



NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

BWA General Council Resolution 2014.6

Humanitarian Crisis of the Mass Migration of Unaccompanied Minors in the Americas

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance {BWA), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

ACKNOWLEDGES the human tragedy of the recent flood of unaccompanied minors to the United States who risk their lives in search of safety, economic resources and justice;

VOICES ITS CONCERN for these unaccompanied minors who are victimized by separation from their families, economic exploitation, lack of medical care and education, discrimination, and who are sometimes subjected to a hostile host environment;

REAFFIRMS the BWA Resolution 16 of 2013 on Displaced Persons of 2013 and its call to the governments of the countries involved to seek together a comprehensive approach to the underlying issues across the region that contribute to this social and human tragedy;

MAINTAINS that this is not primarily an issue of unprotected borders, but a humanitarian crisis affecting the countries of origin and all of the United States, especially the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, as the principal receiving country;

CHALLENGES the churches in the region to practice hospitality and charity as they regard each minor as a neighbor and child of God;

ENDORSES the message of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission which reads in part:

Whereas, United States Customs and Border Protection agents have apprehended more than 46,000 unaccompanied minors since October 1, 2013 and estimates apprehensions this year may reach 90,000; and

Whereas, increasing numbers of minors are coming from the Central American nations of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, where poverty is widespread and violence is rising; and

Whereas, these children, once in the United States, require proper care and supervision; and

Whereas, the United States has an overburdened immigration court system and a confusing policy framework; and

Whereas, unaccompanied minors who come to the United States often end up staying for years before their cases are resolved; and

Whereas, some communities have expressed hostility toward these children; and

Whereas, these children are not at fault either for the circumstances in their home countries or for the confusion created by human smugglers and American policy;

Therefore be it resolved, the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission encourages [Baptists] to remember the many biblical injunctions about caring for the "stranger" or immigrant, as reflected in the words of Jesus, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me;"

JOINS its voice with theirs to urge BWA member bodies and churches to:

1. Respond to the need for spiritual support and pastoral services for these children;
2. Create welcoming communities in the various places where these unaccompanied minors are being housed;
3. Communicate with their Latin American networks that the journey is dangerous and misinformation is being spread about the situation that awaits these minors in the United States; and
4. Promote seasons of prayer for the people of Central America, for the children who are traveling to the United States and for all those responding to this human tragedy.

Keywords

BWA; Children (Minors); El Salvador; Guatemala; Honduras; Immigration; Refugees; United States.

Citations

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