



Disciples Respond to Anti-Immigrant Comments from President Trump and White House Chief of Staff John Kelly

May 18, 2018



In recent days, deeply offensive rhetoric has again been issued against immigrant communities by high political voices in our land:

--White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly, commented on May 10 about immigrants: "They're also not people that would easily assimilate into the United States, into our modern society...They don't integrate well; they don't have skills." See article: <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/5/11/17344262/john-kelly-immigrants-assimilate-npr>

--President Trump said on May 16 about immigrants: "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people. These are animals. And we're taking them out of the country at a level and at a rate that's never happened before." See article: <https://www.vox.com/2018/5/16/17362870/trump-immigrants-animals-ms-13-illegal>.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministry leaders offer these comments in response, with prayers for healing:

"Genesis 1:27 must never be forgotten. The testimony that God created humans in the image of God led both to the blessing and multiplication of humans by God, *and* to our ongoing responsibility to love and value all peoples and living things upon the earth. The offensive name calling of immigrants by the President and incorrect assessment of immigrant capabilities and contributions by the Chief of Staff belies realities that immigrants--who are over one in eight U.S. residents--infuse our economy and workforce, inspire ingenuity, and ignite our congregations and neighborhoods with values rooted deeply in families and faith. Our biblical call to care in this time must be demonstrated by calling out racism that repeats our nation's worst history and causes pain to our present neighbors. We must push back against rhetoric intended to incite fear that leads to family separations, and against policies that seek to deny humanitarian rights of immigrants to seek asylum protections from persecution." -- **Rev. Terri Hord-Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada**

"Racial frames and blames should play no role in our immigration discussions. Indeed, scriptures remind us that anything which causes pain and suffering to another harms us all, since 'If one member suffers, all suffer together' (1 Corinthians 12:26). Instead, let us treat immigrants with respect as the family members they are; whether blood relatives, community partners, or family-of-faith kin--for in Jesus Christ, we are one body. Our identity is richly strengthened by the shared roots that are continually intertwining as we learn to live into our oneness with love, respect and dignity. As the Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (DOC), this is why we witness, 'Somos Uno!' I proudly proclaim that I live in an immigrant household!" -- **Rev. Lori Tapia, Interim National Pastor, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

"Deeply offended by the comments of a President who demeans immigrants and by the White House Chief of Staff who misrepresents their capabilities, I call upon us all to share instead--and often!--the much truer stories of our brother and sister immigrants, who are beloved and deeply contributing children of God. Today, I lift up the words of one long term colleague, as she reminds us best her identity, similar to so many others: '*I am an immigrant. I came to this country when I was 6 years old. I graduated from college with the support of my family. I am a social entrepreneur. I run a multi-million-dollar organization. I have employed hundreds of people during the span of my career. I am amazing, caring, smart and hardworking. I am an immigrant.*' Let us keep listening to and being inspired by our neighbors, and continue to highlight their contributions and courage both publicly and privately." -- **Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries**

"The people this administration seeks to dehumanize are our pastors, our leaders, members of our congregations, and, most importantly, beloved children of God. We the Church are not whole without them. These insults are personal to us." -- **Tana Liu-Beers, Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel**

"Once again, the President of the United States and his subordinates demonstrate their commitment to one of the forces that brought them to power and keeps them there: racism. As a pro-reconciling, anti-racist church, we must speak out boldly against the dehumanizing rhetoric and destructive actions of this Administration." -- **Rev. Ken Brooker Langston, Disciples Justice Action Network and Disciples Center for Public Witness** (see more, on back)

“The words of officials at such high levels cut deeply into the hearts of our immigrant church members and friends, ignoring the vast traumas that immigrants themselves have often experienced at the hands of gangs and traffickers who exploit their vulnerabilities and often terrorize their families. Our time is far better spent not in ramping up fears against immigrants in general, but instead in efforts such as shining a spotlight upon human trafficking as a modern form of slavery, which disproportionately affects women and children--and which is too often a cause that pressures women to migrate, and that is often forced upon them again as immigrant women.” -- **Rev. Pat Donahoo, Executive Director, Disciples Women**

“Exodus 22:21 reminds, ‘Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner for you were foreigners in Egypt’. How quickly we forget our nation’s history, we are a country of immigrants. The United States has thrived because of the gift of those who chose this nation to nurture their families and share their gifts. Look at the beauty of our neighborhoods, restaurants, and even our very clothes bear witness that we were foreigners. When we oppress immigrants and mistreat immigrants, we mistreat and oppress our own lives. No human being should ever be called an animal, every person is a sacred part of God’s creation. **Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise Baker, Program Coordinator for Advocacy and Activism, National Benevolent Association**

“The ridicule and mistreatment of immigrants that is happening in our country right now goes against the very core of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. As Disciples of Christ we are called to love neighbor as self and we desperately need to be reminded that we are all created in the image in the God. To ridicule anyone is to ridicule the image of God. To deport anyone is to deport a beloved child of God.” **Rev. Dr. Laurie Feille, Disciples Public Presence and Pastor of First Christian Church, Minneapolis**

See here the “On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Congregations” resolution, passed during General Assembly, 2017:
https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/GA-IMMIGRANT-WELCOMING-CONGS-SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY_FINAL_02_03_2017.pdf

Go here for ways your congregation can continue to become a welcoming congregation, and to see how to participate in “Refugee & Immigrant Welcome Sunday”:
<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/refugee-immigrant-welcome-sunday/>

Sign up here for ongoing Refugee & Immigration Ministries Updates, and to support RIM:
<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/>

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Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries is a Ministry of:

