

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-A022
Title: Commend the Work of Episcopal Migration Ministries
Proposer: Standing Commission on World Mission
Topic: Refugees

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-D009 Set Forth Christian Principles to Guide Responses to Human Migration
2015-A154 Recognize the 75th Anniversary and Efforts of EMM
1997-D081 Develop Advocacy Agenda of Refugee Admissions and Asylum

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-C033 Denounce Racism Against Immigrants and Advocate for Immigration Reform
1982-A063 Encourage Relief for Refugees

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

A022 - Commend the Work of Episcopal Migration Ministries

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Standing Commission on World Mission

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 05 - World Mission

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring,

That the 80th General Convention commend the work and mission of Episcopal Migration Ministries, specifically its faithful ministry of welcome and love to more than 95,000 refugees through its 40 year-old Resettlement Program and its 80 year-old Church Engagement Program; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention reaffirm that The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to welcome the stranger and respect the dignity of every human being and that those fleeing persecution have a particular claim on our attention and concern as they seek a life of dignity and peace in the face of oppression; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention endorse the continued ministry of Episcopal Migration Ministries in responding to the needs of refugees, even as the number allowed to enter the United States has been greatly reduced in recent years, and working with the Church through the Church Engagement Program to minister to asylum seekers, those in detention, and all migrants.

Explanation

The Episcopal Church has served immigrants new to the United States since the late 1800s, when the Church opened port chaplaincies to minister to sojourners on both coasts. In the 1930s, local parishes collected donations to provide steamship passage for those fleeing Nazi Europe. Out of this effort, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief was

born, the forerunner organization to Episcopal Relief & Development and Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM). Since the mid- and late 20th century, EMM has partnered with other faith organizations to resettle those oppressed by the Iron Curtain, genocides of Southeast Asia, wars and conflict in Africa and the Middle East. In 1988, EMM was formally established as a resettlement agency and, in partnership with a network of affiliate agencies, dioceses, churches, and volunteers, is today one of only nine national agencies through which all refugees enter the United States.

At baptism, we vow, with God's help, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as yourself. In the face of mounting obstacles, the staff of EMM have courageously put that promise into action and continue to lead the way in refugee resettlement and in building ministries of welcome, education, and advocacy across the Church.

The process of deepening relationships with the Church includes discerning together what the ministry opportunities and needs for local churches and dioceses are concerning migration ministries. The EMM Church Engagement unit has led local discernment which has birthed two new vibrant ministry areas in immigration detention and asylum. Consistent with Executive Council Resolution MB001 (Oct. 15, 2018), the Standing Commission on World Mission urges the Convention to lift up and commend EMM's faithful ministry and encourage individual and parish collaboration and support through advocacy, personal involvement, and funding.



Resolution Number: 2018-D009
Title: Set Forth Christian Principles to Guide Responses to Human Migration
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recognize that human migration has always been part of the human condition, and that human migration will continue in future, and will likely increase due to any number of variables including the effects of climate change on human habitat, economic instability, or ongoing war and conflict, and remembering the call in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to welcome the stranger, building stronger and more diverse community: “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25: 35, 40); and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention set forth these principles to guide our church’s response to human migration, including internal migration, in the future:

1. We recognize the fundamental human rights of all people as expressed in our Baptismal Covenant and we reaffirm that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to all refugees and both regular and irregular migrants;
2. We remember that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were refugees, as they were forced to flee into a foreign land to escape violence;
3. We call on all governments to keep their commitments and legal obligations to respect the rights and dignity of all people, including access to justice and social services, while recognizing the complexity of developing just immigration policies in any country, and the legitimate need to protect borders and address security threats to sovereign nations;
4. We commit the church to learning and engaging migration issues as part of the Jesus Movement, sacredly holding the voices and leadership of migrants themselves and honoring their leadership in this process;
5. We will endeavor to learn and address root causes of migration and advocate for just solutions with Anglican/Episcopal, ecumenical, and interfaith partners;
6. We acknowledge the connection between U.S. policies, and the policies of other states, and the root drivers of migration, including climate change, armed conflict, and disruption of local economies through global trade policies;
7. We stress the importance of demonstrating hospitality and welcome as Christian values at the local level, preaching hospitality and positive storytelling to overcome xenophobia;
8. We insist that the United States of America and other powerful, wealthy nations, and all nations to the best of their ability, contribute to resettlement, establish and maintain safe and orderly humanitarian protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other migrants seeking long-term solutions and safety;
9. We call on all nations to maintain family unity and safety during migration;
10. We insist that economic and foreign relationships among governments should not increase the need of migration due to economic hardships, persecution, and violence;
11. We insist that governments strive to maintain conditions which are conducive to internal stability and employment opportunity;

12. **In the event that people are forced to migrate, we insist that our governments address the drivers holistically, without racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, health status, or religious prejudice;**
13. **We insist that our governments adhere to the internationally accepted principle known as non-refoulement, that stipulates that countries should not return migrants and refugees to unsafe conditions in their home countries or other countries;**
14. **We recognize the links between migrants in vulnerable transit situations and human trafficking and other dangers, and will seek to establish and maintain robust, safe, and orderly routes for refugees;**
15. **We urge governments to expand refugee resettlement as a humanitarian response that offers individuals safety and opportunity;**
16. **We recognize that displacement due to climate change already happens and will increase, and we insist that our governments and the international community must commit to development of long-term protection solutions for persons displaced by climate change; and be it further**

Resolved, That this General Convention recognize the process underway at the United Nations to establish a Global Compact on Refugees,[i] and a Global Compact on Migration, processes that have included advocacy by The Episcopal Church Representative to the UN and by the Office of Government Relations Refugee and Immigration Policy Advisor; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention urge the Office of the Presiding Bishop to ensure continued representation of The Episcopal Church at the United Nations and other multinational consultations with faith communities on refugee and migrant issues, alongside the Anglican Communion Office, Lutheran World Federation, and other ecumenical and interfaith partners in responding to the global refugee crisis; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention encourage all congregations and dioceses to learn about the intricacies of migration, including root causes through the resources provided by Episcopal Migration Ministries and its Partners in Welcome network and engage in aiding migrants to the best of their ability.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1065-1067.



Resolution Number: 2015-A154
Title: Recognize the 75th Anniversary and Efforts of EMM
Legislative Action Taken: Adopted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the House of Bishops of the 78th General Convention celebrates the ministry of Episcopal Migration Ministry for these past 75 years and invites the members of our church to join in continual support through our finances, advocacy, and personal involvement; and be it further

Resolved, That the effective refugee resettlement programs of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society achieved during these past 75 years working in partnership with its affiliate network, along with dioceses, faith communities, and volunteers have welcomed refugees from around the globe; and be it further

Resolved, That this House of Bishops recognizes the life-saving ministry of the Episcopal Migration Ministry for resettling 5,155 refugees in 2014 from all around the globe through the assistance and work of many of our dioceses and congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That this House of Bishops encourages its dioceses and congregations to respond to the need of welcoming the stranger in our midst through the work of Episcopal Migration Ministry acknowledging the information from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that every four seconds someone is forced to flee due to conflict, persecution, or fear of violence; that there are currently more than 50 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide, the most in the post-World War II era.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 208.



Resolution Number: 1997-D081
Title: Develop Advocacy Agenda of Refugee Admissions and Asylum
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church charge Episcopal Migration Ministries with the responsibility for developing and implementing an advocacy agenda which reflects the concern of the Episcopal Church that the U.S. Government uphold a generous program of refugee admissions in response to the worldwide refugee crisis, maintain a just system of asylum for persecuted persons seeking safety in the United States, and ensure that needy immigrants are not unfairly denied access to essential services and benefits.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 250.