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RECOVERING THE HUMAN FACE OF IMMIGRATION IN THE US SOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

In the face of the persistence of an uncivil and dehumanizing public discourse about immigration and immigration reform, this report seeks to offer faith leaders alternative ways of framing the conversation around these issues. These alternative framings can facilitate a more nuanced, rational, and morally-informed discussion en route toward a more humane, common-sense immigration policy. In addition, the report seeks to illuminate best practices for welcoming immigrants into faith communities and to encourage greater involvement and a more effective voice from congregations and faith-based organizations in the struggle for just and humane reform of laws and policies impacting immigrants.

As the recent controversy over the influx of undocumented children from Central America and the Syrian refugee crisis shows, immigration continues to be an intractable and polarizing subject. This intractability in large part is due to the dehumanizing language that often characterizes unauthorized immigrants. These immigrants are portrayed as “lawbreakers,” who are not only coming to take jobs from citizens and abuse social services, but also bringing disorder, crime, and disease. This language obscures the complex conditions that lead to this perilous migration, as well as the moral dilemmas this phenomenon poses to the United States. Migration is the result of a complex set of personal, economic, social, and political factors that combine to influence who decides to migrate and when. These include “push” factors (poverty, political turmoil, violence and economic instability at home) and “pull” factors (wealth, job opportunities and political stability in the host country). The process of migration is also influenced by both macro structures, such as international trade relationships related to increasing global economic integration, and micro structures, such as informal social

networks that migrants themselves develop to facilitate the process of migrating to and settling in new destinations.¹

More than ever, it is necessary to re-imagine and re-moralize public discourse on immigration. This is crucial to the construction of a more inclusive and diverse democracy. As scholars from Alexis de Tocqueville to Robert Putnam have shown, religion has always played a central role in the emergence of a vibrant civil society in the United States. Moreover, religious congregations have been vital to the process of integration of successive waves of immigrants coming to this country. Building on these insights, faith-based organizations can play an even more influential and constructive role in moving the conversation on immigration reform forward.

During 2015, with the support of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a series of guided conversations with religious leaders was organized by the Program for Immigration, Religion, and Social Change (PIRSC) at the University of Florida’s Center for Latin American Studies and the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) at Loyola University New Orleans (see Appendix I). The religious leaders came



from a range of Christian faith traditions who have been facilitating fruitful grassroots experiences of inter-cultural exchange, accompaniment and hospitality, and advocacy for immigrant justice. Many of the leaders are based in the U.S. South, a region of the country that has witnessed some of the most draconian anti-immigrant legislation in response to increased flows of immigrants. The guided conversations were set up so the religious leaders could share their experiences, identify and systematize the best practices for facilitating immigrant integration and advocacy, as well as the challenges, obstacles, and shortcomings that they have faced. On the basis of these guided conversations, this report offers interested religious and civic leaders and their organizations effective strategies to tackle the challenges of immigration integration and advocacy, not only at the level of the pew and grassroots but also at the level of policy.

The report is organized into three chapters to address three key questions: 1) How can faith leaders change the negative and polarizing discourse around immigration? 2) How can faith leaders more effectively welcome immigrants into their congregations that in turn will lead to greater inclusion? 3) How can faith leaders, faith-based organizations and congregations engage in effective advocacy in support of immigrant justice? The report also includes a useful resource guide on immigrant advocacy resources available for faith leaders and faith-based organizations (Appendix II).

CHAPTER ONE: CHANGING THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE AROUND IMMIGRATION

PART ONE: DISCOURSE AROUND IMMIGRATION

Much of the uncivil and dehumanizing language on immigration is rooted in deep-seated fears and knowledge gaps about immigrants and immigration. This negative public discourse obscures the complex conditions that lead people to undertake this perilous migration, as well as the moral dilemmas this phenomenon poses to our country. Some of these fears behind the discourse need to be acknowledged, while others are unfounded and should be challenged. Faith leaders are well positioned to counter negative discourse and to address the many “gaps in understanding” surrounding immigration.

What are the key values, issues, narratives, images, and emotions shaping the negative discourse around immigration? The faith leaders participating in the guided conversations identified five key components contributing to the negative tone of public discourse.

1) FEAR

Much of the negative discourse around immigration is rooted in a “fear of the other.” Present-day immigrants speak different languages, practice different cultural norms and values, and are sometimes perceived as refusing to learn English or assimilate into American society. These perceived characteristics align with many previous waves of immigrants. The growing influx of immigrants into the country is seen as an invasion that threatens to undermine America’s cultural identity and security.

Some Americans fear that Euro-Americans are on their way to becoming a demographic minority as a result of immigration. Since 9/11 and in the wake of the recent terror attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, immigration is increasingly conflated with national security. Politicians point to our southern border as “porous” and “out of control,” and emphasize the need to secure our borders. These same politicians argue that until our borders are sealed with walls, high tech fencing and aerial drones, undetected crossings of the border will continue by terrorists, criminals and carriers of infectious diseases like Ebola and Zika. The conflation of immigration with national security has also led to calls to halt the admission of refugees from Syria and prohibit Muslims from entering the United States.

2) ECONOMICS

Significant numbers of Americans view immigrants as taking jobs away from Americans. They also believe immigrants are willing to work for lower wages and thus depress the wages of American workers. Many Americans think that immigrants are an economic and social burden because they use social services like health care and public education but don’t pay taxes. Additionally, immigrants are often seen as not benefiting the local economy because they send most of their earnings home, and drive down home values in the neighborhoods where they settle.

3) RULE OF LAW

The United States is a nation of laws, and enforcement of the law is essential to guarantee order and stability. Immigrants who arrive to the United States without authorization are often viewed as lawbreakers and criminals as they have circumvented the law therefore undermining the rule of law upon which the country’s order and security depends. If unauthorized immigrants want to enter the United States, they should follow the same process that other legal immigrants do. Why should the United States be considering immigration reforms that allow them to jump to the front of the line? Additionally, immigration is sometimes

associated with crime and violence, especially gang-related crime in urban areas and drug violence in border communities.

4) IGNORANCE

There is a general ignorance or gap of understanding regarding the historical, economic, and geopolitical roots of immigration. Immigration results from a complex set of factors that cannot be summed up easily in sound-bites. Given this, some media outlets and politicians fill the void with their own versions of reality regarding immigration and can demonize Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals and not pay a political price. Another example is that, despite the fact that unauthorized immigrants cannot gain citizenship through their American-born children until after they are 21 years old, the term “anchor baby” goes largely unchallenged in the media. Finally, within faith communities there is a general lack of understanding of the theological/biblical perspectives on immigration.

5) SILENCE

In the face of this negative public discourse about immigrants and the issue of immigration, there is a perception of a notable lack of a compassionate response from many faith leaders. Consequently, anti-immigrant politicians and some media are able to set the terms of the debate and to dominate the conversation through the use of negative and offensive stereotypes. This is not to ignore the efforts of many faith leaders and faith-based organizations to counter this dehumanizing and uncivil discourse. However, despite these efforts, more faith leaders and faith-based organizations need to make their voices heard to counter the increasingly negative discourse on immigration.

PART TWO – CHANGING THE DISCOURSE

How then are people of faith to change the public discourse about immigrants and immigration? Participants in the guided conversations emphasized four key elements of a Christian response: moving from a framework of faith and morality; dialogue with immigrants and with political “opponents”; communications rooted in prayer and religious

symbols; and multi-faith and multi-partner collaborations. In this part, the authors of this report are elaborating on these key elements.

First, it is critically important that Christian efforts to change the civil discourse on immigration do so from the perspective of faith and morality. Key concepts named by the participants in this regard are migration in the Scriptures, the *anawim*, jubilee (forgiveness, reconciliation, amnesty, and pardon), hospitality, and human dignity and rights. Such efforts should be rooted, first, in the Scriptures which allows an appeal to all the “people of the Book” (Jews, Christians, and Muslims).

Old Testament. The theme of *migration* is central to the history of the Hebrew people and their exodus from Egypt, and migrants and refugees become privileged recipients of God’s favor and protection. From the time of the Deuteronomic laws, the covenant, and the earliest prophets, there was special mention of the poor and a special place for them existed in the community. The Hebrew word for the poor is the *anawim*, the little ones, originally those “overwhelmed by want.”² In the Old Testament, this group is primarily widows, orphans, and strangers (refugees, sojourners, migrants, immigrants). They are the poor and powerless in their society. Their very existence and the harsh conditions of their lives reflected Israel’s violation of the social virtues rooted in its ancient ideals. In turn, this caused Yahweh to warn the people of their responsibility to the *anawim*:

You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry (Exod. 22:20-22).

The *anawim*’s special status reflected a combination of powerlessness, poverty, and systemic exclusion from full membership in the community and the protection it afforded. This is similar to immigrants today. Yahweh, then, was their protector.

The Hebrew tradition of the *Jubilee* also reflects the mandate to free the debtors and captives and to bring all people into unity with God in their midst. It is embodied in forgiveness and reconciliation in Christian belief and practice and in amnesty and pardon in criminal law.

The Scriptures also emphasize the importance of *hospitality* for the stranger, reflected in the story of Abraham and Sarah welcoming God in the three strangers in *Genesis 18:1-15*, and then being enriched with a son in their old age as a reward. The scriptural emphasis on hospitality itself reflects the hospitality of God in providing the creation for humanity.

New Testament. The special place of the migrant in the Christian Scriptures is reflected, first, in the life of Jesus and his family who become emigrants to escape Herod's violence and later return to their own country. Jesus in his teaching emphasizes his own identification as the Son of Man with the "strangers" among us and the duty of "welcoming the stranger" in the great parable of the Last Judgment in the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel (Mt. 25:31-46). The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of communion among all believers and all people over-against divisions based on tribe, language, nationality, race, and even religion.

Christian Churches Today. This privileged place of the immigrant in the Scriptures is reflected across Christian denominations today. For example, the 2009 statement of the National Association of Evangelicals on immigration policy provides us with a succinct summary:

The Bible contains many accounts of God's people who were forced to migrate due to hunger, war, or personal circumstances.

First, it is critically important that Christian efforts to change the civil discourse on immigration do so from the perspective of faith and morality.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the families of his sons turned to Egypt in search of food. Joseph, Naomi, Ruth, Daniel and his friends, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther all lived in foreign lands. In the New Testament, Joseph and Mary fled with Jesus to escape Herod's anger and became refugees in Egypt. Peter referred to the recipients of his first letter as "aliens" and "strangers," perhaps suggesting that they were exiles within the Roman Empire. These examples from the Old and New Testaments reveal God's hand in the movement of people and are illustrations of faith in God in difficult circumstances.³

These sentiments have motivated many evangelicals to become involved in the effective advocacy work of the Evangelical Immigration Table. Evangelicals have found power to change thinking about immigration from the Scriptures in their "G92" movement. G92 takes its name from the ninety-two references to the *ger*—the immigrant, in Hebrew—in the Old Testament. Faith leaders and elected officials have been asked to pray over the 92 texts as part of a culture-shaping movement for immigration reform.⁴

Similarly, the National Council of Churches USA's "Resolution on Immigration and a Call for Action," issued in 2000, states:

In a world fragmented by fearfulness, Christians proclaim a divine love that casts out fear (1 John 4:18) and binds even those the world calls enemies (Matthew 5:44). In a society still divided by race and increasingly divided into haves and have nots, Christians affirm a vision of community in which every neighbor is valued as a child of God (Genesis 1:27) and all neighbors have enough (Luke 6). In a world fractured by suspicion of those who are "other," Christians have heard a command to welcome the strangers (Genesis 18, Hebrews 13:2), even as Christ has welcomed us (Romans 15:7).⁵

Catholics draw similar inspiration on immigration. The Second Vatican Council, building on the Scriptures, spoke of the Church in terms of being the biblical People of God and a “Pilgrim Church.” In so doing, the Council placed emphasis on the journey of all Christians through time, led by the Holy Spirit and looking forward to “full perfection only in the glory of heaven.”⁶ The concept and language of pilgrim people has become more common as, for example, in the 2011 Letter of the Hispanic/Latino Bishops to Immigrants:

We see Jesus the pilgrim in you migrants. The Word of God migrated from heaven to earth in order to become man and save humanity. Jesus emigrated with Mary and Joseph to Egypt, as a refugee. He migrated from Galilee to Jerusalem for the sacrifice of the cross, and finally he emigrated from death to life in the resurrection and ascension to heaven. Today, he continues to journey and accompany all migrants on pilgrimage throughout the world in search of food, work, dignity, security and opportunities for the welfare of their families.⁷

Recently, Pope Francis put it very succinctly, “Biblical revelation urges us to welcome the stranger; it tells us that in so doing, we open our doors to God, and that in the faces of others we see the face of Christ himself.”⁸

Human Rights and Dignity. The preceding interpretations of the Scriptures by Christian leaders provide a wealth of material for reflection and dialogue among Christians and in the public square. In traditional Catholic thought it is complemented by centuries-old philosophical and theological principles based on human dignity, the rights flowing from that identity, and the common good. For example, as Pope John XXIII explained in 1963, over fifty years ago:

Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own country; and, when there are just reasons for it, the right to

emigrate to other countries and take up residence there. The fact that one is a citizen of a particular state does not detract in any way from his membership in the human family as a whole, nor from his citizenship in the world community.⁹

More recently, the U.S. and Mexican Catholic bishops noted that individual rights and the responsibility of the state for the common good are complementary.

While the sovereign state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated. In the current condition of the world, in which global poverty and persecution are rampant, the presumption is that persons must migrate in order to support and protect themselves and that nations who are able to receive them should do so whenever possible.¹⁰

In 2000, the U.S. bishops reflected on the tension between the right of nations to control borders and the individual right to fundamental dignity. They declared the latter—the right of the individual to “give rise to a *more compelling claim* to the conditions worthy of human life.”¹¹ Appeal to this dignity and the human rights which flow from it can be made in the face of unreasonable claims about “the law” and “illegal aliens” used to deny immigrants their rights and full incorporation into the national community.

Contemporary Christian theology widens and deepens appreciation for the centrality of migration at the heart of revelation and faith. Theologian Daniel G. Groody, reflecting on what he calls a theology of migration, also teaches that those Christians with a migrant’s perspective will see “that God, in Jesus, so loved the world that he migrated into the far and distant country of our broken human existence and laid down his life on a cross that we could be reconciled to him and migrate back to our homeland with God, and enjoy renewed fellowship at all levels of our relationships.”¹² Groody articulates

four foundations for such a migration theology: that we are all created in God’s image and no one from anywhere loses that identity; that in the Incarnation, God crosses the human-divine divide and becomes an actual refugee and migrant; that the mission of the Church is to cross the human-human divide to proclaim a civilization of love; and the vision of God for all humanity is a unity in Christ that transcends national identities.

Within this faith framework Christians are encouraged to respond to the prevalence of fear in discussions of contemporary immigration, whether those fears are economic, cultural, racial, or political. The Scriptures are strong in posing trust in God and the universal call to love in the face of any such fears. As expressed in the First Letter of John, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18) The message of the Scriptures and faith may be delivered in different ways: in personal testimonies of faith; in prayer over elected officials; in authoritative statements of religious leaders; in urging reflection on Scripture texts; and in prophetic preaching. Faith leaders themselves must be reminded of both the content of Christian faith about immigrants and immigration and the call to fearless proclamation of the Word.

Second, participants in the guided conversations underscored the importance of dialogue—in three forms—to change the public discourse on immigrants. The *first* kind of dialogue is to make it possible for new immigrants and long-term residents to sit face-to-face in contexts of genuine listening to stories of immigration (why do people migrate? what is the experience like? etc.) This allows both parties to move past stereotypes and soundbites to understand their



common humanity and common aspirations for themselves and their families. Often done in a faith context (a church or church building, beginning and ending with prayer), such dialogues can change perceptions far more readily than sermons and other messaging. Visits to detention centers and immigration service centers, parish “twinning” or “partnering,” and Black-Brown dialogues on experiences of injustice are all ways to promote such dialogues.

A *second* form of dialogue arises within joint pastoral missions to and with immigrants, out of which develop trusting relationships. Examples would be outreach to rural missions and service at homeless shelters and soup kitchens. Afterwards, discussions about immigration can then occur in an open and honest way.

The *third* form of dialogue considered in project conversations are between people of faith and those with whom they may disagree on immigration to promote a more humane immigration policy of welcoming immigrants. “Don’t demonize the opposition” is good advice for those wishing to be publicly persuasive. It also is more consistent with Christian traditions of councils, synods, interfaith and ecumenical dialogues, and other efforts to promote understanding among believers. Such dialogues are based in the understanding that there are truths on both sides of these important issues and that people’s fears often have legitimate foundations which can only be changed in a context of dialogue and respect.

Third, all participants recognized the usefulness of various forms of communication (print media, mass

media, social media, postcard campaigns, etc.) to inject faith-filled values into the public discourse, especially through the telling of immigrant stories. There also was a recognition that there are privileged and persuasive ways that faith communities can use prayer and religious symbols to convey powerful faith-messaging and encourage faith-



advocates themselves. Days of prayer and fasting, prayer breakfasts with elected officials, and prayer for and prayer over public officials are all important to people of faith wishing to change the public discourse. Various religious services or symbolic actions to highlight the plight of the immigrant and the call to a more just and compassionate response are also critical. Included here are: crosses planted in the desert where immigrants have died; Holy Week pilgrimages that highlight the difficulties of immigrant life; multi-lingual celebrations of Pentecost; Masses and other faith services celebrated at the border fences; foot-washing ceremonies; Stations of the Cross before key venues such as detention centers and jails; the use of appropriate hymnody; and liturgical celebrations of different national and ethnic “saints” and “feasts.”

Fourth, participants emphasized two kinds of collaborations that are critical to helping to change the public discourse on immigration. The *first* is multi-faith strategic collaboration in which congregations and congregational leaders join hands to influence public opinion and public officials. Events like National Migration Week and Ecumenical Advocacy Days are typical of such efforts. Ideally, collaborations would include mutual investments of time and money, reputation and congregants, to build movements for change that will have the staying power for what appears to be a long-term

process of change, especially in the face of recent political posturing to demonize immigrants and foreigners and the proclivity of many Christians to remain silent in the face of injustice. These efforts would include community organizing, networking, and other ways to bring the “power” and credibility of various faith communities—much as happened in the civil rights era—to bear on these important issues.

A *second* kind of collaboration needed at the local, state, regional, and national levels is to bring together faith communities with employers, unions, police, public officials, civic associations, civil rights groups, and immigrants (documented and not). Again, these coalitions would need to invest “time, talent, and treasure” to influence the media, public officials, and the public to change the civic discourse and to urge comprehensive immigration reform that respects the rights of new immigrants and their families in ways that strengthen all of us.

CHAPTER TWO: WELCOMING AND INCLUDING THE NEWCOMERS

On this topic, participants in the guided conversations chose to employ the more informal but accurate language of “welcoming” to describe many models of integration, inclusion, membership, partnership, sharing, and encouraging the participation of new immigrants in existing faith communities or the development of new configurations of worshipping Christian congregations.¹³ Upon still further reflection “welcoming” came to be understood as an initial stage in the development of what Christian theology sees as the desired unity of members of the body of Christ, “building the beloved community.” It then seemed that “inclusion” might be a better way of identifying the long-range goal of any process of welcoming.¹⁴ Participants initially identified a series of models being used among various denominations to welcome new immigrants. The models depended in part on the denomination of the faith community (Evangelical, Catholic, Protestant, etc.), partly on the national and racial/ethnic background of the persons received and receiving, partly on the availability and skills of formal religious leaders (usually those “ordained” or otherwise chosen for leadership in the denomination), and partly upon the receptivity of receiving congregations to the newcomers and vice-versa. Each model, as well, had its strengths and its challenges. After extensive conversation there was a

We also recognized that this is a long-term journey for both welcoming communities and newcomers.

strong sense that no one model was “better” than others, at least in the early stages of welcoming new immigrants. There also was a sense that, as new generations of immigrant families grew up, their preferences for a particular faith community model might differ or evolve. Parents’ preferences for their children might cause them to choose a different community to meet their children’s needs or their desires for their children (such as maintaining cultural identity).

MODELS OF WELCOMING NEWCOMERS THAT CAN LEAD TO INCLUSION

While not necessarily mutually exclusive, the most prevalent models of welcoming appear to be at least seven:

THE SHARED CONGREGATION

Prominent among Catholics and mainline/historic Protestants, this model envisions a single congregation which welcomes newcomers into its membership with a single pastor or pastoral team working within a single set of facilities. Attempts are made to serve the pastoral and educational needs of all the congregants, whether newcomer or not. Congregants may be multi-ethnic and/or multi-racial. Worship and pastoral, social, and educational programs may be conducted in different languages and liturgical styles (music, symbols, etc.) at different times. They also may emphasize different feasts, saints, etc., and include differing para-liturgical practices (*Quinceañera*, *Las Posadas* in Advent, a Day of the Dead altar, etc.). There also may be some members of the pastoral team or visiting clergy or faith leaders specifically designated to conduct worship or other programming for the immigrant congregants at designated times.

NATIONAL/ETHNIC CHURCHES

Following the pattern of early generations of European immigrants to the United States, a particular denomination or independent pastor or group of laity may establish a separate congregation primarily to serve a particular immigrant, ethnic, or racial group. The earliest examples of national/ethnic parishes or churches “were designed

as a pastoral response to provide new European Catholic immigrants with the ecclesial space they needed to live their faith, to pray, and to worship in the context of their own culture, language, and traditions.”¹⁵

These churches served multiple purposes:

The national parishes of the last century enabled European migrants to retain their cultural traditions of worship and ritual, even in their native languages. National parishes’ membership was based upon common language, ethnicity, and national origin, more than on geographic proximity. Under this model, immigrants were expected to integrate into mainstream society, but retain their faith. The Church thus acted as a mediating institution, helping migrants to integrate into the economic and social spheres of society while also enabling them to retain their native customs, cultures, and languages.¹⁶

The experiences of national/ethnic churches serving new immigrants parallels that of many black churches in the Jim Crow South: as they were for African Americans in the period of segregation, these churches serve as centers for cultural, social, and economic life; and they provide strong sources of identity and meaning in the face of discrimination and marginalization.¹⁷

The development of a national/ethnic church may occur only after a certain number of immigrants of a common nationality aggregate and establish or request their own congregation, sometimes after being part of a shared congregation (above) or a mission (see below). Pastors or pastoral teams are: drawn from the same group and may even immigrate with their congregants to this country; recruited later from the sending country; and/or specially trained or competent to work with this group. Worship and pastoral, social, and educational programs are in the language of the immigrants and consistent with their liturgical and cultural experience.

THE MISSION CHURCH

The mission church or congregation is usually situated in a separate location and facility and is

served by an often part-time pastor or pastoral team of the same denomination coming from a usually larger and more established church or congregation. The mission may be in a rural area and serve a distinct immigrant population, such as farmworkers. However, other mission churches may simply be rural congregations of traditional U.S. congregants from earlier waves of immigrants. If composed of a distinct immigrant group, then worship and pastoral, social, and educational programming likely will be in a distinct language and cultural style.

A variant on the mission church is the “mobile” congregation in which religious “servant leaders” follow migrant workers on their journeys and minister to their needs for religious expression, worship, and pastoral, social, and educational programming on the move.

COLLABORATING CONGREGATIONS

In this model, two or more congregations of the same or different denominations and located in different facilities, one or more of which is composed primarily of new immigrants, intentionally collaborate or partner to work on common concerns such as social justice or immigration reform. They also may reach across regional or national boundaries in twinning arrangements to share their faith experiences, personal and financial resources, and diverse worship styles.

MULTI-CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

In this arrangement, two or even three congregations, even of different denominations, share one or more common facilities for distinct worship and pastoral, social, and educational programming. The facilities are usually owned by one congregation, but use of the facility may be governed by a common council. The congregations also occasionally may collaborate to schedule multilingual/multicultural joint services for important holy days. Small congregations may find this arrangement attractive while their membership grows, and different congregations may merge over time or move out into their own facilities.

“NESTED” CONGREGATIONS

This is a variant of the multi-congregational church in which an immigrant congregation, of the same or of a different denomination, rents or otherwise utilizes space within a larger congregation’s facilities. With their own pastor or pastoral team, they conduct worship and pastoral, social, and educational programming in their own language and cultural style. They too may one day blend into the larger congregation or grow to move out into their own facilities.

BASE COMMUNITIES

In some cases, immigrants of faith communities will gather for faith-sharing, worship and pastoral, social, and educational purposes within the homes of the congregants rather than in formal church facilities and settings. These communities may be composed of new immigrants and more long-term residents. They often have a strong social justice component in their faith and community life. Small communities afford an intimate space for deeper cross-fertilization of cultures and trust-building. They can provide a home for people far from home and a space for deeper reflection for host communities. The Catholic Church has experienced success with small faith communities that meet regularly. Base ecclesial communities—a common way of sharing faith and building community in Latin America—offer “a process of liberation of persons who in the light of the gospel unite as a community to confront their reality in order to give a creative response.”¹⁸

EFFECTIVE WELCOMING

Whatever the type of faith community, any model of welcoming congregations that attempts to blend traditional congregants with new immigrants or to promote collaboration among congregations faces a number of common challenges: language barriers; cultural and aesthetic differences; class and generational divides; divergent worship styles; leadership and power sharing; equitable use of resources and facilities; and theological pluralism.

What then are the elements of effective welcoming of new immigrants into various models of Christian congregations that in turn will lead to greater inclusion? Participants in the guided conversations indicated at least six key areas of effective welcoming that also are crucial for eventual inclusion of newcomers into faith communities. They also recognized that this is a long-term journey for both welcoming communities and newcomers.

COMMUNICATION

The first gateway to welcoming newcomers is communication. It begins with the ability of the host congregation’s leadership to communicate in the language of the newcomers, but it requires much more. Newcomers and established congregants must be enabled actually to come together in common spaces to share their personal stories and their faith journeys (“testimonies”) in ways that are respectful and that value the experiences of all. There must be opportunities to listen to one another at deep levels in ways that all feel they are “being heard” and “feel welcome.” Examples from some of the faith leader participants included organizing potluck dinners where congregants shared stories and recipes, developing short video clips of interviews with newcomers, and displaying photos of immigrant newcomers and their families. Express efforts must be made to include newcomer youth in ways that meet their particular needs, which are different from their parents:

While youth everywhere struggle to discover the role of faith in their lives, immigrant youth often require special attention. The continuation of home country religious practices and traditions



may help parents or immigrant adults feel at home. Yet, immigrant youth often experience tension between their desire to mainstream into host society culture and pressures to preserve their ethnic identities, in both religion and society at large.¹⁹

CULTURE

Effective welcoming also requires careful attention to the various aspects of the cultures of newcomers and hosts. Existing congregations grew out of certain cultures and that is reflected in language, ritual, art, music, symbols, saints, and feasts. In the same way, newcomers express their own faith in distinct language, rituals, art, music, symbols, saints, and celebrations. A host congregation will have to include spaces and times for newcomers to celebrate their faith in culturally appropriate ways and provide the aesthetic environment, including signage and adornment, that allows newcomers “to see themselves” at home there. However, this is not without difficulty:

As the cultures of newcomers begin to influence the culture of a host community, both newcomers and hosts often find themselves in unfamiliar and often uncomfortable positions.²⁰

For established congregants, this requires a certain “cultural humility” that promotes an attitude of being “active recipients” of the rich and enculturated faith which the newcomers bring to the congregation. This means moving through the stage of being a multi-cultural congregation to becoming truly “intercultural” in the sense that all are transformed by the encounter with “the other” and with the faith and culture of the other.

LEADERSHIP

The role of the pastor or congregational leaders is critical to any successful welcoming of newcomers into a congregation. Some basic skills involve language acquisition, listening carefully and frequently to both newcomers and established congregants, ministerial flexibility, and being extremely intentional about steps needed to

become a welcoming community which in the process must be transformed into a “new thing.” The challenge of being a leader in a welcoming congregation might be seen in the list of qualities of the effective pastor developed by participants in the guided conversations and condensed for clarity below:

- Is culturally competent: knowledge, skills, and attitudes [explained in the final paragraph of this section]
- Listens to understand and learn
- Acknowledges obstacles and fears but also encourages prophetic leadership
- Helps others (and self) get a more complete perspective by seeing issues from different points of view
- Focuses congregants on common faith-rooted goals and away from differences
- Speaks and acts with love and respect
- Recognizes and uses others’ gifts and is mindful of own limitations
- Sense of humor and delight
- Shares power, encourages diversity, and proactively works to empower others; helps other leaders to do the same
- Forgives and asks for forgiveness
- Shares peoples’ crosses (“Get blood on you”)
- Places the needs of the community above own need for recognition and/or power

While the list may be considered “Jesus on a good day,” its breadth reflects the intense challenges facing pastoral leaders trying to bring together new and established congregants in any of the above models. An unanswered question later in the guided conversations was whether and how this list would be different for pastors who are themselves recent immigrants.

One comprehensive study emphasized the pastoral leader’s need for “intercultural competence” in the sense of “the capacity to communicate, relate, and work across cultural boundaries.”²¹ This involves *knowledge* in the sense of the capacity to

understand more than one perspective, different ways of decision-making and planning, and different modes of celebration. It takes *skills* in the sense of languages, empathy, facilitation, motivation, coordination, and conflict prevention and resolution. Finally, it requires *attitudes* of gratitude for cultural differences, generosity, curiosity, and a willingness to engage congregants from different cultures, make them feel at home, and build bridges to bring them together.²²

WORSHIP AND FAITH

Project participants stressed that the most critical, but difficult, arena for becoming welcoming and later inclusive faith communities was the worship of the congregation and other expressions of faith. Because of the deep tie between worship and personal identity for believers, it is in worship that the newcomer and the established congregant both need to be “at home” and yet can feel most alienated.

The unique customs and traditions of diverse faith communities can be threatening to communities, whether native or newcomer, accustomed to worshipping in one way.²³

Obvious accommodations for newcomers in the areas of language, music, art, saints, and celebrations often are accomplished in “separate” services and spaces. The more difficult challenges are in “merged” or “multicultural” worship services that attempt to blend into a single service elements from different cultural and religious experiences, including different languages and music. As one study indicates, “Multicultural worship is logistically challenging, expensive, and time-consuming.”²⁴ It is critical as well to include elders, youth, and families from all groups within the congregation. The welcoming congregation also must be attentive to recognize the importance of “popular religion” in its various forms

and to make “space” available for different expressions of faith.

RESOURCES

Under this heading, the faith leader participants underscored the frequent challenges associated with access to, and sharing of, congregation resources, including staff allocation, spaces and times, print and media, music and choirs. What begins with simple access (“Who gets to use the church kitchen and hall and when? Who are the gatekeepers? Who has the keys?”) then extends to questions of genuine sharing of resources and being “at home” in the facilities (“What are the manners of your building?”). Hospitality and belonging are important for all groups and all ages. Eventually there must be a shared sense that all must contribute to and have gifts of time, talent, and treasure to enrich the whole congregation. Ultimately—and most importantly—this requires a *sharing of power* within the community that necessitates a dismantling of older

structures (committees, boards, councils, ministries) and the recreation of new ones that involve everyone.

RESPECT

Finally, the congregation and all of its members must respect the experiences of life, faith, and culture

that all bring to the “new” community, both newcomers and hosts. There also must be respect for the losses, grief, and vulnerability that all will experience over time in the various stages of trying to let go of what was and to become an inclusive new congregation that shares faith, power, decision-making, and table fellowship.



CHAPTER THREE: ADVOCATING FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE BY CONGREGATIONS AND OTHER FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The U.S. remains mired in an immigration crisis with no end in sight. Almost 11 million unauthorized immigrants live in constant fear that something unexpected will draw the attention of law enforcement authorities and shatter the lives they have built for themselves and their families. The leaders of all major faith traditions have called for compassionate treatment of immigrants and for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. In addition, many Christian congregations in the U.S. South have become ethnically diverse communities of faith due to increased membership of undocumented Latino immigrants.²⁵ Nevertheless, the faith leader participants in the guided conversations agreed that it is rare for Christian communities in the South, even those with significant numbers of undocumented immigrant members, to engage in immigrant justice advocacy.

For many Christians concerned about social justice, advocacy is way of putting their faith into action. Advocacy refers to those activities by an individual or group which aim to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Because approximately one-fourth of our nation's immigrants are undocumented, most advocacy efforts regarding immigration on the part of faith leaders have to do with addressing or

reforming aspects of our nation's broken immigration system. Immigration advocacy can take many forms such as a prayer vigil in a public place to draw attention and support for action on the part of public officials on behalf of undocumented immigrants, preaching a sermon about the just treatment of immigrants, an op-ed in a local newspaper supporting fair treatment of immigrant workers, or lobbying legislators to support the reform of laws negatively impacting immigrants or to oppose anti-immigrant legislation.

Mary Townsend, a member of our faith leaders group from Mississippi, has been involved in immigrant advocacy in Mississippi for over 15 years. She could think of no other multi-cultural congregation in Mississippi that has engaged in advocacy on behalf of undocumented immigrants except for the Methodist parish she has served as an immigrant legal services provider, ESL teacher, and immigrant advocate since 2006. Fr. Fred Kammer, S.J., and Sue Weishar, both active in social justice work in Louisiana for many years, could identify only a handful of faith communities involved in immigration reform advocacy in Louisiana.

In other words, the faith leaders that participated in the guided conversations were a unique group. The majority were leaders of multi-cultural faith-based organizations active in advocating for immigrant justice. Most were from the U.S. South, where slavery and Jim Crow laws flourished for many years and where advocacy on social justice issues, especially outside large, metropolitan areas, is still suspect. Some of the faith leaders, including Rev. Nelson and Joyce Johnson, are not only actively working for immigrant justice, but they were also leaders in the civil rights struggle of the 1960's and 1970's.

A major goal of this project is to "encourage greater involvement and an amplified, more effective voice from congregations and faith-based organizations in the struggle for just and humane reform of laws and policies impacting immigrants." To understand better how this could be accomplished, the faith leader participants were asked to identify the "best

practices” they had developed to advocate for just and humane immigration policies.

In several discussions on this topic the need for meaningful **encounters** between Americans and undocumented immigrants was frequently recommended. Examples of such encounters included mission trips, table fellowship, working at hospitality houses for immigrants, intentional dialogues between native born and immigrant families, and immersion experiences that provide Americans a close-up look at another people’s culture and society.

Franciscan priest Richard Rohr writes that a central Biblical theme is to call people to encounters with “otherness,” such as the alien, the sinner, the Samaritan, and the Gentile. When there is encounter with the other, mutuality and presence, giving and receiving - then both are changed and the moment has begun to move toward transformation. Rohr warns that without the other, humans are trapped inside a “perpetual hall of mirrors” that only deepens one’s existing worldviews.²⁶

Author and Christian ethicist Miguel de la Torre believes that one reason that many Christians have fallen into the trap of anti-immigrant rhetoric which reduces immigrants to objects and the threatening “other” is because they have not heard the voices and the stories of real people. He believes immigrants’ *testimonios* allow the discourse on immigration to come alive and “be incarnated” by permitting an abstract debate about defending borders “take on a human face.” Solidarity is then created that allows the rest of the faith community to become fellow sojourners on a difficult journey.²⁷

The “pastoral circle” is a methodological tool developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J., at the Center for Concern in 1980 to promote social analysis and action on critical social issues. It begins with an “insertion experience”—where one has an intimate experience of a social issue. Holland and Henriot write, “(Experience) locates the geography of our pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities...What people are feeling, what they are undergoing, how they are

responding.” From a thorough consideration of an experience, bigger picture issues begin to come into focus.²⁸

The faith leader participants were asked to explain in detail meaningful experiences of encounter between immigrants and Americans that they or others they know have facilitated in the U.S. South, and how such experiences led faith communities to become actively involved in immigrant justice advocacy. The following six “case studies” will explore these encounter and advocacy experiences:

- The work of Ann Cass Williams at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in the Rio Grande Valley;
- The Alterna Community in La Grange, Georgia, co-led by Anton Flores, where undocumented immigrant families and U.S. born families live as an intentional Christian community committed to Biblical hospitality and social justice;
- An examination of the Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration, a two-hour program developed by the Jesuit Social Research Institute in New Orleans, which features “encounter” experiences between undocumented immigrants and American born parishioners;
- The work of the Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT) and the ministry of EIT member Pastor Jim Hollandsworth in Gwinnett County, Georgia;
- The work of the North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants; and
- The work of DREAMer and faith leader Estella Martinez of Atlanta, Georgia.

This section will conclude with a discussion of other “best practices” for immigrant justice by congregations and other faith-based groups, identified in the guided conversations held with faith leaders in 2015.

ENCOUNTER AND ADVOCACY DEVELOPED BY ANN CASS AT HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY²⁹

In 1988 the bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville, John Joseph Fitzpatrick, appointed Ann Cass Williams to serve as the Pastoral Administrator of a new parish, Holy Spirit Church, in McAllen, Texas. At the time Holy Spirit had a membership of

approximately 1,500 families, almost all middle-class Hispanics. Ann had served as a pastoral associate at Holy Spirit Church since the parish began to form in 1981, the same year she moved to the Rio Grande Valley.

As Pastoral Administrator, Ann's role was essentially that of a pastor--a priest came to the parish only on Sundays to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. Because she felt that people needed to be involved in church activities and in all decision-making



Ann Cass Williams

processes impacting the parish, she immediately began to organize six commissions to deal with almost every aspect of parish life: Family Religious Education and Catechetical Commission; Peace and Justice Commission; Social Activities Commission; Liturgy Commission; Evangelism and Ecumenism Commission; and Administration. The coordinators of each of these positions sat on the Parish Council. Once a year at Mass, parish members were asked to evaluate the work of the commissions and asked which commission they wanted to become involved with. Ann would frequently explain to parish members that because they did not have a priest, if members did not do the work it would not get done, which she felt led to greater sense of ownership of the parish by its members. Over the course of her 12 year tenure as Pastoral Administrator, membership in the parish doubled and Sunday collections tripled.

The Family Religious Education and Catechetical Commission at Holy Spirit coordinated the baptismal program for the parish. Ann felt strongly that baptism had to be an important conversion experience for the parents. She would tell people, "Baptism is not 'fire insurance.' Don't bring your children to the water unless you really want to drink the water because you are the person responsible for your child's faith development and for seeing

that your child becomes active in the community and works for justice in the world."

Part of the conversion that she wanted parents to experience was to open their eyes to the suffering of the poor all around them. She felt this could best be realized by facilitating face-to-face encounters between the parents and poor residents of the valley, many of whom were immigrants. Ann told us, "Encounter is necessary to develop relationships. When you are able to talk to someone, see their faces, hear their stories, you begin to see yourself in the other."

The baptism program at Holy Spirit required that parents take an eight hour bus trip to visit three ministries that served poor immigrants in the Rio Grande Valley. Casa Romero was a shelter for refugees fleeing the civil wars in Central America located 50 miles from McAllen. The local chapter of the United Farm Workers and the Holy Family Birth Center, which provides maternal care to poor women, were the other two stops.

Prior to the bus trip some of the parents had hard-hearted attitudes towards farmworkers trying to organize or people crossing the border without authorization. A few even worked as Border Patrol agents. But at the ministries they visited, the parents entered into conversations with farm workers who spoke about the abuse they had suffered working in the fields. Central American refugees shared horrific accounts of how their family members had been tortured and murdered by government officials. During the long road trip Ann and other catechists facilitated discussion and analysis among the parents. And powerful, life-changing conversion experiences began to happen. In fact, parents frequently named the bus trip as the high point of the baptismal program in evaluations.

During Ann's tenure as Parish Administrator civil wars in Central America were raging. Because the Rio Grande Valley community is farther south than one-third of Mexico, many refugees fleeing the wars in Central America sought to cross the border near McAllen, just as Central American refugees fleeing gang violence do today. In an effort to build

understanding and solidarity with the people of El Salvador, the Peace and Justice Commission at Holy Spirit worked with the non-profit organization, SHARE, to develop a sister church relationship with a Catholic parish in Guajoyo, El Salvador. Face-to-face encounters as well as immersion experiences that this ministry made possible also had a big impact on Holy Spirit parishioners.

In the first year of the sister church program, in 1990, Holy Spirit sent a parishioner to Guajoyo who also worked for the local newspaper. The paper sent a photographer along with her. Ann remembered her concern when the army had surrounded the airport on the day they landed in San Salvador. However, the stories and pictures the two brought back, which were shared at all the weekend Masses at Holy Spirit, were powerful. Hearing from a fellow parishioner about what was happening in El Salvador made it even more impactful. The coverage that the local McAllen paper gave to the trip also worked to greatly increase local awareness and understanding of the Salvadoran war.

In subsequent years the Peace and Justice Commission alternated between bringing two people from Guajoyo north to Holy Spirit one year then sending two people from the parish to Guajoyo the following year. At Holy Spirit the visitors from Guajoyo were allowed to have the pulpit, which was easy for them because they were leaders in their *comunidades de fe* (faith communities) which had a priest only once every three months. In McAllen, the Salvadorans would stay for three days in one parishioner's home, and three days in another. They then traveled north to Austin where another church community hosted them and helped with expenses. These back and forth immersion experiences had a powerful impact not only for those that experienced them directly, but also for the entire parish, based on the feedback the Peace and Justice Commission received. For example, a powerful, conservative State District Judge was so moved by the stories he heard from the Salvadorans from Guajoyo that he ended up becoming a major contributor to community development projects in Guajoyo.

Encounter and meaningful opportunities for cross-cultural understanding with immigrants were a daily occurrence in the English as a Second Language and citizenship classes that the Peace and Justice Commission coordinated. The classes were taught by Holy Spirit volunteers, and there were always plenty of volunteers to do the job.

Years later, Ann still hears stories from Holy Spirit parishioners of the impact that the immersion and encounter experiences have had on their understanding of who is their neighbor. Ann noted that many of the people who began volunteering to assist the mothers and children at the McAllen bus station during the "border surge" in the summer of 2014 had been deeply involved in immersion and encounter experiences with poor immigrants as Holy Spirit parishioners during the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Ann believes the immersion and encounter experiences were critical in priming Holy Spirit parishioners to become involved in social justice advocacy, including the immigrant justice issues of the day. Four to five times a year the Peace and Justice Commission would organize a letter writing campaign after Mass. While parishioners were enjoying coffee and donuts they wrote letters to their Congresspersons on such issues as streamlining application procedures for legalization through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act; ending military aid to El Salvador; better funding for hunger programs or enacting environmental regulations.

Ann believes the close working relationships she had developed between local nonprofits working for social justice made advocacy efforts undertaken by the Peace and Justice Commission more effective. For example, the Peace and Justice Commission invited speakers from the Border Association for Refugees from Central America (BARCA) to discuss the challenges refugees from Central America were facing in trying to obtain political asylum. Dianna Ortiz, O.S.U., a Catholic nun who had been kidnapped and raped in Guatemala in the 1980's, spoke about how the war was destroying the way of life for indigenous people in that country. Whenever

a speaker addressed Holy Spirit parishioners there would also be a “call to action” afterwards involving letter writing or phone calls to elected officials.

Ann knew that she and her staff did not have the time to collect the facts or present the stories that nonprofits committed to immigrant justice or environmental justice did. The relationships of trust between nonprofits working for peace and justice and parishioners primed to work for social justice through powerful encounter and immersion experiences with marginalized people made Holy Spirit Church a strong and reliable ally in the struggle for justice in the Rio Grande Valley and the world.

CHANGING LIVES AND BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD THROUGH CROSS CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS: THE WORK OF ANTON FLORES AND THE ALTERNA COMMUNITY IN LAGRANGE, GEORGIA.



Anton Flores speaking at Stewart Detention Center protest

Anton Flores, another participant in the guided conversations, co-founded the Alterna Community in LaGrange, Georgia, in 2002. Alterna describes itself as “a bilingual community of Christ-followers devoted to faithful acts of hospitality,

mercy, and justice.” Members of this intentional Christian community, which consists of U.S. citizen and undocumented immigrant families from Latin America, live near each other in homes they have purchased together in a working class neighborhood in LaGrange, a small town about 70 miles southwest of Atlanta. On a weekly basis they share meals, pray together, and open their homes to those in need. Alterna strives to live the Biblical theme of “hospitality to strangers” as “the greatest antidote to our society’s epidemic of fear” and to live lives of “generous simplicity” committed to “waging a war on the evil of materialism by offering all our services

pro bono, living below our means, and being more generous with our time, talents, and treasure.”³⁰

The work of Alterna in Georgia includes: the ministry of accompanying immigrants through legal or medical crisis; monitoring local courts’ treatment of immigrants; advocacy on local, state, and federal policy issues with the aim to bring about “policies that better reflect the values of the reign of God”; and detention and jail ministry. Alterna is a founding member of Georgia Detention Watch (GDW).

Through its work with GDW, the Alterna community has helped organize large protests since 2007 at the Stewart Immigration Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, 70 miles south, as part of the School of the Americas Watch annual vigil.³¹

Alterna also provides education and training to churches, schools, and other institutions on cultural competency and immigrant justice issues. Part of this work includes its “Border Crossing” program, where local immigrants share first-person stories designed to put a human face to the plight and resilience of migrants. At these events local immigrants also prepare a meal for participants to enjoy together.³²

Members of Alterna stress that their work did not begin as a political movement to challenge unjust immigration laws but as a web of relationships. Anton explained, “My introduction to the issue of immigration and illegal immigration was through relationships, and I think that has been one of the keystones of Alterna, that we are always trying to humanize and also trying to help people see the importance of relationships preceding ministry.”³³

While teaching English at a Southern Baptist church in LaGrange, Anton and his wife, Charlotte, met Ramona and Eduardo, undocumented immigrants from Mexico. Their friendship grew during visits with Ramona and Eduardo at the hospital during a difficult pregnancy for Ramona and at their home in a dilapidated trailer park in LaGrange. Shocked at the abysmal living conditions their friends were dealing with, the Flores loaned Ramona and Eduardo the money to purchase a home on the street where they lived, and agreed to share in the equity of the

home.³⁴ Thirteen years later the community has grown to include five standing homes, an apartment, a community garden, and chicken coops.

Since 2009, Alterna has helped organize a Pilgrimage for Immigrants during Holy Week which draws an average of one thousand faithful pilgrims who walk in solidarity with immigrants and in support of humane immigration reform. Anton developed the idea after drawing inspiration from two sources, the civil rights movement and its use of marches, and from friends and Buddhist monks in Atlanta that organize drumming and chanting pilgrimages for nuclear disarmament and peace with justice. He also realized that a Holy Week Pilgrimage would be another opportunity for cross-cultural relationships to grow as people met and talked with each other during the long walk. The Pilgrimage began as a collaboration with the Parish Social Ministries office at the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta.³⁵

The Alterna Community proclaims on their website that “the cross cultural relationships within Alterna have changed our lives, as well as the lives of many others. We invite you to enter into these same life-changing experiences and relationships, where you can learn first-hand about immigrants and their struggles and triumphs in Latin America and the U.S.”³⁶

Firmly rooted in Christ’s radical message of unconditional love and hospitality to all, Alterna serves as a model of how justice and mercy can flourish in communities when Christians see the face of God in everyone they encounter, especially our undocumented sisters and brothers.

CATHOLIC TEACH-INS ON MIGRATION: CREATING MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS AND CATHOLICS IN THE PEWS THAT LEADS TO IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY

Two of the organizers of the guided conversations are with the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) at Loyola University New Orleans, Fr. Fred Kammer, S.J., Executive Director, and Sue Weishar, Migration Specialist. Founded in 2007 in the wake of the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina on Gulf



Anton Flores (second from left) at a Holy Week Pilgrimage event in Georgia.

South communities, JSRI’s mission is “to promote research, social analysis, theological reflection, and practical strategies for improving the social and economic conditions in the U.S. Gulf South, with a particular focus on issues of race, poverty, and migration.”³⁷

In 2012, JSRI identified as one of its strategic issues the designing and testing of innovative methods for “transforming hearts and minds” for social action and solidarity with the poor.³⁸ One such method that JSRI has developed makes possible meaningful encounters between undocumented immigrants and the members of a Catholic church parish—the Catholic Teach-In on Migration. There is also an explicit advocacy goal for these events: to engage more Catholics “in the pews” in the struggle for immigration reform.

PARTNERSHIPS

JSRI usually asks a church parish to host a Catholic Teach-In on Migration. In addition to the church parish, another key partner is a community organizing group—the Congress of Day Laborers (*El Congreso*) with the New Orleans Worker Center for Racial Justice. *El Congreso* was formed after Hurricane Katrina and works to organize its members, undocumented immigrant workers, to challenge systemic injustices impacting their community. The immigrant speakers at the Teach-Ins are active members of *El Congreso* and have undergone training to speak out on immigration justice issues. Volunteer table facilitators are

recruited from local Catholic social justice organizations and trained by JSRI on discussion facilitation and interviewing immigrant participants. Volunteer interpreters are provided by *El Congreso* or recruited from JSRI's list of immigrant advocate contacts.

CATHOLIC TEACH-IN ON MIGRATION AGENDA

Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration are usually held in the host parish's school cafeteria or auditorium from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM on a week night. The event begins with a welcome from Teach-In organizers and a bilingual prayer for unity and understanding led by the parish pastor.

The moderator then reviews the stated goals for the dialogue, which are displayed on screen in the front of the room:

- To provide an opportunity to listen and learn about the migration experience of local immigrants from Central America;
- To learn what the Catholic Church teaches on migration and seeking refuge; and
- To discern how one is being called to respond to our nation's immigration crisis.

Most Americans are confused or unaware of the causes of the migrant crisis or how the U.S. immigration system works. To provide context to what will be the main feature of the event, the migrants' stories, participants view a short video³⁹ that vividly describes the causes of the border crisis: violence and impunity in the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. A JSRI staff member then briefly outlines how the nation's economy has come to depend on the labor of undocumented immigrants but that, because the immigration system provides almost no way for most unauthorized immigrants to legalize their status, almost 11 million people now live with the constant threat of deportation.

Next, two or three immigrants who are comfortable addressing a large group are asked to come to the front of the room and tell their

stories. At the first Teach-In, Juan and Jennifer Molina, members of the host parish, discussed the challenges Juan had faced living undocumented when he first came to the U.S. in the mid 90's and how his mother in Honduras had recently been harassed by gang members who demanded a "war tax" to operate her small business.

After testimonials to the entire group, a member of the JSRI staff provides an overview of the Catholic Church's teachings on migration. This portion of the program begins with a discussion of the foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching, namely the dignity and sanctity of the human person. Because each and every human being is a child of God, made in God's image and likeness, every human being is of inestimable value and worth and therefore has the right to life and the conditions worthy of life. The speaker then goes on to discuss the five principles that have emerged from the Church's teachings on migration, identified in a joint pastoral letter by the U.S. and Mexican bishops, including the right for persons to migrate to support themselves and their families.⁴⁰

At this point, about halfway through the two hour program, the lead facilitator then briefly reviews Listening Session guidelines which ask participants to listen intently, respectfully, and to maintain confidentiality. Next, table facilitators ask everyone seated at their respective tables, which include two or three immigrants, an interpreter, and six to eight Americans, to introduce themselves. After introductions, immigrants begin to tell their personal migration stories.



Table facilitators are provided a “question guide” to help prompt the immigrants in the telling of their stories. The facilitator first asks the immigrants to describe the journeys from their home countries and the dangers and challenges they encountered on their way to the U.S. The next set of questions asks the immigrants to discuss some of the reasons why they left their home countries and how they were affected by gangs, crime, or lack of economic opportunities in their home countries. The last set of questions for the immigrants explores their lives in the U.S., what it means to be reunited with family, and what hopes and dreams they have for themselves and their families.

Next, American participants, if time remains, are asked if they have any questions for the immigrant speakers and to reflect on what they might have done in the same situation as the speakers at their table. American participants are asked to consider how the immigrant speakers’ stories compare to their own ancestors’ migration stories.

To wrap up the listening session, participants are asked to pray and reflect on what they have just heard, which in many cases are powerful and moving stories of terror, loss, and rejection, and to share in a few words what they are feeling with others at the table.

Then, with about 15 minutes remaining in the program, table facilitators ask participants to consider what actions they might be willing to take to support immigrant children and immigrant families in their community. Participants are asked to review “Suggestions for Action,” a handout in participants’ packets that lists a variety of activities, including organizing a meeting with one’s Congressional representative; writing a letter to the editor; and, joining the JSRI action alert mailing list.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

In program evaluations 99 percent of Anglo participants said they found the Teach-In valuable,

...To know how much people have sacrificed is humbling.

with most Anglo participants (66 percent) indicating that hearing about the experiences of undocumented immigrants was what they found most valuable about the event.

Here are some participant responses to the question on the value of the Teach-In:

“To hear the stories of individuals, to be with them, is to remember our connectedness and our humanity.”⁴¹

“It’s valuable because we got an up-close and personal feeling and the truth instead of listening to the media.”⁴²

“To hear the personal stories of faith and courage and to know how much people have sacrificed is humbling.”⁴³

“I feel meeting and listening to the migrants helps me want to do as much as I can to help them.”⁴⁴

Feedback also indicates that the Teach-Ins have had a positive impact on the immigrant speakers. One of the community organizers from *El Congreso* told Sue Weishar, “Our members all said that they really enjoyed the opportunity. They said that it felt good to have the attention directly on them and people really listening to their stories.”⁴⁵

Author and founder of Homeboy Industries, Rev. Gregory Boyle, S.J., writes in *Tattoos on the Heart* that a new, palpable sense of solidarity among equals, a beloved community, is always the fruit of true compassion.⁴⁶ When Central Americans who participated in the first Teach-In were asked how it felt to be listened to, their responses reflected the compassion and solidarity they experienced. A 58 year-old woman who had fled Guatemala to escape brutal beatings from her husband said, “I felt very happy and touched because I came to understand that we are not alone as immigrants, that we are a part of all Catholic people.”⁴⁷ A woman from Honduras whose family spoke in front of the entire gathering stated, “We had not had the opportunity to share our story. I was very moved that so many people were interested... I felt supported by

everyone there; I felt we were all in solidarity with me, my child, and my husband.”⁴⁸ An immigrant wrote on an evaluation from the third teach-In, “[I learned] today that there are people willing to help us regardless of our faces, language, or country of origin and they respect human rights.”⁴⁹ An immigrant teen wrote about the CTOM, “[I learned] it is not bad to be an immigrant.”⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

By almost all accounts the Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration are extraordinary events: A safe space is created where suffering people open their hearts to strangers who, in an act of true compassion, listen intently and respectfully, allowing themselves to enter into the suffering of others and be changed in the process.

JSRI staff have used the contact information they have collected at the Teach-Ins in several immigrant advocacy campaigns, including phone calls to the local ICE office to stop the deportation of undocumented community members, sign-on letters to support immigration reform legislation, emails to Congress to advocate for the resettlement of refugees from Syria, and to urge Teach-In alumni participation in public actions and media events that JSRI has organized to promote immigrant justice

THE EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION TABLE AND THE ‘SECRET SAUCE’: HELPING EVANGELICALS SEE THE SUFFERING OF IMMIGRANTS AND MAKE THE FAITH CONNECTION

The Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT) is a broad national coalition of evangelical organizations and leaders advocating for immigration reform consistent with biblical values. Founded in 2011, member organizations include the National Association of Evangelicals, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, Southern Baptist Conference, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, World Vision, and World Relief. Individual evangelical faith leaders from over 30 states are also members.⁵¹

Through workshops, seminars, and other trainings, members of the Evangelical Immigration Table have

been encouraged to use a type of congregational outreach and organizing known as “faith-rooted organizing” to draw deeply on the wells of their common Christian faith to create encounters and relationships that result in the exchange of hope and passion between immigrants and American-born. The precepts and principles of faith rooted organizing were developed by the Reverend Alexia Salvatierra and a circle of young religious leaders while supporting the struggles for justice of low-wage workers in California with Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) from 2000 to 2011. Alexia is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a co-founder of the Evangelical Immigration Table, and was a core member of the faith leaders that participated in the guided conversations.

Alexia describes faith-rooted organizing as being shaped and guided in every way by faith principles and practices. Faith-rooted organizers are inspired by the love of God to work not just for short term political gains, but rather a change of culture and a transformed society guided by Jesus’ teachings on the kingdom of God.

By encouraging the use of faith-rooted principles and practices, the Evangelical Immigration Table members have created encounters and relationships where immigrants find new hope for change, non-immigrants discover new passion for immigration reform, and faith-based coalitions are broadened and strengthened so they that can reach “unusual suspects,” including conservative legislators. These strategies, which began in Southern California and the Chicago area, have been used throughout the country, including the following southern states: Texas, North Carolina and Florida. They include:

Engaging immigrant and non-immigrant congregational leaders in joint pastoral mission to immigrant children and youth -- often in the context of a detention center but sometimes in afterschool programs. Such programs include training and mutual support components for volunteers that educate them about the immigration system and the Biblical case for welcoming the stranger. Because of

the trust that develops between the volunteers, who have a peer relationship because of their roles as co-ministers, immigrant participants are more willing to share their stories and non-immigrants are more likely to believe them and act on them.

Engaging evangelical pastors and leaders (immigrant and non-immigrant together) in ministering to their Christian legislators, encouraging them to see the issue in new ways and to have the courage to respond from their moral base instead of just their political platform. This happens through the "I Was a Stranger" campaign, where pastors, congregants, and legislators make a pact to use a bookmark with 40 scriptures about immigration in their daily Bible Study and devotions. It also happens through prayer breakfasts with legislators, pastors, and other leaders of evangelical congregations where immigration is discussed through a faith lens that allows for real dialogue about the human costs of our nation's broken immigration system.

Engaging evangelical pastors and leaders in public witness—writing op-eds or hosting prayer vigils, taking a public stand for immigrant rights and immigration integration from the sacred ground of their faith. These strategies have had real demonstrated impact on legislators whose perspectives and commitments have changed as a result of the insights and relationships developed through these strategies.

Alexia interviewed EIT participant Pastor Jim Hollandsworth in February 2016. His story, which follows, illustrates one Southern evangelical Christian's path to conversion, and to converting others, through life-changing encounter experiences with immigrants linked to biblically-based principles.

Pastor Jim Hollandsworth's family has been living in Gwinnett County, Georgia, since the 1870's. Jim says that he does not remember knowing any Democrats when he was growing up. "The majority of the politicians representing Gwinnett County in Georgia at all levels of government are white, male and Republican." While there were certainly Black families living in his town when he was growing up,

his high school was almost all white and there was little contact between races. While he did not know anyone who belonged to the Klan, he knew that when the last public lynching happened in 1946 in adjacent Walton County, people in his broader circle thought that they might know who had participated in the mob that had carried it out, but no one shared that information with the authorities and no one was ever prosecuted.

When Jim committed his life to Christ as a student at the University of Georgia, his perspective began to change. Through visiting Christian missions overseas, he began to make friends from other countries and God opened his eyes to how limited his understanding of the world had been. In the meantime, his town had begun to change. Immigrants were arriving; "the world was coming to our doors." He and his wife began to pray about what they should do.

In 2009, at a Christmas event for poor families at his church, he met a Mexican immigrant family who invited him to visit. Jim, his wife, and baby daughter went to their home, a single-wide trailer for a family of nine, in a trailer park of 300 undocumented families from Morelia, Guerrero, and Michoacán, Mexico. Jim had not even known that this neighborhood was there, "a whole neighborhood of people living in the shadows."

The friendship between Jim's family and the Mexican family grew, and at one point the children asked Jim and his wife for help with their homework because their parents did not have either the formal education or the language capacity to help them. This simple request grew over a period of years into the Path Project, a ministry providing a preschool program, regular tutoring to children, and mentoring for youth to lower high school dropout rates. Now 250 volunteers from eight to ten mostly white churches are involved in one way or another in the ministry, including 75-100 members of Greystone Community Church in Loganville, Georgia, a non-denominational Evangelical Church where Jim has served as Associate Pastor.



Pastor Jim Hollandsworth and wife Melinda with DREAMer graduates.

Over the years, the broken immigration system became “personal” for Jim and for many of the volunteers from his church. “It’s the secret sauce,” Jim says, “—getting to know people personally who are suffering.” Hearts opened and minds changed. Through his participation in the Christian Community Development Association (see Appendix II), Jim found materials from the Evangelical Immigration Table to be very helpful in this process, particularly the book *Welcoming the Stranger*⁵² by Matt Soerens and Jenny Yang from World Relief and various EIT videos (see Appendix II). He describes the change as a spiritual process, reading the passages about God’s immigrant people in the Old and New Testament and the injunction to welcome the stranger because “you too had been strangers, immigrants.” Jim said that he began to realize that responding to the call to love your neighbor meant that you might have to lose some power and privilege so that they can have some too. Not everyone in his church got close enough to be transformed, but the majority are now open and supportive of the ministry. Some are confused about “why you are doing this for these people,” but many donate money and no one actively opposes the ministry with immigrants.

At a certain point, Jim realized that God did not just want them to serve the immigrant but also to speak to and impact the white evangelical community that was living in fear and clinging to the status quo. He began to have conversations with his own senior pastor who taught on the theme of immigration for

a month in the summer of 2016, with other pastors in his network, and with legislators. He has brought youth from the Path Project to meet with legislators and has invited legislators to come to their events.

He remembers talking with one legislator who had visited the Path Project about a proposed policy to help immigrant youth. To help him connect his experience with his pending public decision, Jim said to him, “Remember Emmanuel, the boy you met when you came over?” Jim also noted the importance of the faith connection that he and the other pastors and Christian leaders have with the legislators. All of their representatives are evangelical Christians. He said that the policy conversation went nowhere until it became a faith conversation.

Recently, Jim took three pastors from his network to an immersion experience at the U.S.- Mexico border organized by The Global Immersion Project (see Appendix II). When he actually saw the wall, he was struck by the thought that he could go back and forth but that there were people stuck on both sides. “That wall is not what Jesus wants, not what the kingdom is about.”

Jim believes deeply that the South is changing. He did not know any Evangelicals in their 20’s-40’s who were planning to vote for Donald Trump, and he says that his children have friends of all races. He did, however, know many older people who were planning to vote for Donald Trump, and the legislators tell him that those folks are much more likely to vote than younger people. Jim admits that the lack of political engagement among younger people is slowing down the process – but he still has hope. “The younger Evangelicals know that we need to do something; we need immigration reform.”

THE NORTH CAROLINA RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS

The North Carolina Council of Churches is a statewide ecumenical organization founded in 1935 that promotes Christian unity and works towards creating a more just society. Membership includes 25 judicatories of 17 denominations and eight

individual congregations, totaling about 6,200 congregations and 1.5 million congregants statewide. The North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants (NCRCJI), a program of the North Carolina Council of Churches, was formed in 2009 in response to rising anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiment in North Carolina.⁵³

The purpose of the NCRCJI is as follows: “To remind people of faith that all of us are created in the image of God. In our various faith traditions, it is unacceptable to use—or let others use—dehumanizing language in describing fellow human beings. Our religious calling is to love our neighbors and to treat others the way that we ourselves would like to be treated—whatever their status. We are called, in other words, to offer hospitality, not hostility.”

The NCRCJI is staffed by Jennie Belle, who participated in the guided conversations in 2015. Originally from Georgia, Jennie moved to North Carolina in 2010 to pursue an M.Div./M.S.W. dual degree at Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill where her work focused on advocating for farmworkers and organizing churches for social justice. Jennie devotes approximately 25 hours a week to immigration programming, and the rest of her time is spent working on the Council’s programs for farmworkers and rural life. Jennie is responsible for organizing NCRCJI events, sending out email updates and action alerts, writing press releases and grant applications, and updating their website. Jennie’s position is funded by the North Carolina philanthropic organization—the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.



Jennie Belle at North Carolina rally on immigrant rights

The NCRCJI has three main goals:⁵⁴

GOAL 1: *Shift public opinion toward more favorable views of immigrants. In our society's public discourse about immigrants, we need to recognize our shared humanity as more fundamental than boundaries of language, culture and status that would divide us. Like any major shift in perceptions, attitudes and feelings, this long-term goal will take years-- possibly a generation-- to achieve.*

In order to shift public opinion on immigration, the NCRCJI educates people of faith by promoting and distributing a formidable array of educational resources (see Appendix II) developed by the Council on immigration from a faith perspective.

A “toolkit” for faith communities provides advice on how congregations can address a controversial issue like immigration, key background information on immigration to North Carolina, a primer on how the U.S. immigration system works, and several pastoral reflections and worship resources.

The Biblically-based curriculum, *Becoming the Church Together: Immigration, the Bible, and Our Neighbors*, is composed of six

scripture-based lessons which address various aspects of migration. Each lesson includes opening and closing prayers, discussion questions, Biblical reflections, and group activities, including an immigration board game.

Immigration Simulation provides instructions for an activity where participants play specific roles in the migration experience including *campesino*, landowner, border factory owner, and coyote.

The goal of the NCRCJI *Neighbors Together* pilot project is “taking the politics out of immigration and replacing it with relationships.” With this program the NCRCJI helps facilitate over a four-month period members of Anglo congregations sharing meals with members of a nearby Latino church. In this way,

“everyone involved will learn to practice hospitality, build bridges, and make new friends.”

GOAL 2: *Empower faith communities to take strong actions in solidarity with immigrants. Faith communities should be so active in the immigrant rights movement that they become generally recognized as strong allies and leaders on social justice for immigrants.*

The NCRCJI empowers clergy to become leaders in the struggle for immigrant justice by organizing events where they can learn from each other and share resources. Every year at six clergy breakfasts organized in six different regions in the state participants share a meal and hear from other faith leaders about how they are responding to immigration issues in their congregations and communities. Jennie Bell describes an NCRCJI clergy breakfast as, “a forum for honest questions and positive conversation among local colleagues, [where] everyone will walk away with additional resources and contacts.”

The NCRCJI also organizes an annual Statewide Faith & Immigration Summit in the Triangle area which brings together North Carolina faith leaders and immigrant community leaders. In 2015, the Summit focused on immigrant children and youth and in 2016 the focus was immigration as a racial justice issue.

GOAL 3: *Support implementation of just, humane comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) at the federal level and oppose anti-immigrant legislation, including Arizona-style bills, at the state level. CIR would substantially increase immigrants' quality of life while reducing the fear and disintegration plaguing immigrant communities.*

In order to secure the passage of humane comprehensive immigration reform, the NCRCJI mobilizes faith-based activists across the state by encouraging their participation in grassroots advocacy, sending action alerts and immigration updates to their network of over 1200 contacts, and continuing a statewide “Letter to the Editor”

campaign that promotes positive messages about immigrants in the media.

CONCLUSION

Recently, the NCRCJI ventured into “new territory” when the coalition challenged the backlash against refugees from Syria after the Paris and San Bernardino terrorist attacks. Responding, as Jennie describes, “in a manner that promotes Christian values of grace and hospitality,” NCRCJI members organized an interfaith prayer vigil and community potluck to “demonstrate welcome for refugees.”

When an anti-immigrant bill unexpectedly arose in the North Carolina legislature in 2015, the NCRCJI mobilized allies to call their representatives to oppose the bill, organized an interfaith prayer vigil, and after the bill was passed, a protest outside the Governor’s mansion. During this crisis they were able to strengthen partnerships with other advocacy groups, including the NAACP.

Jennie stated, “As we approach an election year in 2016, there is no doubt that immigration will remain an important and divisive issue, and our work will be more important than ever.” The North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants demonstrates how a state-wide coalition can educate and mobilize people of faith to advocate for their immigrant brothers and sisters and to work to build welcoming communities. Additionally, the importance of reliable funding to staff a coalition coordinator/organizer appears to be essential to their work.

ESTELLA MARTINEZ, DREAMER AND FAITH LEADER

When Estella Martinez⁵⁵ was nine years-old, her family left Mexico for a chance at a better life in the United States, eventually



Estella Martinez

settling in Atlanta, Georgia. Estella always knew she was undocumented, but she never really understood what it meant until her senior year in high school when a school counselor asked for her Social Security number to help her apply for financial aid. Then it really dawned on her how many doors were closed to her because of her lack of legal status. Estela was crushed by this realization, but her parents encouraged her to enroll in a local community college and not give up hope. She was eligible to apply for work authorization through President Obama's June 2012 executive deferred action program for undocumented youth who had grown up in the United States. Since July 2015, Estella has been employed as a youth minister at a large, multi-cultural church in the Smyrna area of metro-Atlanta, St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church. Although she is currently studying for certification as a paralegal at Kennesaw State University, she now feels God is calling her to stay involved in youth ministry.

Estella estimates that about 99 percent of the approximately 300 youths in the youth group she ministers to at St. Thomas are Hispanic. Of that number about 100 are undocumented, and almost all the youths' parents are undocumented. She uses the *Life Teen* curriculum to build community and teach teens about their faith and critical social justice issues, such as global warming, poverty and hunger, and pornography. Since so many of her youth group members are impacted by the country's immigration laws, she has also developed lessons on immigration.

When addressing the issue of immigration, Estella first asks the teens to discuss some of the reasons their families had to leave their home countries - such as war, gang violence, drug cartels, extreme poverty and hunger, and the constant threat of being kidnapped. Then they consider the blessings they have here in the United States, an education, enough food to eat, and freedom from the fear of being assaulted. Next they talk about what is currently going on in terms of U.S. policy. Finally, they offer up their concerns in prayer.

Estella believes prayers move mountains by helping the people who move mountains to have the courage and strength to stand up for what they believe in and know that Jesus loves them, regardless of the color of their skin or legal status.

Estella understands that one of the main issues confronting undocumented youth, because she had to deal with this herself, is to realize their self-worth. "Once we find our worth is not based on where we live or how much education we have or our legal status...that our worth comes from God and...that we are valuable...that is when we stop feeling like we are less than human."

Although Estella has been involved in immigrant justice advocacy since she was 18 years-old, because her youth group members are still in high school, she does not take them to immigrant advocacy events. She believes that before undocumented teens become involved in immigrant advocacy they need to have a discussion with their parents, because the youth and her family could all be targeted under Georgia's strict immigration enforcement laws. Estella has had people spit on her, curse her, and harass her with hateful emails and phone calls because of her immigration advocacy. She told one person who called to harass her that she was sorry he was not able to see her as the human being she is, and that she would pray for him.

She does encourage the youth she works with to attend community meetings on immigration hosted at her church and to become involved in the Pilgrimage for Immigrants event organized by fellow parishioners P.J. Edwards and Anton Flores because it is "all prayer" and very well organized. She believes this walk, which begins at St. Thomas the Apostle Church on Holy Thursday and ends at Marietta Square eight miles away, is a way for people to "pray with their feet about issues that are harming so many of us."

Several faith leaders featured in this report have found that "encounter" experiences are needed to help Americans understand the humanity of undocumented immigrants and how their life chances are burdened by a lack of legal status.

Estella believes that there are many ways to advocate for immigrant justice, and has come to understand that the most effective way for her to advocate is to do so “from the inside” with face-to-face encounters with Georgia legislators. She has told legislators she has met with, “I am the person you want to deport - a youth minister, a college student, who graduated with honors from High School...Our parents work from sunrise to sunset to make a life for us...You are de-humanizing us.”

Estella thinks that it is important that faith leaders show their undocumented immigrant parishioners that they are willing to support them, although what that might look like will vary between faith communities. For example, when the anti-immigrant bill, HB 87, was being debated in the Georgia legislature, her pastor allowed advocates to stand outside Mass and gather signatures opposing the law. Every priest at her church that weekend said something about how it was one’s duty as a Christian to stand up for immigrants and not let them be treated unfairly.

OTHER BEST PRACTICES FOR ADVOCACY FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE BY CONGREGATIONS AND OTHER FAITH-BASED GROUPS

These case studies illustrate how transformative personal encounters between immigrants and native-born can awaken hearts and lead to advocacy for immigrant justice on the part of members of faith-based organizations. An analysis of these case studies, as well as other works by faith leader participants, exemplify additional “best practices” for immigrant justice advocacy identified in the



guided conversations.

LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Faith leader participants identified the need for “prophetic leadership” for

effective advocacy by faith-based organizations. In the cases described, leaders with a commitment to addressing systemic injustices facing undocumented immigrants had to channel the new-found awareness that believers had gained through personal encounters with immigrants into concrete acts of political advocacy. Many pastors fear offending members of their congregations by broaching the injustices facing their immigrant members. Faith leader participants urged such pastors to “get out of their comfort zone” and take risks.

Leadership that bridges different communities is needed to create the encounters that can often awaken the heart and lead to involvement in advocacy campaigns. Such cultural brokers need to be identified and supported. Cultural brokers do not necessarily have to speak Spanish, however. A faith leader participant, P.J. Edwards, and his wife, Amy have organized many cross cultural events in their parish, St. Thomas the Apostle, in Atlanta, including “dinner ministries” where recent immigrant families and U.S. born families meet in each other’s homes to share meals. They also lead an educational program they have developed that promotes dialogue between U.S. born and recent immigrants known as “The Travelers Together Educational and Dialogue Sessions.” The Edwards do not speak Spanish, but have many bilingual immigrant friends willing to assist them in this work.

Some pastors do not know how to do advocacy or feel they lack the needed skills. In such cases, faith leader participants suggested they get the training and/or work with faith-based community organizers and advocates. Sometimes a congregation or other faith based group will need to commit to funding a dedicated staff member for immigrant advocacy. Faith leader participants also suggested that a cluster of churches could pool funding and hire an immigrant justice organizer. It was agreed that there is a great need for such a model to be developed.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with non-profit organizations were key to Ann Cass Williams’ work at Holy Spirit Church in

the Rio Grande Valley. Through non-profit organizations serving immigrants, such as the Casa Romero shelter and the Holy Family Birth Center, her parishioners were able to meet and hear from the migrants themselves why they had fled civil war in Central America. SHARE organized the immersion experiences for her parishioners in El Salvador and for Salvadorans to come to the Rio Grande Valley and speak to local churches.

JSRI could not conduct the Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration without partnering with the community organizing group, Congress of Day Laborers, whose members bravely tell their migration stories in small group discussions at the CTOMs.

In addition, faith leader participants recommended more partnerships between faith-based organizations and universities. It was suggested that the work of faith groups currently working with universities be mapped and studied.

Interdenominational advocacy partnerships are stronger if their work is strategic. For example, JSRI helped to organize a rally to welcome Syrian refugees that included the participation of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faith leaders who spoke on how their respective faith tradition embodies welcoming the stranger. The rally was covered extensively in the New Orleans media. At the national level *Bibles, Badges, and Business* is a network of “unlikely allies” involving conservative faith, law enforcement, and business leaders working to advocate for humane policy solutions to the nation’s immigration crisis.

Often the strongest forms of partnership can be found in coalitions that are funded and staffed. The Evangelical Immigration Table and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition provide resources to thousands of churches and congregations throughout the country. One of the most active and effective faith-based coalitions working for

immigrant justice at the state level in the south is the North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants (NCRCCI).

For the past two years, the Director of NCRCCI, Jennie Belle, has organized Clergy Breakfasts in six different regions of the state. These gatherings are opportunities for faith leaders to nurture relationships, develop networks, and learn of each other’s work welcoming and advocating for immigrants. She also sends out advocacy alerts to the hundreds of people of faith on her email lists and organizes media events to promote immigrant justice. The NCRCCI website contains an impressive array of resources to educate faith communities about what the Scripture teaches on migration, immigration policy issues, and the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants to North Carolina (see Appendix II).

PUBLIC EVENTS AND RITUALS

The faith community has a treasure trove of symbols, rituals, and music that can multiply the impact of a faith group’s message if they are utilized effectively in public communication.⁵⁶

In 1998, during Holy Week and just before Passover, leaders of CLUE in southern California led a procession of faith leaders down Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, bringing milk and honey to a hotel owner who was negotiating in good faith with the members of a hotel workers union. To other hotel owners who were not making sincere efforts to reach an agreement with workers, the faith leaders delivered bitter herbs. One of the hotel owners, who was a person of faith, had previously not seen his management decisions as a moral matter. Soon after the symbolic act by the faith leaders he began to negotiate in good faith.⁵⁷

Mary Townsend, a member of our faith leaders group who works at a Methodist social and legal services ministry for immigrants in Mississippi, organized a multi-faith prayer service at an Episcopal church in October 2013. After praying together and sharing a meal, the group, which included the Catholic bishop for southern Mississippi, walked in

For many Christians, migration goes to the heart of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

procession to the local Congressman's Biloxi office where they prayed for his support for pending immigration reform legislation. Members of his staff joined the faith group in front of his office. This event was well covered by the local media.

In the Atlanta area P.J. Edwards and Anton Flores have helped to organize a Holy Week Pilgrimage for Immigrants for the past nine years. On Holy Thursday, people with legal status wash the feet of undocumented immigrants, which has become a powerful symbol of solidarity for all participants.

IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY RESOURCES FOR FAITH LEADERS

A plethora of resources have been developed to assist faith leaders and people of faith become engaged in the struggle for immigrant justice. Appendix II discusses several helpful resources that can be found on-line.

CONCLUSION/2016 ELECTION POSTSCRIPT

Almost every step of an undocumented immigrant's life is weighed down by the heavy burden of lack of legal status. The election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency, after running an explicitly anti-immigrant campaign that seemed to relish stoking fear and resentment towards immigrants, has shattered hopes that millions of undocumented immigrants' burden of illegality might soon be lifted. Instead, the nightmare of mass deportations and family disintegration now looms large.

As discussed in depth in Chapter One, migration goes to the heart of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. A 2010 Pew Research Center study found, however, that only nine percent of U.S. Protestants and seven percent of U.S. Catholics say they think about immigration issues primarily from the perspective of their Christian faith.⁵⁸ Could this disconnect help explain why eighty-one (81) percent of White, evangelical Christians and 60% of white Catholics voted for Trump, according to exit polls?⁵⁹ Although a growing proportion of Catholic and Protestant church membership in the United States is composed of Latino immigrants—many undocumented—sadly many American Christians do not seem to see the face of Christ in their immigrant sisters and brothers.

Christians must look deeply into who they are and what they believe. Do they or do they not accept Christ's core message to welcome and love the immigrant? People of faith and their leaders are needed on the front lines to stop any efforts at mass deportation that would bring misery and destruction

to millions of families. Christ followers must work tirelessly to finally bring about changes in the nation's immigration laws that will allow undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters to live in peace and dignity. For this to happen, faith leaders will need to be willing to advocate for compassion and justice for immigrants. It is the aim of this report to provide the faith community with ideas and resources that can help them accomplish these goals.

In closing, DREAMer Estella Martinez offers advice to faith leaders contemplating immigrant advocacy:

"We are called to be uncomfortable. We are called to step out of our comfort zone when we are following God in our faith. When we become comfortable in our faith we become stagnant and there is no growth.... Our faith is not just saying an Our Father or a Hail Mary and grace before our meals... A faith that is bold is a faith that says that is my brother, that is my sister and I love them and I will stand up for them... Besides from praying, we need to step into action. That our prayers not just stay on our lips and our hearts, but become the hands and feet of Christ."⁶⁰



APPENDIX I – PARTICIPANTS IN FAITH LEADERS WORKSHOPS

JENNIE BELLE attends the First Presbyterian Church in Durham, North Carolina. Jennie received her M.Div./M.S.W. at Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill where she focused on advocating for farmworkers and organizing churches for social justice. Jennie is currently a Program Associate at the Council of Churches and works to help improve conditions for immigrants and farmworkers in the state.

FATHER RAFAEL CAPÓ is an educator and religious priest from the Order of the Piarist Fathers (Escolapios), left the Archdiocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico to work in Miami at the U.S.: SEPI: Instituto Pastoral del Sureste, or Southeast Pastoral Institute. Father Capó also serves as regional director for Hispanic Ministry for the U.S. Bishops' Regions V and XIV.

ANN WILLIAMS CASS is the Executive Director of Proyecto Azteca, a non-profit self-help housing program inspired by Cesar Chavez which helps migrant workers and colonia residents construct their homes in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, right on the Texas-Mexico border. Prior to coming to Proyecto Azteca, she was the Pastoral Administrator of Holy Spirit Catholic Parish in McAllen, Texas for twenty-five years. She also worked as administrator for the United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO, in Texas during the 1980's.

PJ EDWARDS is Roman Catholic. PJ is a board member of JustFaith Ministries, a member of the Georgia Detention Watch, and active with Alterna, a Christian missional community that offers accompaniment, advocacy, and hospitality to Latin American immigrants.

JOHN FANESTIL is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. From 2007-2014, Fanestil served as executive director of the Foundation for Change, an organization which works for social justice in San Diego and Tijuana. His publications include *Mrs. Hunter's Happy Death: Lessons on Living from People Preparing to Die* (2007).

ANTON FLORES is a member of the Mennonite Church. Anton is a co-founder of Alterna, a bilingual Christian missional community in LaGrange, Georgia that offers accompaniment, advocacy, and hospitality to Latin American immigrants. As part of its mission, Alterna runs El Refugio, which offers hospitality to the men of the Stewart ICE detention center and their families.

REV. JOYCE JOHNSON is currently Director of the Jubilee Institute, a community-based leadership development and training entity. Joyce assisted the Beloved Community Center of Greensboro (BCC) in developing the Jubilee Institute to provide institutional support, social and political analysis, training, and leadership development for the broad-based progressive movement in that city. Joyce also serves on the North Carolina NAACP State Executive Board, the Guilford Education Alliance Board, and the Faith Community Church Council.

REV. NELSON JOHNSON is Pastor of Faith Community Church and Executive Director of The Beloved Community Center of Greensboro. Rev. Johnson centers his efforts on facilitating a process of comprehensive community building, which include a convergence of racial and ethnic diversity, social and economic justice, and genuine participatory democracy. At the Beloved Community Center, he and his colleagues attempt to bring together the homeless, the imprisoned, impoverished neighborhoods, and other disenfranchised groups in the spirit of mutual support and community.

FRED KAMMER, SJ is a Jesuit priest and attorney and the director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans, co-sponsors of this project. A native of New Orleans, his history has been in legal services for the poor (Atlanta) and Catholic Charities at the local (Baton Rouge) and national level. He was also the provincial of the Jesuits of the South from 2002 to 2008 and has written three books on Catholic Social Thought and practice.

MICHAEL MATA (FACILITATOR) is an Evangelical residing in California. Michael has designed and administered community and faith-based programs for nearly thirty years, particularly in the areas of transformational community development, congregational redevelopment, intercultural programs, organizational and leadership development, ministry/nonprofit management and community youth development. He is the Community Transformation Specialist with Compassion Creates Change, Inc. and an affiliated faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary.

TOMMY MORGAN is Senior Pastor at Grace Christian Church (Disciples in Christ) in Helena, Alabama. Rev. Morgan is a member of the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice and actively opposed Alabama HB 56.

STEVE MOSES helped spearhead efforts to bring World Relief to Memphis, Tennessee. Steve oversees the leadership of the office along with a staff of six others. Steve brings his experiences living in the Middle East and over eight years of hands on service to refugee populations in Memphis. Currently, the Memphis office primarily serves Somali, Iraqi, and Nepali populations.

DAVID PARK has served as the lead pastor for Open Table Community in Chamblee, Georgia since 2012. David is a second generation Korean American who desires to see multiethnic, honest, and healthy relationships in community and on mission. David is an active member of the Evangelical Immigration Table in Georgia.

THE REV. DR. OSCAR RAMOS-GALLARDO is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church assigned to the Louisiana Annual Conference through the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries. He is one of three missionaries from this plan assigned to the Louisiana Conference and shares the responsibilities for overseeing conference efforts to reach out and minister with members of Hispanic/Latino communities. Dr. Ramos was born in Tamiahua, in the Mexican state of Veracruz. He attended Juan Wesley Seminario in Monterrey, where he earned a license in theology in 1991. He then studied at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, earning a Master of Divinity degree in 1994. In May 2011, he received a Doctor of Ministry degree in Hispanic/Latino leadership from Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He was ordained an elder in the North Indiana Conference.

GUS REYES is the director of Affinity Ministries and the Hispanic Education Initiative of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). Gus is the director of the BGCT Christian Life Commission, an organization that focuses on critical issues such as Hunger & Poverty, Citizenship and Ethical Choices in society from a Christian and biblical perspective.

ALEXIA SALVATIERRA is a Lutheran Pastor, community organizer and the co-author of *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* by Intervarsity Press. Her particular emphasis is the special contribution that faith leaders and communities can make to the struggle for a fair and humane immigration system. She is one of the co-founders of the New Sanctuary Movement, the National Evangelical Immigration Table, and the Guardian Angels Project of the Welcoming Congregations Network (for unaccompanied migrants.)

FATHER DANIEL (DAN) STACK is the pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Alpharetta. Prior to that, he was pastor of a little church in Cedartown, GA. He has worked with Latinos for the past 26 years.

MARY TOWNSEND is a Roman Catholic working with the United Methodist Church in Mississippi. After Hurricane Katrina Mary worked as a long-term recovery caseworker and assistant for Seashore District Hispanic ministry in Biloxi, Mississippi. Mary has worked as an immigration services provider, a social justice advocate, and an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. She was one of the founding members of MIRA (Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance) in Jackson and served on MIRA's board of directors for several years.

DR. RICHARD TURCOTTE is the CEO of Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Miami. As CEO Dr. Turcotte manages and oversees more than 40 archdiocese programs that help a wide range of people, including the poor, ill, disabled, elderly, and refugees.

MICHELLE WARREN, M.P.A. is both the Community Liaison at Open Door Ministries, a CDC in Denver, Colorado and the Colorado Immigration Specialist for the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), a National Partner of the Evangelical Immigration Table.

SUE WEISHAR, PH.D. is the Migration Specialist Research Fellow, Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University New Orleans. She has been involved in social justice advocacy and social service work for over thirty-five years. As the Director of Immigration and Refugee Services at Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans (1991-2005) she engaged faith and community leaders in coalitions to address the conditions of confinement of immigrant detainees in Louisiana prisons and to advocate for a restoration of federal benefits to elderly refugees and immigrants. At JSRI, Sue has worked to build bridges between native born and immigrant Catholics through community dialogs and Teach-Ins which feature the personal testimonies of undocumented immigrants and the Church's teachings on migration and through an ESL program at her church—a "shared parish." Sue received a B.S. in Liberal Arts and a Master's Degree in Comparative Education from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Research from LSU.

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APPENDIX II IMMIGRANT ADVOCACY RESOURCES FOR FAITH LEADERS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (CCDA)

Since its founding in 1989, the Christian Community Development Association (<http://www.cdda.org/>) has “inspired, trained and connected Christians who are restoring under-resourced communities throughout the world.” Its Biblical Justice Advocacy program focuses on three platform issues: immigration, incarceration, and education. The CCDA has put together an immigration resource list aimed primarily for an evangelical audience. The list includes books, articles, websites, video resources, and resources for small groups: http://www.cdda.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=529&Itemid=573

EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION TABLE (EIT)

The “I Was a Stranger...” Challenge Toolkit can be downloaded from the Evangelical Immigration Table website (<http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com>). The goal of this resource is to “encourage evangelical Christians to allow Scripture to permeate their thinking and inform their responses to both the challenges and opportunities of immigration.”⁶¹ The challenge focuses on two primary groups of people: church-going Christians and elected officials.

The “I Was a Stranger...” challenge begins with a “kick-off” event where a church leader shows an inspiring film (<http://www.thestrangerfilm.org/>) to her members and shares why she believes Christians should care about immigration. Next those gathered are provided with a bookmark with 40 passages of Scripture that relate to immigration. Participants are asked to commit to reading one passage a day and to pray to give them God’s “heart for immigrants.” At the end of the 40 day period, the church, and any other local churches who have taken the challenge, meet in a special prayer service that could include guided prayer opportunities and hearing from immigrant believers.

While various congregations are participating in the 40 day challenge, a lead pastor sends a letter, signed by several local pastors to a targeted elected official asking to meet. At the meeting the pastors ask that the legislator also commits to reading scripture from the bookmark for 40 days. At the end of the 40 days the pastors group then conducts a follow-up, asking the legislator how reading Scripture on immigration has influenced the legislator’s thinking on an immigration issue.

Other resources on the EIT website include outlines and videos of sermons on immigration, short videos about immigration from a faith perspective, FAQ’s about immigration, and recommended readings.

JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS (JFI)

In June 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops launched the Justice for Immigrants campaign to unite and mobilize Catholic institutions and individuals to support comprehensive immigration reform and a broad legalization program. JFI aims to maximize the Catholic Church’s influence on immigration, consistent with the immigration reform principles outlined in the 2003 pastoral letter of U.S. and Mexican bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*.⁶²

The JFI national coordinator organizes monthly conference calls with Catholics working on immigration justice in order to provide updates on legislative and policy developments in Washington, discuss the latest JFI advocacy focus, and to provide a forum for participants to share the immigrant advocacy successes and challenges they are encountering in their respective communities. The national coordinator is also responsible for sending urgent action alerts to the thousands of Catholics on the JFI email list, asking them to contact their Congresspersons on key votes on immigration policy.

The JFI website (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org>) lists many resources, including Tips for Legislative Advocacy, Guide to Communicating with the Media, Bishops' Statements on Migration, FAQ's about immigration, and a "parish toolkit." This downloadable manual was created by JFI and The People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) National Network in 2011 to develop JFI Parish Organizing Committees (POC).⁶³ The manual, which seeks to integrate Catholic social teaching on migration with PICO parish organizing methodology, is divided into ten sessions. Each session includes a sample agenda, core content, and a detailed explanation on how to organize each session's organizing training, which the authors suggest be held one month a part. Each session also contains an array of educational readings, prayers, scripture, and Catholic social teachings on immigration to help parishes plan and organize successful POC meetings in support of just and humane immigration policies.

JUSTFAITH MINISTRIES' CROSSING BORDERS CURRICULUM

JustFaith Ministries (<http://justfaith.org/>) founded by Jack Jezreel in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2001, began as small-group process for Christians to deepen their commitment to care for vulnerable people and the planet. Through the original JustFaith program, which consists of 24 two and-a-half hour sessions, participants study, reflect, and dialogue on critical realities through the lens of the Gospel and Catholic Social Teachings.

In recent years the JustFaith ministry has been expanded to include *JusticeWalking*, a retreat program for young adults, *Engaging Spirituality*, a 21-week spiritual deepening process for adult Christians that invites participants to "enter deeply into the critical realities of our day as they break open their lives,"⁶⁴ a parish-wide faith formation program known as *GoodNewsPeople*, and *JustMatters*. The *JustMatters* modules allow small faith communities to explore in-depth critical current issues "in a prayerful environment that invites personal transformation."⁶⁵ The critical issues addressed by *JustMatters* modules, which require participants to meet over an eight week period, include prison reform, Christian-Muslim dialogue, and immigration.

The *JustMatters* module on immigration, *Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology and the Human Journey*, was created by a Holy Cross priest and theologian Daniel Groody and Mary Miller. Like the JustFaith program, the program consists of readings, prayers, discussion questions, role plays, short films, and detailed instructions for a volunteer facilitator to lead a group through the process. The final session of *Crossing Borders* includes a discernment document, *Engaging the World Together*, and several suggestions for how participants can take action on immigrant justice issues.

INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION (IIC)

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is a partnership of 49 faith-based organizations "committed to enacting fair and humane immigration reform that reflects our mandate to welcome the stranger and treat all human beings with dignity and respect."⁶⁶ IIC members include Bread for the World, American Jewish Committee, Jesuit Refugee Service, Muslim Public Affairs Council, and Sojourners.

Resources on the IIC website (<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/>) include one-page policy briefs on specific immigration and refugee policy issues such as Border Policies, Family Unity, Interior Enforcement, and Worker Rights, which IIE recommends be shared with Congressional offices or used to write letters to the editor and op-eds.

Webinars posted on the IIC website address how faith communities can respond to pressing immigration issues and include the following titles: Faith Response to ICE Raids of Central American Families, Faith Response to Anti-Muslim Movement, Faith Strategy and Action for Compassionate Immigration Reform, and Breaking Bread and Building Bridges.

Several immigrant justice campaign toolkits on the IIE website provide both a theological grounding to the issue being addressed, such as humane immigration reform legislation, as well as detailed instructions on how members

of a faith group can participate in the campaign's advocacy component. The *Neighbor to Neighbor Visits Toolkit* discuss the Scripture teachings that support welcoming immigrants and how to organize a visit with members of Congress, including the specific roles to be assigned members of a faith group during the visit, succinct background material on the issues to be addressed, and a follow-up plan.

IIE's *Living as Spirit Blessed Communities* program is composed of seven sessions on key immigration issues, including political asylum, worker rights, and the root causes of migration. Each session includes Scripture, a devotional thought, an issue brief which includes the stories of real-life immigrants impacted by unjust immigration policies, and a closing prayer.

Interfaith Immigration Coalition sends Action Alerts to its member agencies, who are asked to then share those with their members and networks.

NORTH CAROLINA RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRATIONS (NCRCJI)

The North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants, a program of the North Carolina Council of Churches, was formed in 2009 in response to rising anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiment in North Carolina. One of NCRCJI's main goals is to shift public opinion on immigration. To accomplish this, NCRCJI has developed an array of educational and advocacy resources on immigration from a faith perspective, that can be found at their website at <http://www.welcometheimmigrant.org/>. NCRCJI resources include:

A "toolkit" for faith communities that provides advice on how congregations can address a controversial issue like immigration, key background information on immigration to North Carolina, a primer on how the U.S. immigration works, and several pastoral reflections and worship resources.

Becoming the Church Together: Immigration, the Bible, and Our Neighbors, a Biblically-based curriculum composed of six Scripture-based lessons which address various aspects of migration. Each lesson includes opening and closing prayers, discussion questions, Biblical reflections, and group activities, including an immigration board game.

Immigration Simulation provides instructions for an activity where participants play specific roles in the migration experience including *campesino*, landowner, border factory owner, and coyote.

Neighbors Together pilot project takes the politics out of immigration and replaces it with relationships. With this program the NCRCJI helps facilitate over a four-month period members of Anglo congregations sharing meals with members of a nearby Latino church. In this way, "everyone involved will learn to practice hospitality, build bridges, and make new friends."

THE GLOBAL IMMERSION PROJECT (GIP)

The Global Immersion Project (<http://globalimmerse.org/>) organizes learning labs focused on international and domestic conflicts. The immersion learning experiences allow participants to "(1) develop a robust, practical theology of peace and reconciliation; (2) form a comprehensive understanding of a particular conflict; (3) develop collaborative relationships with international and domestic peacemakers; and (4) be formed into an everyday peacemaking practitioner." One of GIP's learning labs offers a border immersion experience focusing on the human dimension of the immigrant's journey (<http://globalimmerse.org/about-tgip/the-immigrants-journey/>).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Marie Marquardt, Timothy Steigenga, Philip Williams, and Manuel Vásquez, *Living "Illegal": The Human Face of Unauthorized Immigration* (The New Press, 2013), pp. 18-19.
- ² John S. Kselman, S.S., and Michael L. Barre, S.S., "Psalms," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, op. cit., pp. 523-52, at 532.
- ³ National Association of Evangelicals statement on Immigration Policy Resolutions, at <http://www.nae.net/government-affairs/policy-resolutions/354-immigration-2009>
- ⁴ G92 began at Cedarville University in October of 2011. Students, faculty, and administrators at Cedarville joined together with individuals from about twenty other colleges and universities to hear Biblical teaching, to raise awareness about the realities of immigration, and to equip Christian college students across the country to learn from, minister to, and advocate with immigrant communities in ways consistent with Biblical values. See Evangelical Immigration Table at <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/> and G92 at <http://g92.org/>
- ⁵ National Council of Churches USA, "Resolution on Immigration and Call to Action," 2000 <http://www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/2008/immigration.php>
- ⁶ Vatican Council II, *The Church in the Modern World*, 1965, no. 48.
- ⁷ Letter of the Hispanic/Latino Bishops to Immigrants, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, 2011, p. 3.
- ⁸ Pope Francis, "Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us. The Response of the Gospel of Mercy," Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 17, 2016.
- ⁹ Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 1963, No. 25.
- ¹⁰ Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, joint pastoral letter concerning migration, January 2003, No. 39.
- ¹¹ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, Washington, D.C., 2000, p. 11 (emphasis added).
- ¹² Daniel G. Groody, *A Theology of Migration: In his incarnation, Jesus overcame all borders between us*. CELEBRATION FEATURE, February 2010, pp. 1-3, at 2.
- ¹³ Use of the term of "integration" of immigrants into faith communities as an earlier title for this part raised some concerns among participants partly as a result of the history and controversy surrounding "assimilation" into a single culture in this country. It also was inadequate to capture the various ways in which newcomers have been welcomed and included in faith communities.
- ¹⁴ In *Best Practices for Shared Parishes: So That They May All Be One*, issued by The Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the authors identify ecclesial inclusion as a developmental process of mission integration and stewardship taking place over time and following a three-phase process of Welcoming=>Belonging=>Ownership. 2014. p. 21.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12. National/ethnic churches later served the needs of African American, Vietnamese, Korean, and other newcomers.
- ¹⁶ Jill Marie Gerschutz with Lois Ann Lorentzen, "Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for the United States and the Church," in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, edited by Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 126.
- ¹⁷ Marie Friedmann Marquardt, Timothy J. Steigenga, Philip J. Williams, and Manuel A. Vásquez, *Living Illegal: The Human Face of Unauthorized Immigration*, (New York: The New Press, 2011), p. 162.
- ¹⁸ Gerschutz and Lorentzen, op. cit., p. 138, citing the definition used by the National Federation of Priests' Councils.
- ¹⁹ Gerschutz and Lorentzen, pp. 137-38.
- ²⁰ Gerschutz and Lorentzen, p. 131
- ²¹ *Shared Parishes*, p. 4.
- ²² *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
- ²³ Gerschutz and Lorentzen, p. 136.
- ²⁴ Marquardt, et. al., p. 174.
- ²⁵ See Manuel A. Vasquez, "Latino Immigration in the South: Emerging Trends and Critical Issues," *JustSouth Reports*, February, 2010, at <http://www.loyno.edu/jsri/latino-immigration-south-emerging-trends-and-critical-issues>
- ²⁶ Richard Rohr, *Job and the Mystery of Suffering* (New York, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), p. 157.
- ²⁷ Miguel A. de la Torre, ed., *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), p 7.
- ²⁸ Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J., *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983)
- ²⁹ Information in this section is from an interview with Ann Cass Williams conducted by Sue Weishar in October, 2015, author's files.
- ³⁰ From Alterna website at <http://www.alternacommunity.com/>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Alterna, op.cit.

³³ Marie Marquardt, Timothy Steigenga, Philip Williams, and Manuel Vásquez, *Living "Illegal": The Human Face of Unauthorized Immigration* (The New Press, 2013), pp. 226-227.

³⁴ Ibid., pp 227-229.

³⁵ Marquardt, et al, op. cit., p. 232.

³⁶ Alterna website, op. cit.

³⁷ *Agreement between Loyola University of New Orleans and the Catholic Society of Religious and Literacy Education* [The New Orleans Province of the Society of Jesus]. Signed November 28, 2007, No. 1, author's files

³⁸ *JSRI Five Year Strategic Plan: 2012-2017*, author's files.

³⁹ *America's Child Migrant Crisis Explained in Two Minutes*, produced by Joe Posner and Joss Fong, updated by Dara Lind on July 9, 2014, Vox, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IINfbN81h6c>

⁴⁰ *Strangers No Longer*, op. cit.

⁴¹ From participant evaluation from third Teach-In, August 3, 2015, author's file.

⁴² From participant's evaluation, fourth Teach-In, November 10, 2015, author's files.

⁴³ From participant's evaluation, first Teach-In, August 3, 2014.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Personal communication with author, February 6, 2015.

⁴⁶ Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* (New York, New York: Free Press, 2010), p. 80.

⁴⁷ From participant's evaluation, first Teach-In, August 3, 2014.

⁴⁸ Interview with author, August 10, 2014

⁴⁹ From participant's evaluation, third Teach-In, August 3, 2015.

⁵⁰ From participant's evaluation, second Teach-In, February 5, 2015.

⁵¹ From the Evangelical Immigration Table website at <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/>

⁵² Mathew Soerens and Jenny Hwang, *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion & Truth in the Immigration Debate*, IVP Books, (Downers Grove, Illinois, 2009).

⁵³ From North Carolina Council of Churches website at <http://www.ncchurches.org/about/> and written communication with Jennie Belle, Director of Immigration and Farmworkers for the North Carolina Council of Churches, February, 2016.

⁵⁴ From written communication from Jennie Belle, in author's file, February, 2016.

⁵⁵ This section is based on a phone interview with Estella Martinez on June 27, 2016, author's files.

⁵⁶ Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, op.cit., p. 124.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 125.

⁵⁸ *Few Say Religion Shapes Immigration, Environmental Views*, Pew Research Center, September 10, 2010, at <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/17/few-say-religion-shapes-immigration-environment-views/>

⁵⁹ Gregory A. Smith, *How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary Analysis*, Pew Research Center, Nov. 9, 2016 at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>

⁶⁰ Estella Martinez, op. cit., author's notes, June 27, 2016.

⁶¹ From EIT "I Was a Stranger ..." Challenge Toolkit, p. 3 , at <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com>

⁶² From JFI website at <http://justiceforimmigrants.org>

⁶³ From *Enriching our Diversity: A Parish Outreach, Education, and Organizing Manual in Support of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2012, at <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/JFI-Parish-Education-Organizing-Manual.pdf>

⁶⁴ From JustFaith Ministries website at <http://justfaith.org/programs/engaging-spirituality/>

⁶⁵ From the JustFaith Ministries website at <http://justfaith.org/programs/justmatters-modules/>

⁶⁶ From IIC website at <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/>



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