INTRODUCTION

THE MISSION OF THE CLC
The mission of the Christian Life Commission (CLC) Public Policy and Christian Citizenship division is to inform and help churches exercise their faith convictions in relationship to the world outside of the church. The CLC is a division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT).

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP
When Jesus describes the nature of the kingdom of God and His followers, He uses the image of yeast.

To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like the yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

The Christian citizen lends his/her voice to a very large and unlikely chorus of opinion and competing interests. As in New Testament times and in all periods of history, believers are called to engage the problems of the larger society with a strong voice and humble heart. Christian citizens have been remarkably effective in shaping the world through the policy of benevolent institutions in government and in communities. The promise of scripture is that there is a special economy of God’s power. In His grace, He can multiply our efforts just as the tiny portion of yeast multiplies its effect throughout the entire loaf.

Our culture and society are not synonymous with the Christian life or the kingdom of God. Even at its best, human law will always be an incomplete reflection of justice, mercy and the common good. So we seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus’ agape love, commitment and sacrifice through discipleship. We seek a society that shows respect for individual freedom, respect for law and a foundation of justice for all.

The invitation of this guided study is to explore migration, Biblical hospitality and the intersection of our laws. In addition to this study, the Christian Life Commission and the Baptist General Convention of Texas have begun the Baptist Immigration Service Network (BISN) to establish immigration ministry centers to help promote legal documentation and citizenship ministry for churches and Baptist Associations and affiliates. The BISN promotes ministries that promote education, citizenship and family reunification (www.bgct.org/immigration).

Sometimes the odds seem overwhelming. Why care? Why speak or act as Christian citizens? We follow the example of Jesus when we speak and act on behalf of those who need an advocate. The ministry of Jesus is a picture of service on behalf of others, even unto death. He healed, taught and lived in generous example for the benefit of others. The discipline of advocacy in our own lives is an example of the yeast of God’s good grace through us into the world. Our simple words and actions on behalf of others matter; they matter because God is the great multiplier who enables the whole loaf to be leavened.

Suzii Paynter
Director, Christian Life Commission

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION
All of us have unique experiences that shape our beliefs and views regarding particular issues. Dialogue can only take place in an environment where respect and courtesy are present. Please model these characteristics and practice the act of hospitality through listening and a desire to learn from each person in the group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
I would like to say a special thank you to several people who were instrumental in the formation of this study. First, I would like to thank Roger Olson, Professor of Theology at George W. Truett Seminary, for introducing me to Reinhold Neibuhr and to a format of dialoguing about social justice issues in light of the tension between love and justice. The skeletal format of this study is based on a series of discussions Dr. Olson led for Calvary Baptist college students in Waco, Texas. I would also like to acknowledge Gaynor Yancey and Rob Rogers, both professors at the Baylor School of Social Work, whose policy classes reignited a passion I have for the church to impact social structures and policies in our society. Finally, I will always be grateful for the opportunity I had to work with Suzii Paynter, Julie Valentine, Rebekah Jasso and Stephen Reeves at the CLC Austin office. Thank you all for your help and encouragement throughout this project. I had a fantastic time working with you all!

Leigh Jackson
September 2004

All Scripture references cited in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version.
THOUSAND RED BIRDS

We clutch our tiny bits of faith in tight fists shoved firmly in our pockets.

We clutch it suspiciously, so unwilling to let go—we don’t want to lose it.

We clutch it fearing that once it is spent, we will be without hope, cast adrift, out of luck.

Help us to loosen our grip,

Help us to pull our hands out of our pockets.

Help us to uncurl fingers stiffened over time.

to grow,
to shimmer;
to pulse,
to explode into the air

like a thousand red birds.

– Phil Porter

We are not automatic lovers of self, others, world, or God. Love does not just happen… Love is … a willingness to be present to others without pretense or guile. Love is a conversion to humanity—a willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world and broken lives.

– Carter Heyward

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you. And if anyone takes away from your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:27-31

Then they will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

Matthew 25:44-45

WHAT IF WE LOVED LIKE JESUS?

Is it possible to practice the teachings of Jesus in our world today?

If we did practice these teachings, what would our lives look like?

How does the sinfulness of our world affect how we love?

Give to everyone who begs from you.

Luke 6:30a

Jesus, we confess that we clutch our fists, refusing to let go of the gifts that You have blessed us with. The gift of our hearts to love; the gift of our hands to touch; the gift of our minds to grapple with tough questions; the gift of our resources to share. Please grant us the courage to open ourselves up to be changed by Your love. Then, O Lord, help us to share our gifts so that we may be agents of change, offering Your love and grace to a hurting world. Amen.
OLD TESTAMENT

There is no specific word in the Old Testament that conveys the exact concept of justice. Instead, justice is embedded in the definition of relationship set forth by the conditions of the covenant. When a person was in “right relationship” with God or others, they were acting justly. This concept was not limited to individual relationships; it also defined what was just for the community.

The concept of social justice developed in part out of the Israelites’ view of God as creator and liberator. God as creator meant every person was made in the image of God. God as liberator was a reminder of God’s deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. When Israel’s relationship to God did not reflect these beliefs, the result was an unjust community. It was a community of “rituals without relationship, economic exploitation of the poor, political intrigue, and social abandonment of the widow and orphan” (Elsbernd & Bieringer, p. 43).

NEW TESTAMENT

In the Greco-Roman world, justice was defined by the legal system as a concept of what was “right” or what was proper according to the culture. This individualistic interpretation was opposite of the Hebrew worldview. It was during this time that Jesus embodied the justice of God (Luke 4:18).

“Through Jesus, God offers and extends justice to tax collectors and sinners, that is, to those whom the (Jewish) establishment considered irredeemably unjust. In Jesus there is no opposition, but agreement between mercy and justice. The evangelists described the ministry of Jesus as the gracious intervention of God in the flesh for the establishment of justice” (Elsbernd & Bieringer, p. 48).

The relationships of Jesus embodied justice and led to redemption and reconciliation.

THEORIES OF JUSTICE

Justice as Duty and Obligation (Catholic Social Teaching)
Belief in the human dignity of persons requires a reciprocal response. This is based on three faith convictions: (1) human beings are created in the image of God, (2) love your neighbor as yourself, (3) the “treatment of the widow, the orphan and the poor is a concrete measure of the believer’s love of God” (Elsbernd & Bieringer, p. 110).

Justice as Law
Justice is equated with the purpose of the legal system and the courts.

Justice as Restraint of Self-Interest (Reinhold Neibuhr)
“Justice is the place of struggle... between the ideal of love and the reality of sin and selfishness” (Elsbernd & Bieringer, p. 117).

Justice as Fairness (John Rawl)
Justice is equated to social justice and advanced through social institutions. The focus is on distributive justice.

Justice as Fair Process (Robert Nozick)
Justice is found in the principles that guide the process of fair distribution. If these principles are thought to be just, the final outcome is not of great consequence.

Justice as Redemption
The ultimate goal is reconciliation. Issues surrounding moral responsibility, guilt and retribution are not disregarded, but justice is finally realized through restored relationship (Forrester, 1997).

What is your definition of justice?

What is the best definition of justice within the framework of love that Jesus commanded us to live by?

Can you think of any examples where we are able to do justice and to love kindness (or mercy) simultaneously (Micah 6:8)?

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.
Proverbs 31:89


The thought of relating policy to how we live as followers of Jesus may seem far-fetched at first glance. A close look at Scripture, however, shows that God has always been interested in how we live in relationship to the community surrounding us.

**OLD TESTAMENT**
The laws God gave to the Israelites (Exodus 20-23) related a great deal to how they should live as a society—how they should treat one another and those who lived among them. The prophets continually called for Israel to remember the kind of society that God desired for them to be. In fact, Israel usually got in trouble when they began to behave too much like the societies around them.

During the time of the prophet Amos, the people of Israel and Judah appeared no different than other nations. Amos indicted the children of God for the same types of sins as their enemies. The indictment against Judah accounts for such sins as selling “the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (Amos 2:6). They were no different than the nations that would one day hold them in captivity.

**NEW TESTAMENT**
In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, Jesus tells those listening that things are different than they once believed. His teaching tool of “You have heard that it was said... but I say to you” let those listening know that entering the Kingdom of Heaven (or the Kingdom of God) is much more difficult than what they previously heard or believed. Just like God’s standards for the Israelites, Jesus let his followers know that the Kingdom of God was different from the rules of the society in which they lived.

**REFLECT**
When asked about our citizenship today, most of us would answer that we are citizens of the United States of America. While this is a true statement and probably a point of pride for most of us, we must always remember that our primary citizenship is that of the Kingdom of God. Our views on what we value in our society should reflect this relationship. We should be different.

The policies and laws we pass as a nation determine what we value as a society. How much do we value nice roadways? And how much do we value children’s healthcare? Who gets the money when a budget is cut? As followers of Jesus and citizens of the Kingdom of God, we are challenged to set our values accordingly. The answers are not always black and white. In fact, there are rarely easy answers. We all have different and competing interests. The tools of Christian love, biblical justice, and our primary identity as citizens in the Kingdom of God, however, require us to approach policy issues with honesty about our own motives.

The complexity and difficulty involved in extending our faith to the world outside the church should not keep us from engaging our society.
Migration in Scripture

Many of us know that we should offer hospitality, but we wonder whether we can. Hospitality is made up of hard work undertaken under risky conditions. Without structures and commitments for welcoming strangers, fear crowds out what needs to be done. Hospitable places where guests can disclose the gifts they bear come into being only when people take up this practice and grow wise, by experience, in doing it well. In the face of overwhelming human need for shelter and care, and in the face of our fear of strangers, we need to develop ways of supporting one another in the practice of hospitality.

— Ana Maria Pineda

The story of Abraham begins by the Lord asking him to leave his country, home and relatives to go to an unknown land (Genesis 12:1). The story follows Abraham and his family traveling as migrants to Canaan. At one point in the journey, Abraham is forced to travel to Egypt. “Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to the land of Egypt to reside there as an alien” (Genesis 12:10). Later, the family of Jesus would also be forced to flee to Egypt for safety from King Herod (Matthew 2:13-15).

The stories of Abraham and the family of Jesus are not much different from many of those migrating to our country today. Due to dire economic situations, many come in order to feed their family. Others flee for safety reasons and for the purpose of freedom. The story of Refugio on the following page illustrates the desperate motives that force many people to flee their home countries.

“Refugio fled one night from her home in Central America, bringing her three small children with her. She was uncertain of her future but convinced that she could no longer stay in the abusive marriage she had endured for more than a decade. The profile of her battered nose gave silent testimony to the beatings that had been regularly inflicted on her by her husband. She had withstood the beatings for the sake of the children—or so she believed until one day the children became the objects of her husband’s uncontrollable rage. It was then that she gathered up the courage to leave her husband. It was a risky proposition, but the welfare of her children required it of her.

“For weeks, Refugio had plotted how she would escape. Her husband’s family was prominent in the community and all signs of impropriety were suppressed… Refugio reviewed the list of friends and acquaintances whom she knew had left for the United States. To whom could she turn, and who would offer her the help she needed?

“Time passed slowly as she painfully attended to the preparations her departure required. Finally the day arrived. She was filled with the dread of exposure… At the designated hour, she and her children boarded a small van. They crouched down in the van as they were driven across the US border. From there, they traveled for what seemed an eternity. Refugio was filled with self-doubt. Perhaps it had not been such a good idea to leave her husband. What would she do in this strange land? As the children began to fret and cry, her fear increased, and she felt helpless to assure that all would be well.”

Do you know anyone with a story like Refugio’s?

How would Refugio have been treated if she showed up in your community or at your church?

Have you ever had to flee or travel to a foreign country for work or other reasons? How were you treated?

Are there ways that we can work to change situations in other countries so people do not have to flee from their homes?


*Refugio’s story is taken from pages 40-41 of Chapter 3 of Practicing Our Faith by Ana Maria Pineda.
**The Exodus Story**

You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

*Exodus 23:9*

The call to remember the stranger or alien in the land appears throughout the story of Israel’s journey with God. After God delivered them from captivity in Egypt, the Israelites went out as migrants and wandered in the wilderness for years. It was in the time of their wandering, in their wilderness, that they truly become the people of God. It was in the wilderness that God made a covenant with the people.

The stranger was remembered repeatedly in the laws that God gave to Israel through Moses.

*For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the stranger, providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

*Deuteronomy 10:17-19*

God’s desired treatment of the stranger was made concrete in laws regarding tithing and gleaning.

*Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work you do.*

*Deuteronomy 14:28-29*

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyards bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

*Leviticus 19:9-10*

Israel’s laws regarding the treatment of the stranger were obvious reflections on their experience as strangers in the land of Egypt and in the wilderness. They were also a reflection of what it meant to live in right relationship with God.

**Extending Hospitality**

**ENTERTAINING HOLY STRANGERS**

In Genesis, heavenly beings or angels are disguised as strangers in biblical accounts of hospitality. In Genesis 18, Abraham and Sarah welcome the three men who appear at the entrance of their tent by preparing a meal with the choicest of ingredients. In Genesis 19, Lot’s extension of hospitality to two strangers opens the door for the gift of safe passage from Sodom before its destruction.

In Matthew 25, Jesus confirms the character of hospitality by telling His followers that they will, in fact, be welcoming Him whenever they minister to strangers, prisoners, or those who are sick and hungry. Jesus, along with the Genesis accounts, reminds us that we never know when we may be entertaining that which is holy.

**NO ROOM IN THE INN**

The birth account of Jesus in the Luke’s Gospel tells the familiar Christmas story of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem to be registered only to find no room in the inn. When Mary gives birth, the miracle of the incarnation takes place in a stable. Each Christmas we reenact the story of Jesus spending his first night in a feed trough. This story is often remembered as one of where hospitality was lacking for a weary and pregnant couple.

The Hispanic ritual of Las Posadas, however, actually celebrates the hospitality finally shown by the owner of the stable. The ritual takes place over nine nights, and the community walks from home to home each night begging for shelter. Each night they are harshly rejected by those playing the role of the innkeeper. Finally, on the eve of the ninth night, an innkeeper offers his stable as posada or shelter. His hospitality and generosity are celebrated with song, dance and food. This ritual reminds the community of the gifts that a stranger can offer when they choose to practice hospitality. In the case of the stable owner, hospitality provided the setting for the greatest gift of all—the Messiah (Bass, 1997).

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*

*Matthew 25:35*


You asked for my hands that you could use them for your purpose.

I gave them for a moment and then withdrew for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth to speak against injustice.

I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.

I closed them for I did not want to know.

You asked for my life that you might work through me.

I gave you a fractional part that I might not get involved.

God, forgive me for calculated efforts to serve you only when it is convenient to do so, only in places where it is safe to do so.

Creator God, forgive me, renew me, and send me out as a usable instrument, that I may take seriously the meaning of Your Cross.

– Annual meeting of the United Methodist Women’s Caucus, 1976

62% of immigrants live in Texas, California, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois.

– United States Department of Homeland Security

There are currently an estimated 12-14 million undocumented immigrants living in the US.

Aliens
Used to refer to immigrants (legal and undocumented) in many laws.

Undocumented Immigrants or Illegal Aliens
(2 categories)
1. EWI—Entries Without Inspection.
2. Overstays—came in legally, but did not leave when their Visa expired (25-40% of those undocumented).

Legal Immigrants
1. Some are permanent or long term statuses—they can reside in the US indefinitely as long as they do not commit a crime (AKA “lawful permanent residents” or “refugees” or “asylees”).
2. Some are temporary or transitional statuses—they can be indefinite in length (the spouse, child or fiancé of a US citizen) or one getting renewal at set intervals.

Nonimmigrant
An alien legally in the US for some specific purpose for a set period of time (ex: students, tourists, diplomats, guest workers). There are more than 70 nonimmigrant visa categories.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
Formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), now divisions of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Green Card
Granted to immigrants who have been approved to live in the US permanently (lawful permanent residents).

Who’s eligible for citizenship?
1. Persons who have been lawful permanent residents (green card holders) for five years.
2. Persons who have been lawful permanent residents for three years, have been married to a US citizen for those three years, and continue to be married to that US citizen.
3. Persons who are lawful permanent resident children of US citizen parents.
4. Persons who have qualifying military service.
5. Persons under the age of 18 may automatically become citizens when their parents are naturalized.
6. Any person born in the US (minus some exceptions regarding diplomats).

Immigrants in Texas

The Urban Institute reports that children of immigrants in Texas suffer significantly higher levels of hardship in the areas of food, healthcare and housing compared to those in other states:

- 30% of children of immigrants in Texas live below the Federal Poverty Level, even though the unemployment rate of immigrants is comparable to that of citizens (Department of Homeland Security, Texas Comptroller).

- Nearly half of all children of immigrants in Texas live in families struggling to keep food on the table. This compares to 39% nationally and 33% of citizen headed families in Texas.

- A third of children in “mixed-immigration families” in Texas live in what is considered crowded housing.

- A third of children in “mixed-immigration families” are uninsured.

TEXAS IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

- 23% of all Texas children live in “mixed-immigration families” (one or more parent is a non-citizen) (Center for Public Policy Priorities).

- 34% of Texas children that live in low-income families (less than twice the Federal Poverty Level) are in “mixed-immigration families” (Center for Public Policy Priorities).

Policy analysis is never conducted in a vacuum. There are a variety of factors and outcomes to consider. Depending on one’s particular view of the situation, certain factors may weigh more heavily than others. Regardless of the policy, one should consider the following basic questions:

- What is the historical context of the policy? How did it come into existence?
- What current issues impact the policy?

Immigration policy, in particular, comes with a complex set of issues and factors to consider. For example, consider the current issues impacting immigration policy today:

- Homeland security
- U.S. labor force
- U.S. economy
- Undocumented immigrant population
- Increased number of deaths at border crossings
- Insufficient systems in government structures to monitor and maintain policies

These are just a few of the issues that must be considered.

Finally, the stories of those impacted by the policy should be considered. Unfortunately, policy is often enacted with no consideration of those people who it will actually impact. Policy decisions made in the absence of the communities or people that they will ultimately impact, are potentially naive and risky decisions. As Christians, we might consider listening to these stories as part of our gift of hospitality.

If you’re going to care about the fall of the sparrow, you can’t pick and choose who’s going to be the sparrow. It’s everybody.
– Madeleine L’Engle

Undocumented immigrants [in Texas] produced $1.58 billion in state revenues, which exceeded the $1.16 billion in state services they received.

– Carole Keeton Strayhorn, former Comptroller of Public Accounts, 2006
Leaving Home

WHY THE RISK?

War

“Like so many Salvadorian children of war, Jorge Torres grew up knowing his mother mostly as the voice on a long-distance phone call. Born in El Salvador at the height of the country’s civil war, Torres, 15, was raised mostly by grandparents. His mother left the United States to work, first in Houston and then New York. He was raised in San Alejo, a little town in eastern El Salvador, where war raged until 1992 and pervasive poverty reigned thereafter. So many people have left eastern El Salvador for America that the economy of some towns is almost entirely dependent on the money sent home. When his father died more than a year ago, Jorge honored him by getting a tattoo with the father’s name: ‘Lino.’ His mother finally sent for him this year. Relatives in El Salvador bought him a new pair of shoes, and then, like a modern-day Huck Finn, he set out on an adventure. He carried no legitimate identification, probably making it more difficult to confirm that he was dead. His mother identified him by his tattoo, his new shoes, his broken tooth and the scar on the hip from where he fell off a horse as a child” (Althauf, et al., 2003).

Poverty

“Jose Luis Hernandez Aguirre tried desperately to find work in the maquiladora plants near Mexicali but was unable to do so. With a wife and two children, ages one and seven, Jose needed to find a job that would put food on the table. A smuggler told him of the high-paying jobs across the border and offered, for $1,000, to take him there. Joined by his brother and several others, the group headed for the United States with hope. After one day, brother Jaime called and reported to the family and Jose’s sister, Sonia, that Jose was lost. Jaime could not make the trek in the desert, but Jose wanted to continue on the journey. He had to find a job for his family. Four days later, Jose’s body was found in the desert. His sister Sonia borrowed a truck to retrieve Jose’s remains. Upon her return, she encountered another group of migrants heading to the United States. ‘Why do you want to risk your life like this?’ she implored. ‘Come and look at my brother in his coffin’” (Catholic Bishops, 2002, p. 42).

Hope

“My name is Gathkouth and I am a Lutheran Pastor. I was in the ministry for 15 years in Sudan and eight years now in the United States. My ministry is devoted to helping our community transform its life through the Gospel. The main challenge our organization deals with is our members’ displacement and separation from their families because of the war and hardship in our native land. People often become voiceless and hopeless, but our organization works to change that. We teach people how to change their lives for the better; how to maintain a home, how to become self-sufficient, how to be independent, and how to adapt to a new country” (Borgelt-Mose, 2002, p. 32).
Immigrant Eligibility for Public Benefits

Prior to the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, most legally present immigrants were treated the same as citizens for purposes of federal benefit eligibility. After 1996, however, many changes took place. Depending on their status, immigrants now fall into one of two groups: qualified and not qualified. Lawful permanent residents fall under the qualified group, while undocumented immigrants and guest workers are designated as not qualified.

The chart on the following pages is a simplified comparison of the eligibility of the two groups for public benefits. The information on lawful permanent residents is for those who arrived after 8/22/96 or after the enactment of the Welfare Reform Act.

Note: when service providers render the benefits or services listed on the chart under “Undocumented” and “Federally Funded Programs with Unrestricted Access” they are not required to verify citizenship or immigrant status (except for emergency Medicaid) AND they may not exclude undocumented persons.

A recent study by Public Agenda on immigrants living in the US reports that more than 7 in 10 immigrants believe that it is “extremely important” for immigrants “to work and stay off of welfare” (Farkas, Duffet & Johnson, 2003, p. 26). After many focus groups and questionnaires, the study concluded that “immigrants do not come with a sense of entitlement. They believe in self-reliance, not government reliance, and in that way are as American as any native-born American” (Farkas, et al., 2003, p. 28).

Many people might argue that undocumented immigrants do not deserve any federal funds, since they are in the country illegally and do not contribute by paying taxes. The opposite, however, appears to be true. In 2005 the New York Times reported that, according to the experts, undocumented immigrants contribute most of the $56 billion of untraceable Social Security revenue collected yearly. In addition, undocumented immigrants contribute roughly $7 billion yearly to the Social Security surplus—the difference between collections and benefits paid—which is about 10% of the total. This means that undocumented immigrants are partially responsible for the viability of the Social Security system on which we rely (Porter 2005).

The Internal Revenue Service even makes an effort to make sure more undocumented immigrants pay income taxes. Between 1996 and 2003, the agency assigned more than 6.8 million individual tax identification numbers to people who were not eligible to obtain a Social Security number. Many people with these numbers were undocumented immigrants. In 2001, income taxes paid by people with identification numbers totaled almost $305 million (Kong, 2003).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Undocumented/Guest Worker</th>
<th>Lawful Permanent Resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamps</td>
<td>• Not eligible. &lt;br&gt;• Note: undocumented immigrants have never been eligible.</td>
<td>• Children under 18. &lt;br&gt;• Resided in US for more than 5 years. &lt;br&gt;• 40 quarters of work history (among family members). &lt;br&gt;• Receive disability benefit such as SSI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>• Emergency Medicaid only. &lt;br&gt;• Note: undocumented immigrants have never been eligible.</td>
<td>• Barred for 5 years from date of entry. &lt;br&gt;• State option to cover like US citizens after 5 year bar; Gov. Perry vetoed SB 1156 in the 77th Leg. session, that would have exercised this right. &lt;br&gt;• Emergency Medicaid is available to qualified immigrants excluded before and after 5 year bar (includes labor and delivery). &lt;br&gt;• In Texas, qualified immigrant children covered by CHIP same 5 year bar; Texas provides state-funded care during 5 year bar and after 5 years state money is matched by federal dollars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families)</td>
<td>• Not eligible. &lt;br&gt;• Note: undocumented immigrants have never been eligible.</td>
<td>• Barred for 5 years from date of entry. &lt;br&gt;• States may extend coverage during 5-year bar—Texas Legislature has not taken any action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>• Not eligible. &lt;br&gt;• Note: undocumented immigrants have never been eligible.</td>
<td>• After 5 years AND 40 quarters of work history. &lt;br&gt;• At citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federally Funded Programs with Unrestricted Access</td>
<td>• Emergency Medicaid, immunizations, diagnosis and treatment of communicable diseases. &lt;br&gt;• Non-cash assistance needed to protect life and safety. &lt;br&gt;• Non-income conditional assistance (i.e., shelters, soup kitchens, crisis intervention child/elder protection services, abuse prevention) as specified by the US Attorney General. These are services that are deemed necessary for the protection of life or safety. &lt;br&gt;• Short-term, in-kind emergency disaster relief. &lt;br&gt;• WIC, school meals, child nutrition programs, and elderly nutrition.</td>
<td>• Subsidized child care from CCDF. &lt;br&gt;• Title V, Maternal and Child Health. &lt;br&gt;• Title XX, Social Services Block grant. &lt;br&gt;• Title X, Family Planning. &lt;br&gt;• All other public health, mental health, substance abuse, elder programs, disability programs, etc. &lt;br&gt;• WIC, school meals, child nutrition programs, elderly nutrition (Meals on Wheels) state and local programs cannot add their own immigrant restrictions to programs that use these federal funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment-Related Benefits (Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Worker’s Compensation)</td>
<td>• Undocumented immigrants qualify for Social Security benefits under certain circumstances (years worked, country of residence, etc.). See CPPP presentation for more detailed analysis of this policy.</td>
<td>• Legal permanent residents, asylees and other immigrants with legal status and work authorization are treated just like US citizens.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Eligibility chart information taken from a Center for Public Policy Priorities PowerPoint presentation, "Immigrants and Public Benefits," in San Antonio, TX, on 10/21/03. The entire presentation is available at www.cppp.org.
ANALYZING POLICY FROM THE KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE

Where do you see unjust principles at work within current US immigration policy?

What are the main principles that you see guiding current US immigration policy?

Does immigration legislation reflect a Christian ethic of love and justice? How?

Does immigration legislation reflect the biblical teachings on hospitality and welcoming the stranger?

What difficulties or conflicts arise when you view immigration policy through the biblical framework of love and justice?

WHAT NOW?

What are the things that inhibit individuals and your church from extending hospitality? How can change occur?

In light of what we have discussed in this study, what can you or your church do to (a) minister to immigrants, and (b) advocate for policies that would minister to the needs of immigrants?

What are community resources for immigrants in need of help? What needs are not being met?

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BAPTIST IMMIGRATION SERVICES NETWORK
c/o Christian Life Commission
221 East 9th Street, Suite 410, Austin, TX 78701
512.473.2288
www.bgct.org/immigration

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
Baptist General Convention of Texas
Suzii Paynter, Director of Christian Life Commission
221 East 9th Street, Suite 410, Austin, Texas 78701
512.473.2288
www.bgct.org

SENATOR JOHN CORNYN
Room C5 Russell Senate State Office Bldg., Washington DC 20510
202.224.2934 (o) 202.228.2856 (f)
www.cornyn.senate.gov

SENATOR KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON
Room 284 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington DC 20510
202.224.5922 (o) 202.224.0776 (f)
www.hutchison.senate.gov

HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR IMMIGRATION ARTICLES AND INFORMATION
The National Immigration Forum www.immigrationforum.org

US Citizenship and Immigration Services www.uscis.gov

The Urban Institute www.urban.org

Center for Public Policy Priorities www.cppp.org

Thomas: Legislative Information on the Internet www.thomas.loc.gov

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Resolution: Hispanic Baptist Convención

Whereas the allure of freedom and the possibility of prosperity are in the hearts of all people, and

Whereas people are constantly leaving their homelands at great personal costs to seek freedom and prosperity, and

Whereas Texas has become a leading receptor of undocumented immigrants with more than one million currently in the state, and

Whereas the Bible teaches and the ministry of Jesus instructs that believers are to minister to the “alien” and the “stranger” in the land, and

Whereas it is not a violation of Federal or State law to provide ministry to undocumented immigrants,

Be it resolved that this Hispanic Baptist Convención speaks forcefully and clearly in opposition to the current immigration system that hinders the search for freedom and prosperity and that the Hispanic Convención encourages the adoption of new legislation that would unshackle the immigrant, and

Be it further resolved that the Convención encourages a proactive involvement of ministry activity among undocumented immigrants through prayer and action, and

Be it further resolved that we call on our Brothers and Sisters in the Baptist General Convention of Texas to adopt a similar resolution at their convention meeting in Lubbock later this year.

June 2003

Resolution: Baptist General Convention of Texas

Whereas the Bible teaches and the ministry of Jesus instructs that believers are to minister to the “alien” and the “stranger in the land,” and

Whereas Texas has become a leading receptor of undocumented immigrants with more than one million currently in the state, and

Whereas immigrants, documented and undocumented, are members of Baptist congregations and serve as brothers and sisters in Christ,

Be it resolved that the Baptist General Convention of Texas affirms the concerns of the Hispanic Baptist Convención and encourages a proactive involvement of ministry activity among immigrants, documented and undocumented, through prayer and action.

November 2003