

DISAGREEMENT IN UNITY ~ IMMIGRATION

God speaks on this issue through scripture:

Exodus 23:9: “Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

Leviticus 19:34: The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 25:23: The land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers.

Deuteronomy 27:19: Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

Romans 12:13: Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 13:10: Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Colossians 3:11: Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Hebrews 13:2: Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

3 John 5: Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

Romans 13:1-2: Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

1 Peter 2:13-17: Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

Based on this scripture, the position of the Christian Reformed Church states:

Teaching that all people are created in the image of God, Scripture consistently directs God’s people to be welcoming toward strangers in their midst and to extend special care to those most vulnerable to social or economic conditions that threaten their ability to survive. The Christian Reformed Church in North America affirms the need to reach out in hospitality and compassion to immigrant peoples and refugees and encourages congregations to demonstrate this concern through actions including but not limited to the following:

- Prayerful study and discussion of issues related to the causes that motivate people to immigrate to other lands. These exercises can deepen our understanding of the circumstances under which many people live.
- Mindful attention to the plight of both documented and undocumented workers and people without status, reaching out in love to those who seek help for themselves and for their children in terms of financial assistance, food, clothing, and shelter. ↪

- Study of immigration laws and practices and seeking to reform any such law and practices that appear to be unduly harsh or unjust.
- Advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform that seeks the well-being and flourishing of people without legal status and provides increased opportunities for immigrants to gain legal status.
- Advocacy for just and dignified treatment of persons arrested and incarcerated because of their lack of status, and for humane treatment of such persons facing long-term imprisonment.

Points to consider:

- God is a God of order, not chaos. As such, He establishes the rule of law to maintain order and safety. Immigration requires a clear and enforceable process that protects the citizens of this nation as well as those who are requesting to enter the country.
- While we recognize the need for law, we also recognize the presence of injustice in our current system in the separation of children from their parents and the extreme wait-times for those applying for entry.
- While Christians live within the nations of this world, our citizenship belongs to another nation, the kingdom of God (Hebrews 13:14). This kingdom transcends political borders. The concern that Christians have for the suffering of this world is not limited to the political borders in which we live. Our concern for the poor of this nation is equal to our concern for the poor of other nations.

Conclusions:

- Our response to the issue of immigration must include a commitment to order and the laws of the nation, as well as an attitude of compassion to people who are in danger. The rhetoric around this issue tends to emphasize compassion over order, or order over compassion. The position of followers of Jesus includes both equally, in reflection of God's justice and love
- The true solution to the problem of immigration is to address conditions in the country of origin for those seeking entrance to the U.S., making it possible to live in peace and prosperity without leaving their homes.
- While we work for peace and prosperity in the country of origin, we also recognize that we must respond with compassion and order to those already at the border, as well as those who have already entered this country. Our response must include all three groups, those still in their home countries, those seeking asylum at the borders, and those who are currently in the country illegally.

Actions:

- We call the people of our church to pray for those who are suffering, both within and outside of the United States.
- We commit to work with individuals, as God provides the resources, who are attempting to enter this country legally.
- We encourage our people to consider the justice of our immigration system when electing our leaders.

