

March 24, 2006

Dear President Bush and Members of Congress:

We are writing to you as non-partisan Evangelical leaders and churches who are concerned about the issue of immigration in the United States. We urge you to support comprehensive immigration reform. The current state of immigration in this country is a complex situation, which requires a workable solution beyond increasing enforcement mechanisms.

We support comprehensive immigration reform, based on Biblical mandates, our Christian faith and values, and our commitment to civil and human rights. We value immigrants as human beings, made in the image of God. We are aware of the obstacles that immigrants face, especially undocumented individuals, because they are vital members of our churches, our communities, and our nation. Evangelical immigrants are a continually growing part of our churches.

God requires that we show love and compassion to aliens. In Deuteronomy 10:18-19, we learn that "[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt." Leviticus 19:33-34 teaches us, "when an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."

We are deeply concerned with the possibility of some anti-immigrant provisions being included in legislation that could pass in Congress this year. Instead, we encourage Congress and the Administration to enact comprehensive immigration reform that includes the following principles.

- Reforms in our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;
- The creation of more responsive legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner that prevents their exploitation and assures them due process;
- The option for those individuals and families who are already living in the U.S. and working hard to apply for permanent legal status and citizenship if they choose to do so, by meeting specific application criteria; and
- Border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of enforcing our laws.

Thank you for your consideration of these important principles.

Sincerely,

National Evangelical Organizations:

Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI, Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Executive Director

Esperanza USA, Philadelphia, PA, Rev. Luis Cortes, Jr., President

Evangelicals for Social Action, Philadelphia, PA, Ronald J. Sider, President

Jubilee Campaign USA, Fairfax, VA, Ann Buwalda, Esq., Director

Latino Leadership Foundation, Chicago, IL, Noel Castellanos, President

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, Sacramento, CA, Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, Jr., President and CEO

Sojourners, Washington, DC, Jim Wallis, Executive Director

World Evangelical Alliance, Rev. Geoff Tummicliffe, International Director

World Relief, Baltimore, MD, Sammy Mah, President and CEO, Dr. Gordon MacDonald, Chairman of the Board of Directors

Local Churches and Other Evangelical Organizations:

Bilingual Christian Church of Baltimore, Dr. Angel L. Nunez, Baltimore, MD

Grace Life Church, Rev. Roger Kim, Baltimore, MD

The Brethren Church, Rev. Kenneth Humm, Ashland, OH

Individual Evangelical Leaders:

Dr. Will Ackles, Pastor, Calvin Presbyterian Church, Shoreline, WA

Rev. George Antonakos, Associate Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD

Scott Arbeiter, Senior Associate Pastor, Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, WI

Richard Armstrong, Sr., Former Senior Vice President, Service Master, Fort Myers, FL

Nancy Elizabeth Bedford, Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL

Rev. Paul Borthwick, Senior Consultant, Development Associates Int., Lexington, MA

Don L. Bray, Board Chair, Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, Indianapolis, IN

Emily R. Brink, Editor, Reformed Worship, Senior Research Fellow, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Dr. Clive Calver, Senior Pastor, Walnut Hill Community Church, Former President, World Relief, Bethel, CT

Peter T. Cha, PhD, Associate Professor, Pastoral Theology Department, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Dr. Gustavo Crocker, Regional Director, Eurasia Region, Church of the Nazarene

Laird R. O. Edman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Northwestern College, Orange City, IA

Diane Eldridge, Pastor, Lincoln Glen Church, San Jose, CA

Dr. David Espinoza, Board of Directors, Global University, Assemblies of God, San Fernando, CA

Deborah Fikes, Executive Director, Midland Ministerial Alliance, Midland, TX

Carlos Guadagno, Pastor, Crown of Love Evangelical Free Church, Palatine, IL

Dr. William J. Hamel, President, Evangelical Free Church of America, Minneapolis, MN

Dr. Juan Hernandez, Founder, Center for US-Mexico Studies, University of Texas at Dallas, Former Cabinet Member for Mexican President Vicente Fox, Fort Worth, TX

Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland – A Church Distributed, Longwood, FL

Dr. Roberto Hodgson, Hispanic Mission Director, Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO

Rev. R D Hudgens, Lead Pastor, Reba Place Church, Evanston, IL

Dr. Andy Johnson, Professor of New Testament, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO

Jimmie King, Director, Neighbor to Neighbor Outreach, McKinney, TX

Rev. Paul Kortenhoven, Christian Reformed World Missions, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Brian Kluth, Senior Pastor, First Evangelical Free Church, Founder, www.MAXIMUMgenerosity.org, Colorado Springs, CO

Rev. David Lazo, World Harvest Spanish Churches

Rev. Bob LeMoine, Minister, Church of the Nazarene, Berwick, ME

Jamie Lindeman, Staff Partner Coordinator, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Valerie Coe Lowder, Pastor, Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Church, Virginia Beach, VA

Bishop Jaime Loya, International Christian Churches of America

Alejandro Mandes, Pastor, Communion Chapel, San Antonio, TX

Scott M. Manetsch, PhD, Chair of the Church History and the History of Christian Thought Department, Associate Professor of Church History, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Deborah A. McFarland, PhD, MPH, Professor, Department of Global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Dr. Sergio Navarrette, Superintendent, Assemblies of God, Pacific Latin

David Neff, Editor and Vice-President, Christianity Today, Carol Stream, IL

Bill Nelson, Campus Staff Member, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Cockeysville, MD

Mark Nielsen, Missions and International Affairs Committee Member, Reba Place Church, Evanston, IL

Allan Parker, Pastor, Quitman Church of the Nazarene, Quitman, GA

Susan Paynter, Director of Public Policy, Christian Life Commission, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Austin, TX

Pascal Permis, Haitian Mission Director, Church of the Nazarene, Indiantown, FL

Dr. Oliver R. Phillips, Mission Strategy Director, Multicultural Ministries Council, Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO

Rev. Felix Posos, Superintendent, Assemblies of God, Northern Pacific

Dr. Dennis Rivera, Superintendent, Assemblies of God, Rocky Mountains

John E. Schmidt, Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD

Dr. Lindy Scott, Professor of Latin American Studies, Director of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics, Democratic Candidate for the US Congress District 6, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Phillip N. Smith, Executive Pastor, Walnut Hill Community Church, Bethel, CT

Howard A. Snyder, Professor, E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission & Evangelism Director, Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements Asbury Theological Seminary University Professor of World Christianity, Spring Arbor University

Rev. Dr. James A. Stackpole, United Church of Christ, Retired, Williamsburg, VA

Kirsten Strand, Director, Community 4:12 of Community Christian Church, Naperville, IL

Richard L. van Houten, General Secretary, The Reformed Ecumenical Council, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev Elizabeth Vander Haagen, Pastor, Boston Square Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, MI

Peter Vander Meulen, Coordinator, Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI

Kathryn H. Vaselkiv, Board Member, World Relief, Elder, Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD

Dr. Gilbert Velez, Senior Pastor, Mercy Church, Laredo, TX

Dr. John P. Williams, Jr., General Superintendent, Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region, Canton, OH

This letter remains open for endorsement on a rolling basis. To endorse, please contact Jenny Hwang at 443-451-1969 or immigration@wr.org. Please indicate your name, title, organization and location, and whether you wish to sign on as a national organization, local church or organization, or individual Evangelical leader.