June 24, 2019

Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) is a standing committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Its stated purpose is to be “... a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee also monitors the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (*Organization for Mission,* VI.1).

Attempting to live up to our commitment as stated above and standing on the solid ground of the policies of the PC(USA) on immigration,[[1]](#footnote-1) REAC stands in solidarity with the asylum seekers and refugees from Central America, Africa, and other parts of the world, overwhelmingly people of color, who come to the southern border of the United States of America.

The asylum seekers and refugees simply try to exercise their rights under both international and U.S. regulations for such actions,[[2]](#footnote-2) escaping from violence, political upheaval, abject poverty, and food shortages caused by the U.S. interventions and economic policies, as well as climate change. As a result of these issues in their home countries, they seek refuge in the U.S. Instead, they are detained and housed indefinitely, separating children from their parents, resulting at times in untimely deaths from lack of proper medical care.

We call the church to speak up and out that all asylum seekers and refugees be treated humanely. We are appalled and condemn the actions of the U.S. for political reasons that result in the inhumane treatment of human beings who are denied the basic human needs of water, food, sanitary conditions, a toothbrush, a blanket, soap and water.

Therefore, REAC supports wholeheartedly the recent ‘’Letter to Congress’’ by the highest ecclesiastical authority of the PC(USA), Stated Clerk The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson. In his letter Rev. Nelson asks Congress the following,

***First, defend the laws that protect those arriving for humanitarian reasons: asylum, unaccompanied children, humanitarian parole, temporary protected status, and the limits on the incarceration of children. Then, make them better with the right to counsel, protection from expedited removal, community-based alternatives to detention, generous admission of refugees, and border bridges well-staffed with employees who can respond to claims of credible fear and victims of human trafficking.[[3]](#footnote-3)***

Furthermore, we call on mid-councils and congregations to also support our Stated Clerk and communicate their disgust at the actions of the government at the border. Moreover, strong action should follow these communications. We rejoice at the fact that many presbyteries and congregations are already involved.

REAC also calls on Presbyterians to engage all U.S. corporations who participate in polluting the land.

As Presbyterian Christians, we follow the One who gave the ultimate and most important commandment as found in Matthew 22:37, also included in Dr. Nelson’s letter: *‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

May God find us faithful,

Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asylum\_in\_the\_United\_States [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.pcusa.org/news/2019/6/17/stated-clerk-sends-letters-congress-urging-protect/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)