

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D009
TITLE: Christian Principles for Responding to Human Migration
PROPOSER: Ms. Helena Mbele-Mbong
TOPIC: Immigration

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-D048 Support Immigration Actions for Youth and Parents
2012-B028 Reform Refugee Policy
2009-B006 Advocate for Immigration Reform
2006-A017 Adopt the Principles of “The Alien Among You” as the Church Policy
1997-D081 Develop Advocacy Agenda of Refugee Admissions and Asylum
1994-A101 Urge the US Government to Apply Equitable Refugee Policies
1985-D113 Request Congress to Reform Immigration Legislation

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

2015-D057 Recommit to Giving Sanctuary to Immigrants
2015-D079 Urge Church-Wide Assistance to Undocumented Persons
2012-D059 Halt Unjust Immigration Enforcement

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

D009 Christian Principles for Responding to Human Migration

Proposer	Ms. Helena Mbele-Mbong
Endorsed by	Hallanan, The Rev. Sunny; Lawton, Ms. Sarah
Sponsored by	
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RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, 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 the effects of climate change on human habitat, remembering the call in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to welcome the stranger: “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

- 2 *Resolved*, That this General Convention set forth these principles to guide our church’s response to human migration in the future:
 1. We recognize the complexity of developing just immigration policies in any country, and we acknowledge the legitimate need to protect borders and address security threats to sovereign nations;
 2. We commit the church to learning and engaging migration issues as part of the Jesus Movement, uplifting the voices and leadership of migrants themselves in this process;
 3. We will endeavor to learn and address root causes of migration and develop just solutions with Anglican/ Episcopal, ecumenical, and interfaith partners;
 4. We acknowledge the connection between U.S. policies, and the policies of other powerful and wealthy states, and the root causes of migration, including climate change, armed conflict, and disruption of local economies through global trade policies;
 5. 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 and establishing and maintaining safe and orderly humanitarian protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other migrants seeking long-term solutions and safety, demanding that our governments uphold their international legal obligations and maintain a focus on ensuring humanitarian protections for refugees and protections for the rights and dignity of all migrants, including the basic principle of keeping families together;
 6. We insist that all our governments strive to create conditions both at home and abroad where people are not forced to migrate due to economic conditions, persecution, and violence; but that when people are forced to migrate, our governments address these root causes holistically, without racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice;
 7. We insist that our governments not return migrants and refugees to unsafe conditions in their home countries or other countries;

8. 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 to be resettled, contributing our own treasure and time to this project;
9. We recognize that displacement due to climate change is likely to increase, and that while climate change refugees may not meet the currently recognized definition of refugee status, we insist that 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
- 3 *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 participation of the TEC Representative to the UN and recommendations from the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI);[ii] and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That this General Convention urge the Presiding Bishop to ensure continued representation of him and The Episcopal Church in United Nations and other multinational consultations with faith communities on refugee and migrant issues, alongside the Anglican Communion Office, Lutheran World Service, and other partners in responding to the global refugee crisis, and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That this General Convention encourage all congregations and dioceses to learn about the intricacies of migration and become engaged in aiding migrants to the best of their ability.

EXPLANATION

Our news sources continue to fill us with stories of people being forced to migrate from war, civil strife, discrimination, climate change – to seek refuge simply to survive. Others feel forced to migrate due to little or no economic opportunity to provide basic needs for their families – to seek a better life. With the exception of natural disasters, all of these are a result of policy – political, economic, social/cultural – laws written and social attitudes. This is a humanitarian and human rights crisis that shows no signs of letting up; indeed, too often of increasing – again, due to policy.

Countries continue to be overwhelmed by the number of refugees washing up on their shores and traversing their borders. They are struggling to cope with the refugees, which increases the reaction to them. In the past year alone, immigration and reception of refugees and migrants has become more difficult in many receiving countries, in the USA and in many European countries. The challenges of resettlement and integration, real or perceived, have raised a sentiment against migrants and for national “purity,” leading to harsher policy toward migrants. Following the 2016 UN New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the international community are working on a Global Compact for refugees and a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, to be adopted later this year.

As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, care for the poor. We are concerned with ensuring policies that benefit the common good, including that of migrants in our midst. Policies in one country, coupled with globalization and effects of development and climate change raise economic, political, and cultural concerns far beyond the borders of that country. These are concerns of all faith organizations and inter-faith relations.

Those who work with refugees and migrants, are increasingly aware of the importance of faith-

sensitivity, respecting the faith of refugees and migrants and providing spiritual support and understanding in their traumatic situations. International organizations, including the UNHCR, and NGOs recognize the very real role faith-based organizations play at local and national levels in providing planning and delivery of protection and more broadly in areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. They are all the more effective when working in concert with other FBOs and more secular organizations, whether locally or having their voice heard in international fora, including the United Nations and related organizations.

As we seek to respect the dignity of all human kind, The Episcopal Church is called to not only welcome the stranger, but to grapple with the implications of our own actions and policies, the actions and policies of our governments on the well-being of all our peoples, to challenge them where necessary, to support them where we can, and to be engaged in the work, as parishes and dioceses, through the work of Episcopal Migration Ministries, collaborating with other faith-based organizations, NGOs and international agencies wherever we can at all levels, be it toward establishing global policy or direct assistance in a given location.

[i] See the UNHCR website for information on the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the global compact on refugees and the global compact on migration:
<http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

[ii] The Board of JLI includes representatives from ERD and the Anglican Website. See their website:
<https://jliflc.com/> Their recommendations can be found at: <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/events/conferences/5afc2dcd7/joint-recommendations-role-local-faith-communities-refugee-response.html>



Resolution Number: 2015-D048
Title: Support Immigration Actions for Youth and Parents
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention urge The Episcopal Church to support the goals of expanded immigration relief for youth and parents designed to keep families together, as outlined in the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) executive actions; and be it further
Resolved, That The Episcopal Church re-affirm 2009-B006 which advocates for immigration reform.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 408.



Resolution Number: 2012-B028
Title: Reform Refugee Policy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church urge the United States Congress to reform the Refugee Act of 1980 in order to modernize the nation's refugee resettlement program; and be it further

Resolved, That such modernization efforts include but not be limited to, meeting the urgent needs of a diverse refugee population through specialized and extended case management, culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services, recertification assistance for refugees with a professional background, restoration of federal benefits from 8 months to at least one year, housing and transportation assistance, and other innovative policies that create an adaptive, sustainable, and effectual integration pathway for refugees that helps them reestablish their lives in welcoming communities and live to the full potential of their talents and abilities in freedom and safety; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church, in response to our baptismal covenant's call to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being, as part of the Anglican Communion work to identify emerging refugee crises on the ground and to lift up populations who lack access to durable solutions, including resettlement and amplify their voices to local and global decision makers.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 320-321.



Resolution Number: 2009-B006
Title: Advocate for Immigration Reform
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention recognize that all people living in the United States are entitled to protection provided by due process of law and that all immigrants and their families are entitled to receive protection granted by our laws and Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention call for a moratorium on roadside checkpoints and raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at work sites, transportation systems, community gatherings, places of worship, lawful assemblies and private residences leaving families torn apart and children parentless and negatively affecting businesses, workers and communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention advocate for a return of congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform which will allow millions of undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention deplore conditions found in immigration detention centers and the over-reliance on a costly prison-like detention system for immigrants, and urge the uses of alternatives to detention, and calls for accountability and oversight to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care and sanitary conditions; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention call for termination of any program which allows or funds local enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law, and return that enforcement to Federal Immigration Agents, leaving local law enforcement agencies the work of keeping communities safe and dedicating their resources to that end, and provide for a sense of safety for immigrant victims of crimes to come forward and report without fear of detention and deportation; and be it further

Resolved, That in as much as youth are a priority of The Episcopal Church, the 76th General Convention support the provision of conditional legal status for undocumented youth who arrived as infants and/or children and have grown up as members of our communities and schools, providing for them the opportunity to pursue higher education and/or serve the United States so they can become full contributing members of our communities and could eventually become U.S. Citizens.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 142.



Resolution Number: 2006-A017
Title: Adopt the Principles of “The Alien Among You” as the Church Policy
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive “The Alien Among You” in the Blue Book Report of the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns; and, while recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders, adopt the following fundamental principles included in “The Alien Among You” as the policy of The Episcopal Church.

1. **Undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency.**
2. **Legal workers should be allowed to enter the United States to respond to recognized labor force needs.**
3. **Close family members should be allowed to reunite without undue delay with individuals lawfully present in the United States.**
4. **Fundamental U.S. principles of legal due process should be granted all persons.**
5. **Enforcement of national borders and immigration policies should be proportional and humane; and be it further**

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church undertake a campaign to educate Episcopalians as to the plight of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, which will include information about the root causes of migration; and be it further

Resolved, That this campaign call the Church to commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their well being 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.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 532-533.



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.



Resolution Number: 1994-A101
Title: Urge the US Government to Apply Equitable Refugee Policies
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 1994 General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges the United States government to apply its refugee policies in a uniform and equitable manner without regard to the nationality, race or creed of those seeking refugee status so that, for example, those individuals from Central America and the Caribbean Basin can be treated equally with individuals from Eastern Europe and Russia; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the 1994 General Convention be requested to send a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, and to the Episcopalian and other appropriate Members of Congress.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 1994* (New York: General Convention, 1995), p. 286.



Resolution Number: 1985-D113
Title: Request Congress to Reform Immigration Legislation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 68th General Convention, as it has in the past, call upon Congress to enact immigration legislation of a positive nature that will recognize human realities of the millions of undocumented people in the country, provide for appropriate asylum and safe haven for those fleeing political repression from abroad, and will eliminate the many repressive features contained in the present Senate bill, S. 1200; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this Resolution be transmitted to all members of the United States Senate, and to the members of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives; and be it further

Resolved, That all deputies to this Convention, as individuals and through the appropriate social concerns committees of their churches, write to their respective United States Senators.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 257.