_\_(name of) House Office  
Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative [Stewart]:



# Organizing a Community Dialogue Session<sup>103</sup>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a house party or a community dialogue session?

A community dialogue session is a way for local RESULTS groups and other members of the community to come together and discuss issues such as education, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), federal nutrition assistance programs, and health care.

### Why organize one?

Outreach is an important part of RESULTS' work and community dialogue sessions promote discussion of important issues and can clear up confusion about government programs or legislation. These events are also less time intensive than organizing a larger community forum and can be a good time for your group to focus solely on one issue.

### Who would I invite?

It is up to you who you want to invite. You could keep the session limited to RESULTS members or open it up to others in your community who may have differing opinions but could bring new perspectives, ideas and experiences to the discussion.

### What would we discuss?

It is up to you and your local RESULTS group to choose an issue to discuss. Choosing one of RESULTS' major domestic campaigns that is of particular interest to your group or community may be a good place to start.

### How much time would this take?

Your community dialogue session could be

as simple or complex as you want. It is up to you how much time and energy you want to commit.

## Quick Steps for Organizing a Community Dialogue

### Find a location

For a small group, you may want to host the event in your home or at a local coffee shop or diner. For larger gatherings, you may want to reserve space at a library, community center, school or church.

### Decide whom to invite

It is up to you whether or not you want to limit the group to existing RESULTS members and close friends and colleagues or open it to a wider audience. Keeping the group small may allow you to have more control however your event will have a greater impact if you invite people with differing opinions.

### Invite people to attend

Being personally invited to an event always produces a larger group. The best strategy may be to send a written or e-mail invitation and then follow up with a phone call or invite members in person. Use posters, fliers and online Web postings if you want to generally get the word out.

### Get necessary materials

You may want to use an article, book or short video as the basis for your discussion. If so, be sure to make copies for people or send out information on how they can acquire the materials themselves.

## Set up the room

Set up the room so that everyone feels included in the discussion. Put chairs in a circle so people can properly see and hear each other. Refreshments help create a comfortable setting. You could serve light refreshments yourself or ask everyone to bring a dish or beverage to pass.

## Host the community dialogue

Gather people together and let the discussion begin. The ideal number for a group in which everyone is included in the discussion is eight to 10. If there are more than 14 participants, break into two groups and appoint a facilitator for the second group.

## Report back to the RESULTS' national office

The national office is interested in hearing about your community dialogue session. Learning about what worked and did not work for your group will help staff improve resources and guide future groups. Contact Meredith Dodson at (202) 783-7100.

### SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT

**Below is an example of what could be sent out via e-mail or placed on community calendars or in church bulletins:**

RESULTS, a grassroots citizens' lobby dedicated to creating the public and political will to end hunger and poverty, will be hosting a community dialogue session on health care.

Please join us as we examine the need for a national health plan in the U.S. This discussion will take place at *date/time/location*.

Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ with questions.

Refreshments will be served.

## Sample Agenda

**Topic:** Why does the US need a national health plan?

### Welcome (20 min)

- Greet everyone as they arrive.
- Serve light refreshments.
- Thank people for attending.
- Explain the purpose and agenda of the session.
- Ask each person to provide brief intro.
- Give brief summary of RESULTS.

### Discussion (40 min)

- Have one person introduce the topic and general guidelines for the discussion.
- As a group, discuss some of the pros and cons of our current health care system.
- Discuss what each person would like to see in a new and improved health system.
- Think about whether or not those ideals are achieved through some of the current plans for a national health plan — single payer, individual mandate, expanded Medicare, etc.

### Closing and take action (20 min)

- Thank everyone for attending and talk about ways the group may want to continue the discussion.
- Write to members of Congress and encourage them to support legislation that moves us in the direction of a national health care plan.

# Stories of Immigrants

## The Hassan / Ahmed Family<sup>104</sup>

Mohammed Hassan and his family fled the war in Somalia in 1992, when Mohammed was four. He and five older sisters came to the United States with their father, but were separated from their mother during the war. She and her oldest daughter, Sadia, went to a refugee camp in Kenya, where Sadia's baby, Ruqia, was born. In November of 1996, after four long years, Sadia and Ruqia joined the others in Chicago. Mohammed, his sister, Mulki, and his mother Amina Ahmed, told their stories several months later when Mohammed was in fourth grade and Mulki was a freshman in high school.

### Mohammed Hassan

I was born in Mogadishu. What I remember is the water. If you want water, you take a rope with a bucket and put it down a hole and then pull it up.

I was too little to go to school so my mom was just holding me. It was very hot in Somalia. Sometimes it rained all the time. We lived far from the ocean. We lived in a big house made out of rocks.

I was too little to see any fighting. I was three. We would play hide and seek. I liked it there. Auntie still lives there with my cousins. I would like to go back. It was sunny and everything was fresh. My dad had a garden. Doctors were all free.

We would go and see my uncle's two camels. We kept a goat. It had a baby, but the dog ate it. We don't touch a dog. It is against our religion.

I was scared when I had to leave Somalia. I had to leave my mother. I remember crying.

We took three airplanes, and it took three days. Five hundred people were taking the airplane. My dad worked for the United Nations and the UN people helped us.

When we first moved to Chicago, we had 24 people related to us living there. I played with cars. I like toys like cars and motorcycles. When I get older, I will drive a car all around. I like Chicago, but not that much. I don't like the gangsters.

I help around the house. I make my bed. I wash the bathroom every Saturday. I take out the garbage. My favorite food is McDonald's hamburger, french fries and vanilla milkshake. I go ice skating on Saturdays.

I like school. It is important. I like math the best. I like Ayaz. He is my best friend and gave me a calculator. I do not like T.V. I just like to study. I want to be a doctor. I'll need to see people's tongues with a stick. I want to be an ear, eyes and throat doctor with older people. I think I can make it.

When I get older I will marry at eighteen.

My mom came to Chicago on November 22, 1996. I didn't know about it. It was a big surprise. She hugged and kissed me, and she cried and I cried. I was so surprised and so happy. We had a party, the biggest party in the world. Everybody loves our mom. I was so little that I didn't remember her, but now I am very happy.

### Mulki Hassan (Mohammed's Sister)

I went to school in Mogadishu. It was a crowded city. I liked it there, because it was

always hot and we never had to wear jackets. I walked to school. It was in back of our house. I studied Arabic, math and art. They made us lunch, sometimes spaghetti or rice or sandwiches. I was happy.

Then trouble started. I was about 10 then. Soldiers could come and shoot you and take what they wanted. They pushed you, messed up stuff and took money. They were young. They trashed stuff. We couldn't sleep. It was so noisy and guns were all over. They had grenades. My big sister's husband died there.

We had to stop going to school. We went shopping once and never went back. My dad would go out and get stuff. It was very dangerous. Then we had to leave fast. We couldn't bring anything—just the clothes we were wearing. I was scared.

We went on foot. My dad took us to Medina—to our cousin's house. My mom stayed to watch the house with my sister.



The Hassan/Ahmed family after immigrating to the United States.

Then we went in a truck to Kenya, but not my mom. We were so worried about her. My mom thought she would never see us again, and we thought we would never see her.

We stayed in Nairobi, in Kenya, for a month. My dad knew people, but we didn't want to stay. It wasn't safe.

Then we got on a plane. That was scary too, when it goes up and down. We were dreaming of coming to America, and our dreams came true.

We were shocked by snow and cold. The first time we saw downtown, it was awesome.

When we went to school, nobody was from Somalia. Everyone stared, but they were nice. I was in fifth grade. I was in bi-lingual, and it took me two years to learn English. There were a lot of kids who were talking to me,

but I just shook my head because I couldn't understand. Then I made friends with some Puerto Rican girls.

We never heard from my mom, not for a long time. I didn't know if she was ok, if she was alive. When she came last November, Mohammed didn't remember her, he didn't know her name. I really missed my mom.

I want to be a nurse—whenever there's a problem, I can help.

We go to mosque together on Friday—the women sit on one side, the men on the other. On Sundays we go from nine in the morning until one. We don't date or go out with boys. If a man wants to come to your house, he asks your parents. I don't want to date. I go to school and come straight home. I should be getting married when I'm 20. I could wait until 25, but 30 is too old. My mom got married when she was 15 and had my sister at 16.

### **Amina Ahmed (Mohammed's Mother)**

I used to live in Mogadishu with my former husband and my children. We had a farm between Afgoi and Merca. We grew maize and sesame, which we sold in our grocery store. I helped manage the store with the sons of my husband's other wife. My husband worked for the American Embassy for 32 years, helping foreign workers get used to living in Somalia. I lived in our big six bedroom house from the time I got married at age 15. We had a good life.

The war started little by little in the north of Somalia. Nobody tried to get out. We didn't know the war would be so big. Then we had to flee our house—once in 1990, and again in 1992. The fighters were mostly people from the countryside who had guns. They came to the city to take anything they could, like money and jewels. When the war started in Mogadishu, my husband took the children to safety. They left by truck and went to the border with Kenya. Foreigners, especially those who worked for the U.N., were airlifted to safety by helicopter.

I stayed behind to protect the house, but I was scared because the gunmen tried to kill

people who stayed in their houses. My oldest daughter Sadia, who was pregnant with Ruqia, stayed behind too. When we saw a lot of artillery fire we ran out. We escaped with nothing, not even pictures. I lost everything in the house. Sadia's husband and my brother were killed.

After leaving my house, I went to Medina, but when I got there, I heard that my husband and kids had left and gone to Mandera, Kenya, near the border. I walked 15 days to reach Mandera. When I got to Mandera I rejoined Sadia, but the rest of the family had already left. I was always just missing my family. I had so many problems on the trip. I didn't have any money, and I was scared of being killed and never seeing my kids again. I never dreamed I'd be with them in the U.S.

We went to a refugee camp in Mandera. Four months after leaving our house, I spoke to my family by phone and learned they were safe in the U.S. From Mandera we went to the refugee camp in Mombasa, Kenya, where Sadia's baby was born. We lived there for a long time. I had contact with my family in the U.S., but I was afraid I would never see them again.

After three years in Mombasa, my daughter, Hawa, called me from the United States and told me she was going to sponsor us to come here. We were so happy! I cried when the whole family met us at O'Hare Airport. I hadn't seen my children for four years.

## The Quiroz Family<sup>105</sup>

Yadira and Ivan's parents came to the United States from Michoacan, Mexico, when their mother was 19 and their father was 18. Although they had grown up in the same small town, they did not meet until they were living in Chicago. They were married a year later. Yadira and Ivan were born in Chicago, and every year the family travels to Mexico to visit their relatives. These stories were told in spring of 2001 when Yadira was 12 and in sixth grade, and Ivan was 10 and in fourth grade.

## Yadira and Ivan Quiroz

**Yadira:** We were born in Chicago. We go to Mexico once a year and stay for a few weeks once school is out. Both my mom's parents and my dad's mom live there. We stay with my dad's mom. At first in Mexico, we were lonely. We only had each other. But after just a day, we got along with our cousins and had fun.

**Ivan:** In Mexico, we sometimes speak English to each other and people on the street look at us. Here we speak Spanish with my mom and English with my dad.

**Yadira:** It's pretty in Mexico because it's warm and there's more space. It doesn't seem so crowded. My mom's mom used to have a lot of pets—a little pink rabbit, pigeons, roosters, turkeys—but not any more.

**Ivan:** They have lemon trees, avocado trees, cactus, sugar cane, pomegranates. We eat them with lemon and salt. My mom's dad told me to catch a hummingbird once, but I couldn't because it was way too fast. We go with my mom's family on trips. Once we went real far on a bus to Mexico City to see a church. It took six hours. We left at four in the morning.

**Yadira:** We had to walk from the house to the bus and it was scary because we had to go by some cemeteries. It was dark and my dad tried to scare us.

**Ivan:** In Mexico you can go places by yourself because there are no bad things there. Here I once got to go to the Davis Theater with just two friends.

**Yadira:** Here I can only go to the store by myself during the day. I can't go to my friends because it is too far.

**Ivan:** My best friend here is Francisco. He's from Mexico too. And Kong is my friend, he's Asian. I like to play kickball with my friends.

**Yadira:** My dad has a soccer team. Sometimes we go to watch him play, but not all the time because he goes so early. We go to arcades

with our dad and to Old Country Buffet with our grandpa. He lives upstairs.

**Ivan:** I like art too. I like to watch my dad paint. Sometimes my dad cooks at home. He cooks Mexican here but not at work. He always tries to do different things to recipes. I cook for my mom and dad or for myself. I make eggs and soup from a package. I'm going to have my dad show me how to cook like he does. When I get older, I want to be like my dad, drawing and cooking.

**Yadira:** I like to play the piano. I had lessons but I quit. I still practice sometimes. I want to go to college, probably somewhere away from Chicago. I'd like to go to Spain to study and live. I knew a girl who got a scholarship to go there. I'd like that.

### **Maria and Martin Quiroz (Mother and Father of Ivan and Yazira)**

**Martin:** I was born in Michoacan in Ciudad Hidalgo, a small town not far from of Mexico City. We were very poor. I started working when I was 10. I did whatever, washing cars, carpentry. When I was 14, my father left for the United States. He had problems getting work here, and we continued having economic problems in Mexico. I went to school until the second year of high school. I had to leave school because we needed money. I had five younger sisters and I was the only male. My mother didn't work.

**Maria:** I'm from Ciudad Hidalgo, too, but we didn't know each other there. Our fathers knew each other and his uncle was a friend of my uncle.

I studied until my third year of high school. Then I stopped because there were seven more children in my family who needed to go to school. In Mexico you have to pay for books, uniforms, everything. I thought I should get a job to help my family and let someone else go to school.

My aunt and uncle had gone to the United States. When my grandmother died my uncle came home. I was working and I started thinking about coming to the U.S. to earn more money. My idea was that I would work

to bring the others here. My uncle asked permission to bring me back with him. My parents said, "No, no" because I was a woman. It is very dangerous for a woman, and I was only 17. Finally when I was 19, they said yes, but I didn't have any money to go. I was working in a purse factory. The owners were very nice. They lent me money and my sister who had just married lent me money she got for her wedding.

The economic situation in Mexico is so difficult. There is very little work and the families are large, with eight or 10 children. When people started hearing about success stories in the United States, that there were jobs and opportunities, everybody started to look for how they could come.

**Martin:** People cross the border on foot with help from someone you pay to get you across safely. We call them coyotes. I was 18. It was 1983. I came to live with my father who was in Chicago. I had his telephone number with me—if I lost it, I would have nothing. I arrived in Los Angeles. And the coyote was waiting for his money, but I didn't have any. At first, I couldn't reach my father because he wasn't home.

**Maria:** I went with my uncle's brother-in-law and Martin's uncle. We took a bus for three days to the border. We got to the house of the coyote. We arrived in the morning and had to wait until night. There were five vans with 25 people in each one. Each van went a little different way—they couldn't all go the same way or it would be too obvious. The first four vans crossed the border and got through without a problem. The fifth van didn't and I was on the fifth van. As soon as we crossed there were helicopters and police and patrols circling us. We were sent back to Mexico that day.

That night we tried again to cross and we made it. But this was only the first part. There are a lot of checkpoints between the border and San Diego and Los Angeles and we had to get through those checkpoints. They don't stop all the cars, but they stop some. They ask if you are a resident of the U.S. and they ask to see your papers. They check through

the car. That's why the coyote charges. He takes you where they don't stop you, along the water or in the mountains. If they find you, everybody goes back to Mexico and the drivers go to jail.

We were in a trailer with 110 people—children, adults and some little babies. We rode in the trailer for a few hours. Then we stopped and were waiting for a half an hour. With



The Quiroz family immigrated to Chicago from Mexico.

110 people, the air supply gets short. The children and babies started to cry. Some adults began to get hysterical, banging on the sides of the trailer saying, "Just get us out. It doesn't matter if we go back. I can't take anymore, let us out." They didn't let anyone leave.

We arrived at a farm with horses. There were more people waiting there, too. We didn't know whose ranch this was. We only went where they took us. We stayed in the stables for two or three nights. There were so many people and not enough food. It didn't happen to me but it was said that other women were attacked by men who were there. Finally I was able to speak to my uncle in Chicago. He sent money for the three of us to pay the coyote and get airplane tickets to Chicago.

So I came here and stayed with my aunt and uncle in this neighborhood. Martin was living in the same apartment with them, too. I thought I wouldn't have any boyfriends, but then I met Martin! First we became friends, and then we really got to know each other. After a year we were married. We had a civil marriage here and went back to Mexico to be married by the church.

When I first came here I didn't speak any English. Everyone else was always working so they couldn't help me. It was three months before I started working and began to repay what my uncle had spent to bring me here. I worked with my aunt cleaning houses.

**Martin:** I started out working in a restaurant, washing dishes. Then I was promoted to cook.

I worked hard and went to school. I learned a bit of English, finished my GED and studied a little journalism. I didn't stop studying until I met my wife. We got married and had our children. We've been very happy.

Now I have a good job as a cook at the East Bank Club during the day, and a second job as a pastry chef at night.

What I'd really like to do most is something to do with sports. If we could get some money together we would like to open a sports store. I used to play soccer. Now I'm a soccer coach for adult teams.

**Maria:** We'd like to try to establish a team for our kids.

**Martin:** Ivan likes to draw. Maybe he'll be an engineer. I started painting in Mexico when I was young. I still paint. I paint whatever comes to mind. This (*a painting of a bird*) is an owl, the symbol of crossing the border, coming over.

**Maria:** I have been working at Hibbard School in the parent volunteers program for two years. I work with children who have just arrived from different countries, teaching them their colors, their numbers, basics in English. I like this job a lot. I always thought I'd like to be a teacher, and although I am not a teacher I can work with the children and do a lot of things that are related to teaching. And I am studying for my GED. When I finish my GED I'll try to study English. Little by little we have been able to progress.

**Martin:** We've even bought a house!

**Maria:** We help both of our parents. Not as much as we thought, but we have been able to help. If one can leave Mexico it is a good thing, because things are good here economically. But emotionally it's not good at all because all your family is far away.

**Martin:** I got my legal papers under amnesty in 1987, so I was able to leave the U.S. and stay in Mexico up to a month. Every summer we go back to Mexico for three or four weeks. Everybody is together. It is our dream to return to Mexico for good, but with a future that is

secure. If we don't have something good to do when we go back, then we won't go. The children like to go there on vacations, but they don't like to live there. The future for them is more here than there.

We try to make sure that the children never lose their Spanish. We teach them to believe in the church. We teach them about important holidays like the Day of the Dead, November 2, where we bring gifts of flowers to our family members who have died. And November 20, the day of the Mexican Revolution. We want them to know about their Mexican Culture.

## Maria's Story

*Maria has lived in Chicago since 1977—30 years. Her story appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of Centerings, the newsletter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice. Maria was interviewed by Franky Stebbins, a graduate student in Social Justice at Loyola University and a leader in Epiphany Parish. It is reprinted here with permission.*

### The Crossing

...When I came walking my son got sick. We were in the desert on the border and all night he had a fever. There was no one there who I could ask for help. I wanted to turn back, and forget about it. It is very difficult when your child is sick and you cannot ease his pain. In the morning, the person who was to help me cross the border helped me get some medicine for my son's ear infection. I still wanted to go back to Mexico.

Then we were in the airport at El Paso. My son was following these men. It had been awhile since he had seen his father, so he thought these men were possibly his dad. He started calling to them, "Papa, papa!" So these two men turned to look at my little boy. They were immigration officers. They looked to see who the boy was traveling with and realized it was me. I was detained. My son was hungry. There was only soda and I didn't have any water to give him. It was horrible. Horrible.

But, one has to continue. When the officials saw that I didn't have any food for my son they bought him a sandwich and let us

go. One of them advised me that I should return to Mexico and not try to cross. He stated that it was very difficult for a woman with a child to make it.

I phoned my husband in Chicago. We discussed our choices and he urged me to try again. I agreed since I was already there on the border. And so I tried again and I made it across.

My husband came to the US in Sept., 1976. I came in Feb., 1977. After this we were ok for a few years. Then I was arrested at work with another woman. Handcuffed, detained for five hours, and released. Then my husband and I hired an attorney.

### No Help From Attorney

I received a letter from immigration to appear at their offices. I called my attorney and let him know about the letter. He told me not to worry about it. This happened several more times and each time...he told me not to worry. Then I received a "date for deportation notice" in the mail. It was an appointment for me to appear in court before a judge. I called the attorney again. He said that everything would be fine...that he would file for a suspension of deportation. I asked him what I should do. Should I pack a suitcase? Do I need to make arrangements for my children? He told me not to worry, that he, too, was going to be there for my court date and that it would be fine. When I arrived, the attorney wasn't there. There was a van outside waiting to take me to the airport.

I didn't know what to do... I had \$50. I was handcuffed and put inside the van and taken to the airport. In the terminal I saw a pay phone and requested to make a call to my house to let them know what was happening. They uncuffed me so I could call.

All I could say to my family was that I was being deported. I didn't have any money and I did not know where they were taking me.

### Deportation

I was taken to Brownsville, Texas. Never again do I want to hear the name of that town! Arriving back on the border is a

difficult thing. I was taken to the immigration office; they took down all of my information and told me to go. I asked: "Where should I go? I don't know anyone here." They told me to cross the bridge—that Mexico was on the other side...I was scared.

Luckily there were two other gentlemen who were deported with me. If it wasn't for them I don't know what I would have done. They suggested that I get a room in the hotel on the Mexican side of the border and make plans with my family. I explained that I did not have enough money.

### **Second Crossing**

This time when I crossed I was the only woman in a group of men. Thank God they all treated me like I was part of their family. We came in a car; the car broke down. We were on the freeway in the middle of nowhere, not near any place where we could get help. Thankfully, these men were able to fix the car. All I can tell you is that I have no idea where we crossed, no idea.

They left me at a bus terminal and purchased my ticket for me to arrive here in Chicago. It was four days for me to come from the border to Chicago. I lost my job when I came back. I looked and looked for work. Some places were too far, or too unsafe. Others paid too little. That is when I decided to stay home with my children. Everything else has been frustrating because I want a good job to have money to feed my family, but I can't.

### **Applying for Residency**

Then came the amnesty. I had these big illusions of applying for my residency. I went to various places that said I could not apply because of my deportation. I know people whose records were worse than mine and were able to apply; but every place I went, I was told not to apply. The time arrived when my daughter who was born here turned 21 and applied for me. It was a slow process—two years without getting an appointment for my fingerprints. Finally, they took my fin-

gerprints. Then I had to go back so that they could take them again.

### **Residency Denied**

I went to the interview. I was asked if I'd ever been arrested. I told them the truth, that yes I had been arrested and deported. They asked me the date. They were unable to find a record on me for that date. They told me that I should pay the \$1,000 fine and that they would contact my daughter. I paid the fine and waited to hear from them. Two years passed. In February 2005, I received a letter denying my petition because I had been deported.

### **Today**

Today I am scared to go out and get the mail. It worries me the situation that we are living in right now. There are some people who look at us with distrust. It bothers me a little bit. I understand that some undocumented people have done something wrong—but not all of us. Today I am here. I do not know if I will be tomorrow. I don't know. I hope in God that there is a solution for people like myself.

Some people make me feel like a criminal. The only thing that I have done is to make a better life for my family. This has been my only crime. I am conscious of the laws of this country. But I want to know what any other woman would do to be back with her children. I want you to understand that we did not come here to take jobs from people. Really, we came here to take jobs, which many people are too well trained and cannot do. Also it is not true that we are taking public benefits. I have never used benefits. Three of my children attended private schools. I believe that we are contributing more than we are taking away.



# Immigrants in the Jewish, Muslim and Christian Texts

## Hebrew Bible

### Exodus 23: 9

You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt.

### Leviticus 19: 32-34

If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

### Tobit 4: 7-8

Set aside part of your goods for almsgiving. Never turn your face from any poor man and God will never turn his from you.

### Psalms 82: 2-4

No more mockery of justice,  
no more favoring of the wicked!  
Let the weak and the orphan have justice,  
be fair to the wretched and destitute;  
rescue the weak and needy,  
save them from the clutches of the wicked!

### Psalms 103: 6

Yahweh, who does what is right,  
is always on the side of the oppressed.

### Proverbs 31: 8-9

Speak, yourself, on behalf of the dumb,  
on behalf of all the unwanted;  
speak, yourself, pronounce a just verdict,  
uphold the rights of the poor, of the needy.

### Ecclesiasticus 4: 8-9

To the poor man lend an ear,  
and return his greeting courteously.  
Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor,  
and do not be mean-spirited in your judgments.

### Isaiah 10: 1-2

Woe to the legislators of infamous laws,  
to those who issue tyrannical decrees,  
who refuse justice to the unfortunate  
and cheat the poor among my people of their rights,  
who make widows their prey,  
and rob the orphan.

### Isaiah 61: 1-2

The spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given to me,  
for Yahweh has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to bind up hearts that are broken;  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
freedom to those in prison;  
to proclaim a year of favour from Yahweh.

### Jeremiah 22: 3-4

Yahweh says this: Practice honesty and integrity; rescue the man who has been wronged from the hands of his oppressor; do not exploit the stranger, the orphan, the widow; do no violence, shed no innocent blood in this place.

**Micah 6: 8**

What is good has been explained to you;  
 this is what Yahweh asks of you:  
 only this, to act justly,  
 to love tenderly,  
 and to walk humbly with your God.

**Zechariah 7: 8-11**

(The word of Yahweh was addressed to Zechariah as follows:) He said: Apply the law fairly, and practice kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow and the orphan, the settler and the poor man, and do not secretly plan evil against one another.

**Christian Testament****Matthew 25: 35-40**

For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me.

... I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.

**Mark 12: 30-31**

This is the first [commandment]...you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

**Luke 4: 18-19**

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.  
 He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,  
 to proclaim liberty to captives  
 and to the blind new sight,  
 to set the downtrodden free,  
 to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

**Galatians 3: 28**

... there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 2: 5-8**

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:

His state was divine,  
 yet he did not cling  
 to his equality with God  
 but emptied himself  
 to assume the condition of a slave,  
 and became as men are;  
 and being as all men are,  
 he was humbler yet,  
 even to accepting death,  
 death on a cross.

**Colossians 3: 12-13**

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience.

**1 John 4: 19-21**

Anyone who says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, is a liar, since a man who does not love the brother that he can see cannot love God, whom he has never seen. So this is the commandment that he has given us, that anyone who loves God must also love his brother.

**The Qur'an**

*The verse numbers given in the references below sometimes vary slightly in different editions and translations of the Quran. However, they are rarely off by more than five verses in either direction.*

**Verse 107**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful Hast thou observed him who belieth (makes a lie of) religion? This is he who repelleth the orphan, And urgeth not the feeding of the needy. Ah, woe unto worshippers Who

are heedless of their prayer; Who would be seen (at worship) Yet refuse small kindnesses.

**Verse 4:97**

Lo! as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves (by sinning), (the angels) will ask: In what were ye engaged? They will say: We were oppressed in the land. (The angels) will say: Was not God's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein?

**Verse 55:9**

But those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which has been given to them, but prefer (the refugees) above themselves though poverty become their lot. And who is saved from his own avarice—such are they who are successful.

**Verse 16:41**

And those who became (refugees) for the cause of God after they had been oppressed. We verily shall give them goodly lodging in the world, and surely the reward of the hereafter is greater, if they but knew.

**Verse 24:22**

And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and to the needy, and to refugees for the cause of God. Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that God forgive you? God is Forgiving, Merciful.

**Verse 4:135**

Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for God, even though it be against (the worldly interests) of yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man.

**Verse 5:8**

Be steadfast witnesses for God in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to God. Lo! God is Informed of what ye do.

# Interfaith Prayers

## Remember the Immigrant

*A Prayer for Call-and-Response by Interfaith Worker Justice*

**Leader:** We serve a God who directs us to care especially for those most vulnerable in society. Our scriptures tell us of God’s special concern for the “alien” or the “stranger,” or as more contemporary translations say—the immigrant.

**All:** For the Lord our God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. God defends the cause of the orphan and the widow and loves the immigrant, giving the immigrant food and clothing. And we are to love those who are immigrants, for God’s people were immigrants in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

**Leader:** We ask God to open our eyes to the struggles of immigrant workers, for we know that

**All:** We must not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether the worker is a resident or immigrant living in our town. We must pay the worker the wages promptly because the worker is poor and counting on it. (Deuteronomy 24:14)

**Leader:** God’s desire is that those who build houses may live in them,

**All:** And that those who plant may eat. (Isaiah 65:22)

**Leader:** And yet we know this is not possible for many in our midst.

**All:** We know of: farm workers who cannot feed their families; construction workers who have no homes; nursing home workers who have no health care; restaurant workers who could not afford a meal in the restaurant.

**Leader:** We know that too many immigrant workers among us are not receiving the fruits of their labor, nor the justice required by the courts.

**All:** God charges our judges to hear disputes and judge fairly, whether the case involves citizens or immigrants. (Deuteronomy 1:16)

**Leader:** But our laws do not adequately protect immigrants. Our legal and social service programs exclude many immigrants. Our education programs undervalue immigrant children.

**All:** God tells us that the community is to have the same rules for citizens and for immigrants living among us. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Citizens and immigrants shall be the same before the Lord. (Numbers 15:15)

**Leader:** When an immigrant lives in our land,

**All:** We will not mistreat him or her. We will treat an immigrant as one of our native born. We will love an immigrant as ourselves, for God’s people were once immigrants in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

**Leader:** To those who employ immigrant workers, we lift up God’s command:

**All:** Do not oppress an immigrant. God's people know how it feels to be immigrants because they were immigrants in Egypt. (Exodus 23: 9)

**Leader:** And a special word to those who employ immigrant farm workers:

**All:** Make sure immigrants get a day of rest. (Exodus 23:12)

**Leader:** To those who craft our immigration laws and policies, we lift up God's command:

**All:** Do not deprive the immigrant or the orphan of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that God's people were slaves in Egypt and the Lord our God redeemed them from there. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18)

**Leader:** To all of us who seek to do God's will, help us to:

**All:** Love one another as God has loved us. Help us to treat immigrants with the justice and compassion that God shows to each of us.

## A Prayer for Immigrants

*By Jessica Vazquez Torres*

**Source of Life who is known by many names;**

**Over-turner and illuminator of hearts;**

We gather with gratitude for the earth and all who journey in it.

We give thanks for the interconnectedness of all creation.

**Support for those without support;**

**Stronghold of those without protection;**

We declare openly the times we have fallen short

From living out the call to justice our sacred stories place upon us;

From recognizing the whole of creation as an extension of our being;

From hearing the plight of the creation yearning for justice;

From seeing the harm our way of life and our policies inflict upon the creation.

**Source of Wisdom who is known by many names;**

**The Prophet Mohammed asks: What actions are most excellent?**

To gladden the heart of a human being;

To feed the hungry;

To help the afflicted;

To lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful;

To remove the wrongs of the injured;

**Let us not forget.**

**The Psalmist asks: Who is fit to hold power and worthy to act in God's place?**

Those with a passion for the truth, who are horrified by injustice;

Who act with mercy to the poor and take up the cause of the helpless;

Who have let go of selfish concerns and see the whole creation as sacred.

**Let us not forget.**

**Jesus, carpenter of Nazareth, asks: What is the greatest commandment?**

To love your creator;

To love your neighbor;

To undermine oppressive powers with life-giving actions;

To be in solidarity with all who suffer;

To act for justice;

And to teach others to act for justice

**Let us not forget.**

**Source of Justice who is known by many names;**

Let us not swerve from the path of righteousness that leads to just and equitable relationship.

**Open our eyes that we may see the immigrant and undocumented;**

Whose labor enables and sustains our living;

The farm worker, the hotel maid, the line cook, the childcare provider, the healthcare worker;

**Give us the courage to stand with those crossing our borders;**

Escaping economic oppression and political persecution;

Seeking work to support their families;

Aspiring to participate in the bounty of the creation;

**Give us the strength to confront the prejudice and intolerance of those who are fearful;**

And respond by closing our borders to those who sojourn seeking life and opportunity;

**Give us the will to leave behind the safety of our sanctuaries and temples;**

And claim our place in the movement to transform the creation;

That our voice, our heart, our spirit will join the voice, heart and spirit of all who demand to live with respect, justice and peace.

**Source of Direction who is known by many names;**

**In our daily living let us be guided;**

By the highest estimate of the worth and dignity of every person regardless of their legal status;

**And let us not forget;**

That the creation is founded on justice;

And that we have the moral responsibility to bring forth justice into these times.

**May it be so.**

*These resources were originally created by Jews United for Social Justice and are reprinted here with their permission.*

# Jewish Resources and Tools

## Introduction to Parashat Ki Tetze

Parashat Ki Tetze is a commandment-focused part of the Torah. There is no particular plot—nothing actually “happens” in this parashah. Instead, the portion is a series of guidelines for how we are to live our lives. The commandments deal with a variety of topics, ranging from clothing to food, marital status to the rules of war. Although these ideas seem disjointed at first, there is a crucial Jewish value that ties them together: social responsibility. It is within the context of this value that the text is particularly relevant to immigration and immigrants’ rights.

Many of the commandments presented in Ki Tetze are about maintaining a successful, self-sustaining community. We are commanded to assure care for the widow, to return lost property to our neighbor, to provide food for the poor, to pay fair wages to employees. Yet our social responsibility is not simply a matter of “dos” and “do nots”. Rather, the Torah enjoins us to make the safety and well-being of all people a priority, an essential part of our thinking. For this reason, we are commanded to build a parapet on our rooftops, so that “[we] bring not blood upon [our] house, if any man fall from thence.” The radical and very Jewish concept, then, is that it is not enough to provide for the welfare of those who are in need. We must also take action to prevent that need from developing in the first place. Therefore, we must build a railing on our rooftops, so that we have done our part to decrease the chance that someone will fall from it.

We must make it as unlikely as possible that an injustice will happen on our account. This context provides an interesting lens for analyzing the parashah’s statements about strangers. As is seen on the Dvar Torah Ideas resource, the text is explicit about the need to be kind to strangers, to not treat them differently under the law and in the workplace. The text reminds us that we were strangers in the land of Egypt, and therefore we must recall what it is like to be outsiders and be compassionate to those who are where we once were.

On a surface level, then, it seems that the parashah teaches that our responsibility is to avoid passing laws that unjustly harm strangers. If we do not actively discriminate against immigrants, it appears that we are obeying the commandment. Yet, in light of the overall message of the parashah, it is evident that we are expected to be proactive, to actually *preempt* the abuse of the strangers in our midst. Just as we must build a safe rooftop to prevent a person from falling from it, so too must we work with community partners to actively improve the lot of immigrants, both Jewish and gentile. By taking the initiative to push for policies that guarantee equal wages for equal work, that provide English classes and job training, and that ensure adequate healthcare, we bring to life the essence of the mitzvot in this parashah and ensure the dignity of immigrants and all members of our communities.

### Parashat Ki Tetze – D’var Torah Ideas

*“No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of the Eternal... because they did not meet you with food and*

*water on your journey after you left Egypt... You shall not abhor an Edomite, for such is your kin. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in that land.”*  
—Deuteronomy 23:4-5, 8

*“Remember what Amalek did to you on our journey, after you left Egypt- how undeterred by fear of G-d, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. Therefore...you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!”* —Deuteronomy 25:17-19

These passages command us to recall the cruelties and generosity that various peoples visited upon the Israelites in their journey to the Promised Land. We are told to remember how the Ammonites and Moabites refused us sustenance in the desert, how Amalek specifically targeted our weakest brothers and sisters to be killed. Yet in the same passage, G-d also commands us not to hate the Edomites and Egyptians, as some of them aided us when we were strangers at their mercy. The parashah instructs us with examples of how not to behave and how we ought to behave. G-d reminds us of the hateful acts of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Amalek not only to condemn the perpetrators, but also in order for us to remember never to behave like them. As we think of how as wanderers we were once denied the basic elements of survival by those who could have helped us, we commit ourselves to act better than those that oppressed us. We think of those brave Egyptians who did help us when we were strangers, and commit ourselves to treat others humanely. The Torah demands that we show kindness to strangers and migrants, that we help them obtain the necessities of life. We show compassion to the weak and exploited wanderers among us so as to distinguish ourselves from those who were cruel to us and to honor those who treated us with graciousness.

*“You shall not turn over to the master a slave who seeks refuge with you from that master. Such individuals shall live with you in any place they may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever they please; you must not ill-treat them.”*  
—Deuteronomy 23:16-17

This part of the Torah provides an explicit basis for the principle of asylum. When we encounter someone who is fleeing from bondage, we are obligated by the Torah to provide that person safe haven. The passage commands us to “not turn [the former slave] over” to the former master, and to let the escapee live with us. Furthermore, we “must not ill-treat them.” All too often, we forget the reasons why most people, including our ancestors, immigrate. Other than the few who can migrate for reasons of pleasure or new job assignments, the vast majority of immigrants flee oppression. The attraction of job opportunities in the United States is great, but it often takes catastrophe to push someone to abandon their family, friends, and home and move to a strange new place. The master many are running away from is far greater than one person: it is genocide in Sudan, civil wars in Central America, religious persecution in China. The Torah tacitly acknowledges that we are limited in our ability to prevent oppression elsewhere, as evidenced by the fact that we are not commanded to punish the former master. Instead, we are asked to treat the escapee with dignity and respect once he or she is among us. We may not be able to end oppression in other nations, but once we have the power to influence the fate of another human being fleeing affliction, it becomes our responsibility to care for him or her. When today’s immigrants, like our forebears, arrive on our shores, we must care for them and offer them shelter as the Torah commands. We must not deport them and return them to the suffering they once endured.

*“You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow Israelite or a stranger in one of the communities of your land. You must pay out the wages due on the same day, before the sun sets, for the worker is needy and urgently depends on it; else a cry to the Eternal will be issued against you and you will incur guilt”*

—Deuteronomy 24:14-15

While this Mitzvah appears rather self-explanatory, there is an important aspect that must be considered. It is apparent that we are enjoined to treat workers with decency and pay them their wages on time. The text shows an appreciation for the dependency of workers on their salaries in order to survive and for this reason condemns employers who delay or deny just payment. What is most relevant, however, to the immigration issue, is the inclusion of the phrase “thy strangers.” G-d emphasizes that this law applies not only to Israelite workers, but to all people, regardless of national origin. But if G-d meant for such a law to be universal, why wouldn’t the commandment omit any reference to “thy brethren” and “thy strangers”? Since we presume that every word of Torah is written for a reason, an explanation for this particular word choice could be xenophobia. The text seems to acknowledge that in all societies, people tend to have different economic standards for “natives” and “foreigners.” One need only look at the wage differentials for Indian workers in the Persian Gulf, Africans in France, the Thai in Israel and immigrants of all stripes in the United States. All too often, societies are willing to ignore fair labor standards for immigrant populations, as they are a “foreign” constituency. The Torah recognizes this tendency, and commands us to overcome it—to apply fair wage practices to all people. Unfortunately, many immigrants in our own community are exploited and denied payment for work they have completed. Therefore, we must live up to our biblical obligations by supporting community institutions, such as day laborer and employment justice centers, that ensure that all people receive fair wages for the work they do.

## **Jewish Textual Resources on Immigrants’ Rights**

### **Kindness to Strangers—Chesed Le’gerim**

*The Jewish tradition is explicit about the need to treat strangers with compassion and justice, as equals to other citizens. Given our experience as foreigners in Egypt, Jewish texts remind us to treat others who find themselves in that position with the generosity we would have desired.*

“When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow- in order that the Eternal your G-d may bless you in all your undertakings...[a]lways remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment.” (Deuteronomy 24:19, 24:22)

“There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.” (Exodus 12:49)

“When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your G-d.” (Leviticus 19:33-34)

“Welcoming a guest takes priority over welcoming the Shechina, the presence of God.” (Sabbath 127a)

“You shall not wrong or oppress the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’ ‘You shall not wrong’ with words, ‘and you shall not oppress’ financially...” (Mechilta d’Rabbi Yishmael Mishpatim—3rd century Midrash)

“You shall not turn over to the master a slave who seeks refuge with you from that master. Such individuals shall live with you in any place they may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever they please; you must not ill-treat them.” (Deuteronomy 23:16-17)

וְכִי-יִגְוֹר אִתְּךָ גֵר, בְּאַרְצְכֶם--לֹא תוֹנוּ, אֲתוֹ לֵג וְאַהֲבַת לּוֹ כְּמוֹךְ--כִּי-גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם,  
אֲנִי, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם, כְּאַזְרַח מִכֶּם יְהוָה לָכֶם הֵגֵר הֵגֵר אִתְּכֶם

**Kindness to Strangers: Translation and Analysis—Chesed Le’gerim: Targum ve’Nituach**

*The Jewish textual tradition is filled with quotes obligating us to treat strangers with compassion and equality. One such well known quote comes from Leviticus 19:33-34 and urges us to recall our own experience as strangers in Egypt. Look over the following translations and note how people have taken the same Hebrew text and chosen different English words to represent it.*

“When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your G-d.” (Plaut—Reform—2005)

“When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (adaptation by Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society—2005)

“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not taunt him. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be as a native from among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.” (Chabad.org—Chassidic—2005)

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the Lord am your God.” (Jewish Publication Society—Conservative—1985)

“And if a stranger sojourns with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” (Jewish Publication Society—Conservative—1917)

# Liturgical Resources for the Christian Community

*The resources in this section have been gathered from different sources. We give special thanks to the Justice of Immigrants campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for granting us permission to use their liturgical and prayer resources.*

One of the most profound ways that we can welcome and embrace diversity in the church is to include the cultural signs, symbols, music, and languages of immigrants, migrants, refugees and other ethnic communities into our worship services. By interacting with diverse people who make up our community, we are strengthened in our Christian faith and are made more aware that we are one in Christ, who has called us “from every tribe and tongue, people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

## Sample Intercessions

*The following intercessions may all be used together for a special liturgy, or particular intercessions may be chosen for use throughout the liturgical year.*

- For an end to the violence and poverty that displaces so many people from their homes and homelands, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer.*
- For our leaders, that they may implement policies that allow for safe migration, just migrant working conditions, and an end to the detention of asylum seekers, while protecting our national safety, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*

- For migrant workers, that they may labor in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labor may be truly grateful for what they provide, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For unaccompanied migrant children, that they may be protected from all harm and reunited with loving families, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For an end to human trafficking, that the dignity of all of God’s children will be protected, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For migrants, refugees, and strangers in our midst, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For our community, gathered here today to celebrate our unity under the Lord and his mother, Mary, that we may come to greater understanding and acceptance of our differences, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For all those who are overwhelmed by loneliness, poverty, and despair, that they may be comforted through our help and kindness, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*
- For those in special need, that the Lord in his divine mercy may heal the sick, comfort the dying, and keep travelers safe, we pray to the Lord.  
*Response: Lord hear our prayer*

## MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

*"In Christ There Is No East or West"*  
by John Oxenham

*"One Spirit, One Church"* by Kevin Keil

*"Pan de Vida"* by Bob Hurd

*"Service"* by Buddy Ceaser

*"They'll Know We Are Christians"*  
by Peter Scholtes

*"E Na Lima Hana"* by David Haas  
and Joe Camacho

*"We Are Many Parts"* by Marty Haugen

*"Weave One Heart"* by Marty Haugen

*"Diverse in Culture, Race and Nation"*  
by Ruth Duck

*"We Are Called"* by David Haas

*"Song of the Body of Christ"* by David Haas

*"Let There Be Peace On Earth"* by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson

## Sample Prayer Service

*"You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt."* (Leviticus 19:33-34)

### HYMN:

Add a suitable hymn, using suggestions listed.

### SCRIPTURAL READING:

Choose a scriptural passage from the preceding section (such as stories of Exodus, of the Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem, or of their flight to Egypt, or Matthew's Gospel).

### *An Alien's Prayer*

#### Leader:

I wear the mark of your disapproval and your often unspoken words pierce straight to my soul, "Why didn't you stay where you belong?"

I feel the icy stare that says, "Keep your distance, you foreigner, with your different-colored skin and your strange-sounding speech, with your culture, food, religion, and clothing that are inferior to my own." I'm an immigrant, a wetback, an alien, an outsider operating a sweatshop sewing machine; cheap labor, unwanted or dirty jobs are mine for the taking; I'm one of the countless invisible ones who puts fresh vegetables on your plate or stitches the fashion dresses and shirts that you buy in your stylish stores.

As Moses of old once said, "Remember, you were once aliens in the land of Egypt," remember that your grandfathers and grandmothers were immigrant unwanted, were exploited cheap labor, second-class citizens, uneducated and poor, used and abused, ignored or looked down upon for their foreign religion, speech, and food.

The White House, first house of this great land, says it well: White is this land of promise; no room for other colors or creeds. Someday we'll paint the first house in rainbow colors—someday, not long from now.

#### All:

Creator God, help us to remember that when we speak of immigrants and refugees, we speak of Christ. In the One who had no place to lay his head, and in the least of his brothers and sisters, you come to us again, a stranger seeking refuge. We confess that we often turn away.

#### REFLECTION:

The prayer leader or another designate may wish to provide a guided reflection or instruction on "An Alien's Prayer" and the chosen scriptural reading or the leader may wish to engage the participants in a guided group discussion on the prayer and reading.

#### INTERCESSIONS:

The prayer leader may wish to incorporate intercessions from the preceding section or to ask the participants to offer spontaneous prayers for their intentions.

#### CLOSING PRAYER:

Our God, you have given us in your word the stories of persons who needed to leave their homelands—Abraham, Sarah, Ruth, Moses. You have chosen that the life of Jesus be filled with events of unplanned travel and flight from enemies. You have shown us through the modeling of Jesus how we are called to relate to persons from different nations and cultures. You have called us to be teachers of your word. We ask you, our God, to open our minds and hearts to the challenge and invitation to model your perfect example of love. Amen.

*"An Alien's Prayer" by Edward Hays is reprinted with permission from Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim, copyright © 1989, Forest of Peace Publishing, 251 Muncie Rd., Leavenworth, KS 66048.*



# Policy Statements from the Religious Community

*Interfaith Worker Justice felt it was important to highlight the powerful witness the religious community has offered in the struggle for a just and comprehensive immigration reform. Below are excerpts from statements made by the religious community and its leaders calling this nation and its leaders to use a different approach, choose a more just way and to be filled by spirit of inclusion.*

## **Church of the Brethren 1982 Annual Conference**

### **A Statement Addressing the Concern of Undocumented Persons and Refugees in the United States**

The primary truth of faith as we consider immigrants and refugees today is that Christ has made another appearance among us, as Himself an immigrant and refugee in the person of political dissidents, the economically deprived and foreigners on the run. We are to join them as pilgrims in search of that city yet to come, with foundations of love and justice whose architect and builder is God.

We need to affirm that everything belongs to God and that we are part of an immigrant people who are looking for better land. Our brother and sister immigrants are reminders of who we are and whom we serve. The refugees and immigrants bring needs with them but they also bring considerable skills, rich cultures and great spirits which can enrich us all. We look forward to a time when all people will be free to move from one nation to another and to choose their homeland without restriction. If that seems impossible

to us now, it is only because sinful greed and fear still divide the nations East and West, North and South, poor and rich, crowded and spacious.

**Link:** [www.brethren.org/ac/ac\\_statements/82Refugees.htm](http://www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/82Refugees.htm)

## **No More Deaths: Faith Based Principles for Immigration Reform**

Recognize that root causes of migration lie in environmental, economic and trade inequities. Experiences of Mexico and countries further south demonstrate that current trade and aid strategies that are based on greed and lack of basic respect deeply and negatively impact workers, their families, and the environments in migrants' homelands. This is forcing a quest-for-survival based migration of unparalleled proportions. International agreements must be negotiated in ways that build mutual and just relationships. Such agreements must be designed to meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations' abilities to meet their needs. New strategies must include incentives for the public and private sectors to invest in economic and environmental repair and sustainable development in the sending communities.

**Link:** [www.nomoredeaths.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=43&Itemid=71](http://www.nomoredeaths.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=43&Itemid=71)

### **Unitarian Universalist Association Resolution of Immediate Witness (July 1995)**

*From “A Call to Conscious, Humane Treatment of Immigrants.”*

Because we covenant as Unitarian Universalists to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and...we covenant as Unitarian Universalists to promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations...we cannot in conscience condone...the systematic refusal of human social services to needy persons and their families based on immigration status, national origin, or citizenship.” And the UUA resolved to “...demand...from both state and federal lawmakers humane solutions to the very complex social issues relating to undocumented persons in this country, and a just application of human rights at both the state and national levels for all people living within our borders; and urges individual Unitarian Universalists in the United States to serve those directly harmed and others affected by the passage of any legislation which would deny human beings the basic services warranted to all members of a free and just society.”

**Link:** [www.uua.org/actions/immediate/95immigrants.html](http://www.uua.org/actions/immediate/95immigrants.html)

### **General Assembly of the Union for Reform Judaism Immigration Policy (December 1995)**

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has long supported a fair and generous immigration policy. Our people were and continue to be immigrants to this nation. We have benefited from open doors and suffered when they were closed. We struggled to adjust to a society that did not always welcome our arrival. We understand the problems faced by today’s immigrants, as well as the difficulties attributable to the problem illegal immigration. Our tradition demands of us concern for the stranger in our midst. We know that the alien and the foreigner should be treated with respect and welcomed, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Yet we also must support the territorial integrity of the United States and the governance of its laws. As the United

States Commission on Immigration Reform explores the current state of immigration policy and suggests improvements to be made in the system, and as new legislation is proposed to confront issues raised by legal and illegal immigration, we support those efforts that compassionately seek to regulate and to aid newcomers to this land but we oppose those that will unduly restrict immigration or burden the lives of legal immigrants.

**Link:** [www.urj.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=7237&pge\\_prg\\_id=29601&pge\\_id=4590](http://www.urj.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=7237&pge_prg_id=29601&pge_id=4590)

### **A Message on Immigration from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (November 1998)**

“Immigration, refugee, and asylum policies express who we are as a nation, influence the nation’s future character, and affect the lives of millions of people. We encourage our members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good. Our advocacy needs to take into account the complexity of issues, the diversity of interests and the partial or relative justice of laws at the same time that it counters appeals rooted in hostility, racism, prejudice, indifference and simplistic solutions. We draw on the best of our nation’s traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that “we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants,” and that we “will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them.”

**Link:** [www.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/)

### **From the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (1996, 2000)**

With grace and concern, the church must address the legal, economic, social, and human

right conditions of people who are legal or undocumented immigrants, and it must oppose the introduction of legislation by Congress of any state that would cause human suffering and a denial of such individual's rights as interpreted by our biblical understanding of God's grace to all peoples, but especially to the sojourner...

We call upon United Methodist individuals and churches in the United States and through general boards and agencies throughout the United Methodist Church to do the following:

1. Actively oppose anti-immigrant legislative action and support legislative action that protects the poor and oppressed in their quest for survival and peace;
2. Urge stringent policing and penalties for coyotes (illegal transporters);
3. Urge that humane and fair treatment be extended to all immigrants by business and agricultural groups;
4. Advocate human's rights (political, economic and civil) for all people, including the strangers who sojourn in our land;
5. Support communities and congregations by prayer and action where anti-immigrant measures are implemented;
6. Continue to work with community organizations to provide forums for citizens to voice concerns, educate one another, and confront the problems of racism and fear or hatred of foreigners as obstacles to building community;
7. Continue to work with civic and legal communities who are now, or will be, affected by the destructive, deteriorating social issues raised by anti-immigrant measures;
8. Support the legal needs of immigrants through church-based immigrant clinics.

**Link:** [www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=fsJNK0PKJrH&b=848309&content\\_id=%7B9EE31D24-E9FF-4007-8C3D-9BD18DD4C330%7D&notoc=1](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=fsJNK0PKJrH&b=848309&content_id=%7B9EE31D24-E9FF-4007-8C3D-9BD18DD4C330%7D&notoc=1)

## The American Baptist Churches Policy on Immigration and Refugee Policy

Because of the Biblical mandate that we be a caring community, that we love our neighbors, that we establish justice and proclaim liberty; because we have a sense of Christian responsibility to serve human needs; because of our commitment to respect the human rights of all people; and because we are mainly a nation of immigrants, we, the American Baptist Churches USA, shall:

1. Continue our historical role as an advocate of human rights for immigrants, refugees and migrants.
2. Continue our historical role in resettlement of refugees and immigrants.
3. Continue to cooperate with Church World Service and other religious/volunteer/community agencies in the servicing and resettlement of refugees.
4. Continue to raise the consciousness of the Church and society regarding the needs of refugees, their contribution to American society and the Biblical trust that we are all God's children.
5. Engage in wholistic ministry to immigrants, refugees, migrants and overstayed and undocumented persons in Immigration and Naturalization Service detention facilities and refugee camps in the United States and in local communities, offering assistance...

For Christians, the only humane and sustainable immigration and refugee policy for the United States must be one that reflects humanitarian values, responds to the needs of people within and outside of our own nation alike, and recognizes the importance of trade and foreign assistance policies for developing countries if internal pressures for emigration are to be reduced.

**Link:** [www.emoregon.org/pdfs/faith\\_groups\\_say\\_imm.pdf](http://www.emoregon.org/pdfs/faith_groups_say_imm.pdf)

### **A Pastoral Statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (November 2000)**

#### **“Welcoming the Stranger among Us: Unity in Diversity”**

The call to solidarity is also a call to promote the effective recognition of the rights of immigrants and to overcome all discrimination based on race, culture or religion. “It means bearing witness to a fraternal life based on the Gospel, which respects cultural differences and is open to sincere and trustful dialogue” (Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 17).

We Catholic bishops commit ourselves to continue to work at the national level to promote recognition of the human rights of all, regardless of their immigration status, and to advance fair and equitable legislation for refugees and prospective immigrants. Present efforts need to be strengthened and supported with new initiatives, both at the local level and at the national level as U.S. immigration law and practice change in the face of changing political pressures and social realities.

Immigrant communities give ample witness to what it is to be Church—in their desire to worship as a people, in their faith, in their solidarity with one another and with the weakest among them, in their devotion and their faithfulness to the Church of their ancestors. For the Church in the United States to walk in solidarity with newcomers to our country is to live out our catholicity as a Church. The Church of the twenty-first century will be, as it has always been, a Church of many cultures, languages and traditions, yet simultaneously one, as God is one—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—unity in diversity.

**Link:** [www.usccb.org/mrs/unity.shtml#summary](http://www.usccb.org/mrs/unity.shtml#summary)

### **American Friends Service Committee Board of Directors (June 2001)**

Undocumented immigrants pay taxes, and contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of their communities in countless ways. A legalization program would

recognize the equity undocumented people have built through their participation in U.S. society and acknowledge the inherent injustice of the secrecy, vulnerability and exploitation imposed on undocumented women, men and children.

**Link:** [www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/documents/principles.pdf](http://www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/documents/principles.pdf)

### **Baptist General Convention of Texas Resolution on Undocumented Immigrants (June 2003)**

Whereas the allure of freedom and the possibility of prosperity are in the hearts of all people, and; Whereas people are constantly leaving their homelands at great personal costs to seek freedom and prosperity, and; Whereas, it is apparent that the current system of immigration is broken often leading to abuse, exploitation, discrimination and in some cases death... Be it resolved that this Hispanic *Convención* speaks forcefully and clearly in opposition to the current immigration system that hinders the search for freedom and prosperity and that the Hispanic *Convención* encourages the adoption of new legislation that would unshackle the immigrant.

**Link:** [www.bgct.org/texasbaptists/Page.aspx?&pid=3205&srcid=3204](http://www.bgct.org/texasbaptists/Page.aspx?&pid=3205&srcid=3204)

### **Mennonite Church USA Churchwide Statement on Immigration (July 2003)**

As Christians, we believe we are called to welcome these sojourners in our congregations and communities, especially as our government creates increasingly harsh immigration laws in the name of fighting terrorism. Assumptions about identity make some people more vulnerable to political biases and discrimination than others. Our concerns about the status of immigrants in this country relate to how people are treated based on race, nationality, ethnicity and religious identity. *We reject our country’s mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence, and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our*

*immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status.*

**Link:** [www.mennoniteusa.org/NewItems/delegates/statement\\_immigration.pdf](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/NewItems/delegates/statement_immigration.pdf)

### **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (July 2004)**

#### **Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States**

One crucial practice of justice is to correct the abuses occurring in our midst. The awful conditions that are experienced by undocumented workers are not intolerable to them because they are desperate for the income. But these abuses should be regarded as intolerable by others of us. Undocumented workers are put in the position of a servant class. Michael Walzer, a political philosopher, asserts that to use a person's labor without making available the full rights of citizens is akin to tyranny (*Spheres of Justice*, Basic Books, 1983, pp. 56–61).

A Christian perspective on immigration challenges us above all to love immigrants, to establish justice for them, and to seek to be reconciled with them in a new and transformed community. While this does not automatically settle particular questions of public policy, General Assemblies have consistently advocated justice for these vulnerable neighbors.

**Link:** [www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/immigration-resolution.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/pdf/immigration-resolution.pdf)

### **The Jewish Council for Public Affairs**

#### **Resolution on Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Problems of Undocumented Migration to the United States (2004)**

Migration has been a central element of the Jewish experience since biblical times when famine forced the Jewish people to flee Canaan and resettle in Egypt. This experience has been mirrored in American-Jewish life with the immigration of Jews to the United States in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity. As a reflection of our his-

tory, and based upon the biblical imperative to welcome the stranger, the American Jewish Community has long advocated for fair and just immigration and refugee policies.

Our American-Jewish values necessitate confronting difficult immigration challenges facing our country and our community. At present, one of the most critical issues is the problem of undocumented migration to the United States. Undocumented migration involves a set of interrelated issues including: the existence of millions of individuals living in the United States without legal status; the dangerous reality of unauthorized border crossings that has resulted in thousands of deaths and increasingly violent conditions in the border regions; the extensive backlogs for family immigration visas that result in prolonged and inhumane separation of families; and the United States' pressing security needs that require the government to focus resources on individuals who pose grave dangers to the country.

**Link:** [www.jewishpublicaffairs.org](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org) once there go to Resolutions Index and select Equal Opportunity and Social Justice

### **Toward A Biblically Informed Debate on U.S. Immigration Reform by Albert Reyes, President of the Baptist University of the Americas and immediate past president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (2005)**

The current immigration reform debate should be informed by a question that goes to the heart of the issue: Does Jesus still have a mission to the poor, the prisoner, the blind and the oppressed?

The last time I checked my Bible Jesus announced his agenda to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for those in prison, to give sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed (Luke 4:14).

In fact, my Bible also tells me that Jesus was an international refugee within the first year of his life. His father and mother took him from Bethlehem to Egypt to flee infanticide as

well as political and religious oppression. The Bible does not specify whether or not Jesus' parents were required to present immigration documents when they reached the Egyptian border.

The core issue at the center of the immigration reform debate is justice. Where is our American sense of decency, the value of basic human rights, our love for children and families and fairness toward under-privileged newcomers?

Christians must ask the justice question: Is it right for the United States of America to continue to operate a dysfunctional border policy that criminalizes under-privileged and undocumented immigrants seeking to earn a living to provide basic subsistence to their family while allowing American businesses to employ these workers at lower wages?

**Link:** [www.ethicsdaily.com/article\\_detail.cfm?AID=7192](http://www.ethicsdaily.com/article_detail.cfm?AID=7192)

### **A Jewish Vision: For the Future of American Immigration and Refugee Policy (July 2005)**

Jewish religious and ethical values provide a firm foundation for Jewish involvement in immigration and refugee policy. Central Jewish teachings emphasize protection of the stranger, as seen in the over 36 references to this principle within the Torah, including: "When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong."

The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34). Jewish tradition also includes principles of Piddyon Shevuyim (redeeming the captive), Chesed (kindness), and Hachnasat Orchim (hospitality) that creates a solid framework for a compassionate response to the needs of immigrants and refugees.

**Link:** [www.hias.org/news/Docs/Jewish%20Vision%20Updates\\_\\_Oct%2014.pdf](http://www.hias.org/news/Docs/Jewish%20Vision%20Updates__Oct%2014.pdf)

### **Statement of Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform by World Relief (February 2006)**

World Relief is actively advocating for comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level, cooperating with other faith-based agencies, and working to engage the Evangelical community. We approach comprehensive immigration reform as a non-partisan issue, in which we feel called to engage based upon Scripture and our moral values.

We believe that a comprehensive approach is required that goes beyond border protection alone and addresses the current problems of our immigration system, by looking at root causes of immigration, developing workable solutions, and providing dignified relief to the millions of immigrants who are contributing to our communities, despite their lack of legal status. We also advocate for reforms that better protect those seeking refugee and asylum status.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/576.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/576.pdf)

### **Letter on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Sent to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senate Leadership by the Leadership of the Jewish Community (February 2006)**

As leaders of Jewish community organizations, we look both to the teachings of our Jewish religious and ethical tradition, and to core American values relating to immigrants, for guidance on immigration reform. They call on us to "welcome the stranger," and provide an effective legal immigration system characterized by rule of law, national interest and compassionate treatment.

A comprehensive approach to immigration reform must recognize and respond to the reality that approximately 11 million undocumented individuals currently reside in the United States; that unrealistic immigration laws and ineffective border enforcement policies have created conditions that have resulted in thousands of deaths and increasing violence in the border regions; and that extensive

backlogs for family immigration visas have led to prolonged and inhumane separation of families.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/579.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/579.pdf)

### **Presiding Bishop's Statement on Immigration Policy Episcopal Church (U.S.A.) (March 2006)**

I believe that legislation which does not acknowledge the poverty which compels persons to take incredible risks to cross borders and ignores sectors of our economy that need workers is both unworkable and immoral. While there are those who would invest in higher walls and more elaborate fences or punish those whose only crime is to escape the curse of grinding poverty, we espouse a more humane and workable approach. We support a system which permits the orderly and legal movement of a significantly larger number of workers to the U.S., extending to them the opportunity to become permanent members of our communities if that is their choice.

**Link:** [www.episcopalchurch.org/1275\\_73170\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1275_73170_ENG_HTML.htm)

### **Immigration Reform Statement by the Anti-Racism Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of California (March 2006)**

Our Baptismal covenant calls us to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all people and to respect the dignity of every human being. Our Scriptures reflect a profound empathy with the plight of the exile, teaching us that it is right to love the foreigner, and to give him/her food and clothing (Deuteronomy 10:17-19); that when a stranger lives with us in our land we must not mistreat him or oppress him/her (Exodus 22:21); that the foreign born living among us must be treated as our nativeborn; and we must love them as we love ourselves (Lev. 19:33-34).

The United States is a nation founded by immigrants, benefiting from centuries of

immigrant contributions to the sciences, the arts, governance, manual labor, our national defense, entertainment and culture. Undocumented immigrants, from Mexico, South America, Asia and other countries living in this country have become part of the fabric of our communities, schools, and churches; their departure would cause a significant vacuum in the lives of innumerable US citizens. They pay taxes (income tax, social security tax, sales taxes, etc); and they engage in significant economic activity including labor, investment and consumer spending.

Our Christian identity calls us to live a life of radical hospitality. Therefore we reject any legislation which would include the criminalization of either undocumented immigrants in the United States or those who grant them assistance.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/669.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/669.pdf)

### **Statement from the Presiding Bishop and the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2006)**

St. Paul calls on us to “[W]elcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7). Our Lutheran tradition calls on us to uphold the Biblical mandate to welcome the stranger. The Bible teaches us “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19: 33-34).” In Matthew 25, Jesus himself identified with aliens: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

We therefore request the following specific changes in legislation currently under consideration:

- Oppose the criminalization of the church, its ministers and its members who provide humanitarian aid to undocumented immigrants.
- Oppose provisions which criminalize undocumented presence.

- Provide a path to permanence for individuals currently residing and working in the United States as well as their families.
- Ensure basic constitutional due process rights in the enforcement of our laws.
- Include in the legislation the bipartisan “Agricultural Job Opportunities Act” for farm workers.

**Link:** [www.elca.org/advocacy/immad0306-5.pdf](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/immad0306-5.pdf)

### **Immigration: A Muslim Perspective (April 2006)**

Prophet Muhammad, as Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) before him did, taught that one is not a true believer until they love for others what they love for themselves.

Our greatness as a country comes from our compassion toward our most vulnerable members.

At the end, regardless of how we choose to deal with their infractions against our laws, they deserve basic human rights which include due process, food assistance and medical care when necessary. An illegal person is still a human being. While no one should condone anyone breaking our laws, we have to realize that unless the economic hardship in their home countries and our increasing demand for cheap unskilled labor are resolved, we will continue to hypocritically feed this influx while dehumanizing its victims

**Link:** [www.ocreger.com/ocreger/news/local/article\\_1104826.php](http://www.ocreger.com/ocreger/news/local/article_1104826.php)

### **Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform In the United States by the American Friends Service Committee (May 2006)**

Sooner or later, comprehensive immigration reform will need to be carried out not just unilaterally, but multilaterally, in concert with the needs and interests of other countries that send migrants or refugees to the United States and whose cultures, peoples and economic prospects are thereby bound

up with the citizens and residents of this country.

**Link:** [www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/documents/principles.pdf](http://www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights/documents/principles.pdf)

### **Open Statement about Immigration by the Global Ministries of the United Church Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (May 2006)**

All persons have the right to find economic opportunities that will allow them and their families to live in dignity (the “pursuit of happiness,” as framed in our Declaration of Independence). If those economic opportunities are unavailable in their homeland, then persons should be allowed to migrate to support themselves and their families. God instructed Abram and Sarai, the parents of our faith, to migrate to a new land; today, the voice of God continues to direct people to paths of migration and immigration. Our faith traditions also call on us to welcome the stranger among us and to promote hospitality toward the migrant, the refugees and the exiled in our communities. Our traditions also recognize that all the goods of the earth belong to God and are intended to be shared by all people.

Those fleeing violence and persecution should be afforded protection. The global community should protect those who flee wars and persecution, as many people from our own faith traditions have been forced to do throughout history. This requires that migrants be allowed to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their asylum claims fully considered by a competent authority. The human dignity and human rights of all migrants should be respected. Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected, and we must develop policies that safeguard this dignity. We must seek policies to safeguard the rights and inherent dignity of all migrants, particularly the undocumented, including their rights as workers. Family unity among migrant and immigrant families should be protected and upheld. Our faith

and moral imperatives transcend borders and compel us to act on the basis of justice and love.

**Link:** [www.globalministries.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=191](http://www.globalministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=191)

### **Theological Premises—Episcopal Church Migration Ministries**

To be linked to our immigrant origins and to affirm our nation as one having a vibrant immigrant tradition is to recall our roots as a basis for identifying with those who are repeating, although often under more traumatic circumstances, the journey of earlier sojourners.

On so many levels, the account of the Samaritan offering comfort and support to the wounded traveler underscores the Gospel imperative of hospitality. This parable reminds us that neighbors are often unlike us and may come from communities and regions that have been shunned or treated with disdain. Yet, we are told to embrace an inclusive view of family and community in expressing our faith. In the parable, the provision of hospitality is more than a gesture - it is a willingness to see the hurt friend through to recovery, to make a difference in restoring hope to the suffering. We are admonished to create the time and space to extend help. The story of the Good Samaritan calls us to invest ourselves in the restoration and recovery of others regardless of circumstance. It is also a message against the racism and prejudice that can affect our attitude toward refugees and immigrants.

**Link:** [www.ecusa.anglican.org/3687\\_32097\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm?menu=menu32104](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/3687_32097_ENG_HTML.htm?menu=menu32104)

### **75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church Resolution on Immigration (June 2006)**

And be it further resolved, that this campaign [The Alien Among You] call the church to commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their wellbeing and protection and to urge its members to resist legislation and actions

which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.

**Link:** [www.ecusa.anglican.org/3687\\_76477\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/3687_76477_ENG_HTML.htm)

### **The Southern Baptist Convention on the Crisis Of Illegal Immigration (July 2006)**

WHEREAS, There are reportedly 12 million immigrants and counting who are living and working in America without legal status, many of whom have children who are American citizens by birth; and

WHEREAS, Many of these hardworking and otherwise law-abiding immigrants have been exploited by employers and by others in society, contrary to James 5:4; now, therefore, be it...

RESOLVED, That we urge the federal government to enforce all immigration laws, including the laws directed at employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants or who are unjustly paying these immigrants substandard wages or subjecting them to conditions that are contrary to the labor laws of our country; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge citizen Christians to follow the biblical principle of caring for the foreigners among us (Deuteronomy 24:17-22) and the command of Christ to be a neighbor to those in need of assistance (Luke 10:30-37), regardless of their racial or ethnic background, country of origin or legal status.

**Link:** [www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1157](http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1157)

### **Interfaith Statement In Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform (July 2006)**

The Hebrew Bible tells us: “The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19:33-34).” In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger (cf. Matthew 25:35), for “what you

do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me (Matthew 25:40).” The Qur’an tells us that we should “serve God...and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing] (4:36).” The Hindu scripture Taitiriya Upanishad tells us: “The guest is a representative of God (1.11.2).”

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/707.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/707.pdf)

### **Undocumented Immigration—A Jewish Response by Rabbi Steve Gutow, Executive Director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (July 2006)**

How we treat the twelve million undocumented who are here in many ways colors who we are as Jews. How we react to those who want to enter our borders and become part of our country says a lot about how well we remember our own stories when we were immigrants looking for a safe haven, a place to rest and live and prosper. We have a duty to law, to our borders and to our country but, no matter what else we think or do, we must act with our hearts and our souls when we confront those who live amongst us and those who want to live amongst us. In my mind the Torah and our history point to both law and to equity, to both strength and to compassion. To me Judaism asks us to dig deep and find ways to give those who are vulnerable among us, the undocumented immigrant here in our country, a chance to find the peace and prosperity and happiness that fortune and G-d have bestowed upon us in America.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/587.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/587.pdf)

### **Pastoral Letter on the Current Immigration Issues from the General Board of the Church of the Brethren (October 2006)**

God’s call to live together well is not just for the future, however. God’s Word gives practical advice for sharing life with people of differing national identities right now. The Holiness Code contained in the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus forbids idol worship, demands justice in the courts, and lays down

the second great commandment quoted by Jesus in the New Testament, “*you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord*” (Leviticus 19:18). It also contains this more specific commandment regarding our relationships with neighbors from other nations in our midst:

*“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”* (Leviticus 19:33-34)

**Link:** [www.brethren.org/genbd/clm/clt/index.html](http://www.brethren.org/genbd/clm/clt/index.html)

### **National Association of Evangelicals Resolution on Immigration (October 2006)**

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is deeply concerned by a growing spirit of hostility towards immigrants and refugees who have become residents in our communities. While we recognize that some of our constituency feel strongly concerning issues of justice and law, we are all compelled by the love of Christ to act with compassion to our neighbors. Therefore, we pledge to eliminate the spirit of racism in any of our responses. While we recognize the right of nations to regulate their borders, we believe this responsibility should be exercised with a concern for the entire human family in a spirit of generosity and compassion (Deuteronomy 10:19, Leviticus 19:34).

Furthermore, we acknowledge that immigrants and refugees contribute much to the continuing strength and vitality of local communities and our country by their commitment to work, education and the family. We call upon our government, therefore, to maintain reasonable and just admissions policies for refugees and immigrants. As evangelicals responsible to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), we are called to show personal and corporate hospitality to those who seek a new life in our nation.

**Link:** [www.nae.net/images/Resolution%20on%20Immigration%20-%20October%202006.pdf](http://www.nae.net/images/Resolution%20on%20Immigration%20-%20October%202006.pdf)

### **Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada: Compassionate Response to U.S. Immigration Legislation**

In addition to the above initiative we urge Nazarenes:

1. to denounce and oppose the rise of insensitive reactions against undocumented immigrants, and to support any and all efforts to build bridges;
2. to provide pastoral care and crisis intervention to undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers;
3. to provide technical and financial assistance to local churches in compassionate ministry with undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers;
4. to monitor immigration policies and practices in order to ensure fair and adequate process in regard to asylum petitions, judicial review, refugee resettlement priorities and immigrant categories;
5. to become more informed and active citizens, using their voices and votes to speak for the voiceless, to defend the poor and the vulnerable and to advance the common good.

Holiness must never be limited to the sanctuary or to the moments of private prayer. It is achieved in the midst of the world, in family, in community, in friendships and in citizenship. Through their competency and by their activity, holiness persons have the vocation to bring the light of the Gospel to public policy, so that the world may be filled with the Spirit of Christ and may more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/582.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/582.pdf)

### **Statement on Immigration by the Most Reverend Anthony Evans of the National Black Church Initiative (2006)**

This issue of immigration sparks the heart of American democracy. If we cannot honor the

destiny and the foundation of our country's principles by welcoming the Blacks, the Italians, the Latinos, the Hindus and the Buddhists, we will have failed the very essence of what our forefathers Hamilton, Washington, Jefferson and Adams set out to do, what historians call the "Great American Experiment." This experiment worked because we were willing to take chances, leaving our fate in the hands of God.

The Black church was born out of racism and persecution. I have come to represent that persecuted church, the same church that Rev. C.T. Vivian did when he stood on the courthouse steps. He did this because he was trying to save the soul of America. We cannot save the soul of America if we allow our Latino brother and sisters to be ostracized, banned and deported. We must ensure that America lives up to those principles that General Pace affirmed and C.T. Vivian prayed for.

This movement is not about immigration; it is about the soul of America. If America decides to close its doors to those who yearn for the same principles that everybody over the past 200 years came to America to inherit, then America will stop being America, that unique experiment, a light of hope. It will grow dim in the eyes of the world, and eventually go out, engulfing the nation in darkness and those who stand at the door, knocking.

**Link:** [www.cirnow.org/file/594.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/594.pdf)

### **Statement from the Rev. William G. Sinkford, Unitarian Universalist Association, on Immigration Reform (2006)**

...America has, once again, created a permanent under-class of residents who are refused the dignity and civil protections that come with citizenship. To people of conscience, this situation is intolerable.

There are no easy answers, but the religious community is called to stand in solidarity with the oppressed. The dramatic sight of half a million immigrant families rallying in Los Angeles touched many of us with a heightened awareness of their plight. Our concern for family values needs to embrace these fam-

ilies as well. We are also called to acknowledge that racism has blinded most Americans to what takes place in our own kitchens, workshops and fields. For our nation to be whole, we must acknowledge that our lives of privilege are supported in thousands of ways by people whose labor is invisible and whose suffering is hidden.

Each generation of Americans is called upon to define again who we mean when we say “We, the People.” We must follow our conscience as we respond to this call. During this religious season, our thoughts and prayers are with our elected legislators as they struggle to revise our current immigration and labor policies. It is my deepest hope that their work will reflect the values of justice, equity and compassion for all.

**Link:** [www.uua.org/president/060413\\_immigration.html](http://www.uua.org/president/060413_immigration.html)



# Organizations

**American Friends Service Committee**  
[www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

**Church World Service**  
[www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)

**Council on American-Islamic Relations**  
[www.cair-net.org](http://www.cair-net.org)

**Episcopal Migration Ministries**  
[www.ecusa.anglican.org/emm](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/emm)

**Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society**  
[www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org)

**Immigration & Refugee Services of America**  
[www.irsa-uscr.org](http://www.irsa-uscr.org)

**Immigrant Solidarity Network**  
[www.immigrantsolidarity.org](http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org)

**Jewish Council for Public Affairs**  
[www.jewishpublicaffairs.org](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org)

**Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ**  
[www.ucc.org/jwm/](http://www.ucc.org/jwm/)

**Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service**  
[www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)

**Presbyterians for Just Immigration Network**  
[www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/immigration.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/immigration.htm)

**Presbyterian Peace Fellowship**  
[www.presbypeacefellowship.org](http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org)

**Refugee and Immigration Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
[www.discipleshomemissions.org/RIM/](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/RIM/)

**Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism**  
[www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)

**SocialAction.com: A Social Action Resource for the Jewish Community**  
[www.socialaction.com/issues/human\\_civil/immigrants.shtml](http://www.socialaction.com/issues/human_civil/immigrants.shtml)

**Unitarian Universalist Association Social Justice Program**  
[www.uua.org/programs/justice/](http://www.uua.org/programs/justice/)

**United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society**  
[www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org)

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**  
[www.nccbuscc.org/mrs](http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs)  
[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

## Immigrant Rights and Allied Organizations

A joint project by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) of Arizona:  
[www.vigilantewatch.org](http://www.vigilantewatch.org)

National Employment Law Project's Immigrant Worker Issues website tools: <http://www.immigrant-nonstandard.org/index.php>

National Immigration Law Center's toolkit on Social Security No Match issues:  
[http://nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA-NM\\_Toolkit/index.htm](http://nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA-NM_Toolkit/index.htm)

NILC's immigrants' rights newsletter: <http://nilc.org/pubs/iru/index.htm>

IWJ's publications on immigrant workers' issues in reconstruction of the Gulf Coast  
<http://www.iwj.org/actnow/gccre.html>

### **Additional Articles**

“Mi Casa Es Tu Casa: A Biblical Perspective on the Current Immigration Issue” by Dr. Lindy Scott, Wheaton College [www.wheaton.edu/CACE/resources/onlinearticles/immigration.htm](http://www.wheaton.edu/CACE/resources/onlinearticles/immigration.htm).

“A Labor Day Reflection on Immigration and Work” by the Most Reverend Nicholas Di-Marzio, Bishop of Brooklyn (September 2006) [www.usccb.org/sdwp/laborday2006.html](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/laborday2006.html).

“Undocumented Immigration—A Jewish Response” by Rabbi Steve Gutow, Executive Director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (July 2006): [www.cirnow.org/file/587.pdf](http://www.cirnow.org/file/587.pdf).

“The Ethics of Hospitality in a World of Nation-States” by Dana Willbanks [www.progressivechristianwitness.org/pcw/pdf/Wilbanks\\_EthicsOfHospitality.pdf](http://www.progressivechristianwitness.org/pcw/pdf/Wilbanks_EthicsOfHospitality.pdf)

“Why Fixing the Border First is Backwards” <http://bibdaily.com/pdfs/Fixing%20First.pdf>

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# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>From “Maria’s Story,” Centerings, Winter 2007, the newsletter of the 8th Day Center for Justice. Maria’s full story is on pages 68-69. It is reprinted here with permission.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer S. Hsuh and Krissah Williams, “Illegal Workers Arrested in 6-State ID Theft Sweep,” *New York Times*, December 13, 2006; “U.S. Uncovers Large-Scale Identity Theft Scheme Used By Illegal Aliens to Gain Employment at Nationwide Meat Processor,” ICE Press Release, December 13, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 20-21 for a more detailed explanation of IWJ’s stand for comprehensive immigration reform.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 22-23 for an historical overview; Resource B for an immigration chronology.

<sup>5</sup> It was not until 1965 that a law was passed creating legal barriers to immigration from anywhere in the Western Hemisphere.

<sup>6</sup> While there are large numbers of Latinos, immigrants come from every part of the globe. See page 13.

<sup>7</sup> See ICE Workplace Raids, Resource D.

<sup>8</sup> The National Conference of State Legislatures compiled a list of anti-immigrant legislation passed in 32 states. See <http://ncsl.org/programs/immig/6ImmigEnactedLegis3.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Passell, “The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.: Estimates Based on the March 2005 Current Population Survey,” Pew Hispanic Center; available at [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).

<sup>10</sup> Miriam Davidson, “Lives on the Line, Dispatches from the U.S.-Mexico Border,” University of Arizona Press, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel, et al., “Undocumented Immigrants: Facts and Figures,” Urban Institute Immigration Studies Program, January 12, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> This chart is based on 2002 data; by the end of 2006, estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants had grown to 11.5 million.

<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey Passell, “The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S,” op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Jeanne Batalova, “Spotlight on Legal Immigration to the United States,” Migration Policy Institute, August 1, 2006, based on data from *The Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, published by the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration Statistics.

<sup>15</sup> Story reprinted with the permission of *Changing Worlds*.

<sup>16</sup> National Immigration Law Center, “Paying Their Way and Then Some: Facts About the Contributions of Immigrants to Economic Growth and Public Investment,” September 2006. Available at [http://www.nilc.org/immisps/research/immispspaytheirway\\_2006-9-25.pdf](http://www.nilc.org/immisps/research/immispspaytheirway_2006-9-25.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> National Immigration Law Center, “Paying Their Way and Then Some,” op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Steve Goss, Social Security Administration's Chief Actuary, quoted in Eduardo Porter, "Illegal Immigrants are Bolstering Social Security with Billions," *New York Times*, April 5, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Statement of the Honorable Mark W. Everson, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service, Testimony Before the House Committee on Ways and Means, July 26, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Exceptions include a) victims of trafficking, b) political refugees and asylum seekers, c) Cuban/Haitian entrants, d) battered spouses and children with a pending or approved self-petition for a visa or a petition filed on their behalf by a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident (LPR).

<sup>21</sup> Medicaid is a federal health coverage program that is co-funded by states for economically indigent people. National Immigration Law Center, "Immigrant Rights Update: Access to Medicaid for Newborns of Immigrant Mothers," Vol. 20, Issue 7, December 6, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> "Guide to Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs, LSC-Funded Legal Services," revised July 2004, National Immigration Law Center.

<sup>23</sup> CRS-1B10103, Issue Brief for Congress, "Immigration Legislation and Issues for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress." Ten states, however, passed recent legislation permitting state aid for these college students.

<sup>24</sup> RAND Corporation, "Immigrants and the Cost of Medical Care," *Health Affairs*, November 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Federal funding from Medicaid for emergency medical services has been available to help cover the costs of care for undocumented aliens. Supplemental Medicaid payments are also made to hospitals that treat a disproportionate share of low-income patients. The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 appropriated \$1 billion over fiscal years 2005 through 2008 for payments to hospitals and other providers for emergency services provided to undocumented and certain other aliens.

<sup>26</sup> GAO-04-733, "Illegal Alien Schoolchildren: Issues in Estimating State-by-State Costs," U.S. Government Accountability Office, June 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence Mishel, et al., Economic Policy Institute, "The State of Working America 2004/2005," ILR Press, pp. 187-188.

<sup>28</sup> Interfaith Worker Justice, "Working on Faith: A Faithful Response to Worker Abuse in New Orleans," available at [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org).

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from Jeffrey Passell, "The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.," op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Interfaith Worker Justice, "Working on Faith," op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Dakin Campbell, "Big Payoff for Big Business on Border Security?," Global Security. Org in the News, News 21, September 17, 2006; available at [www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2006/060917-border-payoff.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2006/060917-border-payoff.htm).

<sup>32</sup> CBS NEWS/AP, "Boeing Gets 'Virtual Fence' Contract," Sept. 21, 2006; available at [www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/09/21/business/main2031319.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/09/21/business/main2031319.shtml).

<sup>33</sup> Spencer S. Hsu and John Pomfret, "Technology Has Uneven Record on Securing Border," [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), May 21, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> The Supreme Court held that an unauthorized worker is not protected by the National Labor Relations Act and therefore cannot recover back pay for unlawful job termination nor is s/he entitled to job reinstatement when fired.

<sup>35</sup> The Employee Free Choice Act, approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in February 2007, would enhance workers' protections to form a union and increase penalties against employers who violate labor laws, but undocumented workers would still have no legal recourse for unlawful termination of employment.

<sup>36</sup> An Illinois court denied back pay to a group of Chicago workers fired for filing an overtime pay claim, saying, "The Supreme

Court has made it clear that awarding back pay to undocumented aliens contravenes the policies embedded in immigration law.”

<sup>37</sup> The U.S. and 33 other nations in the Western Hemisphere are members of OAS. Key goals in OAS’ charter include promoting peace and security, democratic governments and economic cooperation among members.

<sup>38</sup> Ginger Thompson, “Santa Ana de Guadalupe Journal; A Saint Who Guides Migrants to a Promised Land,” *New York Times*, August 14, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organization of American States, Washington, DC, “Application to the Inter-American Commission on Behalf of Undocumented Workers in the United States v. United States.”

<sup>40</sup> OC-18, para. 157, quoted in “Application to the Inter-American Commission on Behalf of Undocumented Workers in the United States v. United States, op. cit.”

<sup>41</sup> Council of the City of Hazleton, “Ordinance 2006-18: Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance,” September 8, 2006. Available at [www.hazletoncity.org/home\\_frameset.htm](http://www.hazletoncity.org/home_frameset.htm).

<sup>42</sup> *Lozano v. Hazleton Temporary Restraining Order*. Case 3:06-cv-01586-JMM, October 31, 2006, United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Available at: [http://www.aclu.org/images/asset\\_upload\\_file230\\_27227.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/images/asset_upload_file230_27227.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> ACLU Press Release, “Federal Judge Blocks Hazleton Anti-Immigrant Ordinance,” October 31, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> “Overview of Local Ordinances on Immigration,” chart, Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FAIR), December 18, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Available at: <http://fairimmigration.org/learn/policy-and-politics/immigrant-justice-at-the-local-level/>.

<sup>46</sup> “Impact of Hazleton Immigration Ordinance,” WFMZ-TV Online, August 24, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> State Progress, Center for American Progress, “On the Ballot,” November 2006. Available: <http://www.americanprogress.org/projects/stateprogress/ballot.html>.

<sup>48</sup> The National Conference of State Legislatures compiled a list of 84 immigration bills passed in 32 states in 2006. Go to <http://ncsl.org/programs/immig/6ImmigEnactedLegis3.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> The Minuteman Project Official Website, available at: <http://www.minutemanproject.com>.

<sup>50</sup> David Montgomery, “New Ford Pickup Line: So Available with a Manuel,” *New York Times*, August 6, 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Associated Press Report, “Border Watch Group Submits IRS Filing, Audit,” *Arizona Daily Sun*, November 27, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> “Creating the Minutemen: A small extremist group’s campaign fueled by misinformation,” American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Available at: [www.vigilantewatch.org/CreatingtheMinutemn.pdf](http://www.vigilantewatch.org/CreatingtheMinutemn.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> “Arizona Showdown,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Summer 2005.

<sup>54</sup> “Open Season,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Spring 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Jim Gilchrist, “The Crushing Economic Cost of Illegal Immigration,” speech delivered August 26, 2005.

<sup>56</sup> “Playing Rough,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Fall 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus,” 1883.

<sup>58</sup> See Resource B for a Historical Timeline covering the changes in Immigration Law in the U.S.

<sup>59</sup> “Message on Immigration,” approved by the Board of the Division for Church in Society and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on November 16, 1998.

- <sup>60</sup> Warren Adams-Leavitt, "Ideology and the Prophetic Tradition," available at [www.piconetwork.org/linkeddocuments/Adams-LeavittArticle.pdf](http://www.piconetwork.org/linkeddocuments/Adams-LeavittArticle.pdf).
- <sup>61</sup> Imâm Al-Hajj Talib Abdur-Rashid, "The Challenge of Modern Ministry in the Prophetic Tradition, keynote address to the Unitarian Universalist Association Continental Conference on Urban Ministries, March 2001.
- <sup>62</sup> Charles Ess, "Prophetic, Wisdom, and Apocalyptic Traditions in Judaism and Christianity."
- <sup>63</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1978.
- <sup>64</sup> Adapted from the ELCA Church in Society.
- <sup>65</sup> Interview with Kay Berkson conducted January 31, 2007.
- <sup>66</sup> This story is based on interviews by Jessica Vazquez Torres with the Rev. Walter Coleman, November 17, 2005 and February 20, 2006.
- <sup>67</sup> Kathy Gilbert, "Local church joins in immigration struggle," *World Wide Faith News*, June 13, 2006.
- <sup>68</sup> Roberto Lopez, "La Familia Latina Unida," *CIVITAS* (The Newsletter of the Coalition of African, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois), May 1, 2006.
- <sup>69</sup> Kathy Gilbert, "Church Rallies around Woman Battling to Stay in the U.S.," *United Methodist News Service*, August 17, 2006.
- <sup>70</sup> Alice Woodward, "Elvira Arellano's Defiant Stand," *Revolution* #58, August 27, 2006.
- <sup>71</sup> Lou Dobbs Tonight, transcript for August 16, 2006, available at <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/060816/ldt.01.html>.
- <sup>72</sup> Interviews with Fr. Sean Carroll conducted on November 14, 2006, and January 26, 2007.
- <sup>73</sup> The interviews on which this piece is based occurred on November 8, 2006 (Imam Mustafa); November 13, 2006 (Hussam Ayloush); November 15, 2006 (Imam Bray); and November 17, 2006 (Sadiya Ahmed).
- <sup>74</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," April 4, 1967.
- <sup>75</sup> National Immigration Law Center (NILC), "Laws, Resolutions, and Policies Instituted Across the U.S. Limiting Enforcement of Immigration Laws by Local Authorities," July 2004.
- <sup>76</sup> "M.C.C. Immigration Committee Recommendations for Enforcement of Immigration Laws by Local Police Agencies," adopted by Major Cities Chiefs, June 2006. Available at: [http://www.houstontx.gov/police/pdfs/mcc\\_position.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/police/pdfs/mcc_position.pdf).
- <sup>77</sup> Jesse McKinley, "Immigrant Protection Rules Draw Fire," *New York Times*, November 12, 2006.
- <sup>78</sup> "City Officials and Community Leaders Join Mayor Newsom in Supporting Immigrant Rights," Press Release, City and County of San Francisco Office of the Mayor, April 6, 2006.
- <sup>79</sup> Story reprinted with the permission of Changing Worlds.
- <sup>80</sup> Essay by José F. Morales, Jr. (M.Div., McCormick Theological Seminary), reprinted with permission. Rev. Morales serves as associate pastor at Iglesia del Pueblo Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and as executive director of that congregation's social agency, Hope Center of Northwest Indiana.
- <sup>81</sup> German pastor Martin Niemöller is said to have written this poem in 1976, as he reflected on the apathy of German intellectuals to stand up to the rise of Nazi power. Originally a supporter of Hitler, Niemöller was later imprisoned in Hitler's concentration camps. This version of the poem is found inscribed at the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston, Massachusetts.
- <sup>82</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, April 16, 1963.
- <sup>83</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, "Immigration and Naturalization Fundamentals."

<sup>84</sup> CRS Report for Congress, “Immigration and Naturalization Fundamentals,” op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> CRS Report for Congress, “Immigration and Naturalization Fundamentals,” RL31114, May 20, 2003, pp. 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> See Made in Mexico, Inc.’s Web site [http://www.madeinmexicoinc.com/About\\_Us.htm](http://www.madeinmexicoinc.com/About_Us.htm)

<sup>87</sup> Language requirement is waived for people who are at least 50 years old who have lived at least 20 years in the U.S. or who are at least 55 and have lived in the U.S. at least 15 years. Special consideration on the civics requirement is given to aliens who are over age 65 and have lived in the U.S. at least 20 years. CRS-RS20916, Report for Congress, “Immigration and Naturalization Fundamentals.”

<sup>88</sup> Arthur N. Read, “Learning from the Past: Designing Effective Worker Protections for Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” General Counsel of Friends of Farmworkers, Inc., January 2007.

<sup>89</sup> U. S. Immigration Reform Commissioner Richard Estrada’s 1995 testimony before the U. S. House Judiciary Committee’s Immigration and Claims Subcommittee.

<sup>90</sup> GAO-07-235R, “Potential Oversight Issues: Reform Immigration Policy to Ensure Equity and Economic Competitiveness — Suggested areas for Congressional Oversight,” November 17, 2006. GAO is the investigative research arm of Congress.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. GAO’s Report to the Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, “Foreign Workers: Information on Selected Countries’ Experiences,” September 2006, p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> Testimony of Rebecca Smith, National Employment Law Project, Hearing on Guest-worker Programs: Impact on the American Workforce and U.S. Immigration Policy, U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, July 19, 2006.

<sup>93</sup> Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, “Immigration: Policy Considerations Related to Guest Worker Programs,” December 11, 2006, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> CRS Report for Congress, “Immigration: Policy Considerations Related to Guest Worker Programs,” op. cit. (Returning H-2Bs and H-2B workers who extend their stay are not counted in the cap.)

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, “Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2006-2011,” p. 35.

<sup>96</sup> The federally proposed Employee Free Choice Act, designed to protect workers’ right to join a union, is not yet law in America thus thousands of U.S. citizens annually lose their jobs during union organizing campaigns.

<sup>97</sup> David Bacon, “Be Our Guests,” *The Nation*, September 27, 2004.

<sup>98</sup> The Legal Services Corporation, established by Congress to provide free legal assistance through its offices nationwide, is barred from representing non-agricultural workers holding H-2B visas. 45 CFR Ch. XVI § 1626.5

<sup>99</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy, “Employment Law Guide,” 2005, p. 68.

<sup>100</sup> “Responsible Reform of Immigration Laws Must Protect Working Conditions for all Workers in the U.S.” AFL-CIO Executive Council, March 1, 2006. AFL-CIO Legislative Alerts: January 11, May 16, and May 23, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, “Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2006-2011, p. 36.

<sup>102</sup> Used with permission of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

<sup>103</sup> RESULTS is a national anti-hunger organization.

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<sup>105</sup> Story reprinted with the permission of Changing Worlds.

# About the Authors

## **Kim Bobo, Executive Director**

Kim is the Founder and Executive Director of Interfaith Worker Justice (formerly the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice). In 1991, Kim founded the Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues out of which the vision for IWJ developed. Kim has over 25 years of organizing experience, as a former trainer for the Midwest Academy and former Director of Organizing for Bread for the World. She is the author of *Lives Matter: A Handbook for Christian Organizing*, and co-author of the best-selling organizing manual in the country, *Organizing for Social Change*.

## **José Oliva, National Coordinator IWJ Workers' Center Network**

José has created a program that blends elements of popular education and direct action organizing, with the goal of allowing workers to shape their own lives. Born in Xelaju, Guatemala, to parents forced to flee in 1985, his early organizing experiences came through Casa Guatemala, a solidarity organization, where he directed the Guatemala Radio Project and eventually became its Executive Director. At Casa Guatemala he organized day laborers on Chicago's street corners. As Coordinator of the IWJ National Workers' Centers Network, he has created a program that blends elements of popular education with direct action organizing, with the goal of "allowing workers to shape their own lives." He has received the Chicago Fire Hispanic Heroes Award, the Public Allies Tomorrow's Leaders Today Award and currently serves on Illinois Governor Blagojevich's Panel on Workplace Safety.

## **Hollen Reischer, Public Policy and Organizing Advocate**

A recent graduate of Duke University, Hollen earned a B.A. in Psychology as well as a certificate in Documentary Studies. Hollen received the Griffith University Service Award in recognition of her involvement in facilitating dialogues and designing programming around issues of race relations, mental health advocacy and environmental education. Currently, Hollen is serving as a corps member in AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps, a program which enables young Jews to live out and deepen their commitments to Jewish life and social change through a year of work in urban non-profits which serve low-income people. Hollen currently coordinates the summer undergraduate internship programs at Interfaith Worker Justice as well as contributes to the development of various public policy and organizing initiatives.

## **Rev. Jessica Vazquez Torres, National Religious Outreach Coordinator**

Jessica is an ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). From 1999 until the Spring of 2006, she served as General Staff in the Office of the General Minister and President. A graduate from the University of Central Florida in Orlando and Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, she currently serves as National Religious Outreach Coordinator with Interfaith Worker Justice in Chicago. A "1.5 generation" Latina of Puerto Rican descent, she is also an Anti-Racism Core-Organizer/Trainer with the Disciples of Christ in Indianapolis and Crossroads in Chicago. When asked why she dedicates her ministry to the transformation

of social institutions she says, “So that my niece can experience a church community where her identity as a young Latina woman of Puerto Rican and Mexican descent are affirmed and nurtured.”

### **Ted Smukler, Public Policy Director**

Before coming to IWJ, Ted worked for seven years as the senior researcher and community advocacy director for two major labor unions, involved in comprehensive organizing campaigns at hospitals, agencies for the developmentally disabled and other service providers. He was the lead researcher and author of several major union publications. Ted also brings more than 20 years of community organizing experience in the Chicago metropolitan area, working on issues such as affordable housing, school reform and parental leadership involvement, public safety, and treatment for addicts. Ted also had a brief career as a teacher, teaching 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in a Chicago public school and also working at an alternative school for high school dropouts.

### **Elisabeth Solomon, Senior Public Policy Analyst**

Elisabeth has upwards of 15 years experience in research and public policy issue development. As a researcher for the Commission on Intergovernmental Cooperation, a bipartisan research arm of the Illinois General Assembly, she catalogued and exposed waste and abuse in the state’s employment training system in a controversial report, *The Organization and Administration of Education for Employment Programs in Illinois*. She monitored the implementation of Illinois’ first wave of welfare reform for the Public Welfare Coalition resulting in an extensive report, *Beyond the Hype*, which was distributed to the Illinois Congressional members and used by reform advocates statewide.