

Becoming Immigrant- Welcoming Congregations: A Study of Resolution GA-1723

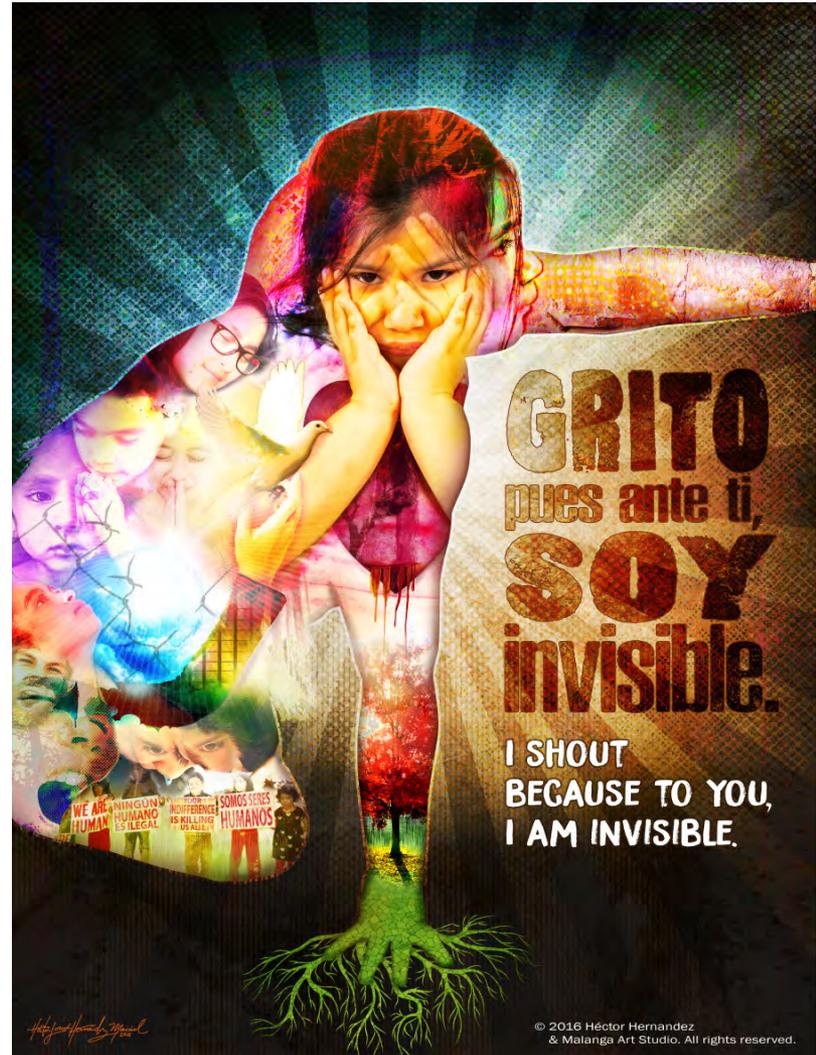
June 22, 2017

Rev. Dean Bucalos

Rev. Héctor Hernandez



National
Benevolent
Association
CALLED TOGETHER | CALLED TO CARE



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Resolution GA-1723

Coming to General Assembly on Monday 7/10:

<http://ga.disciples.org/resolutions/2017/ga-1723/>

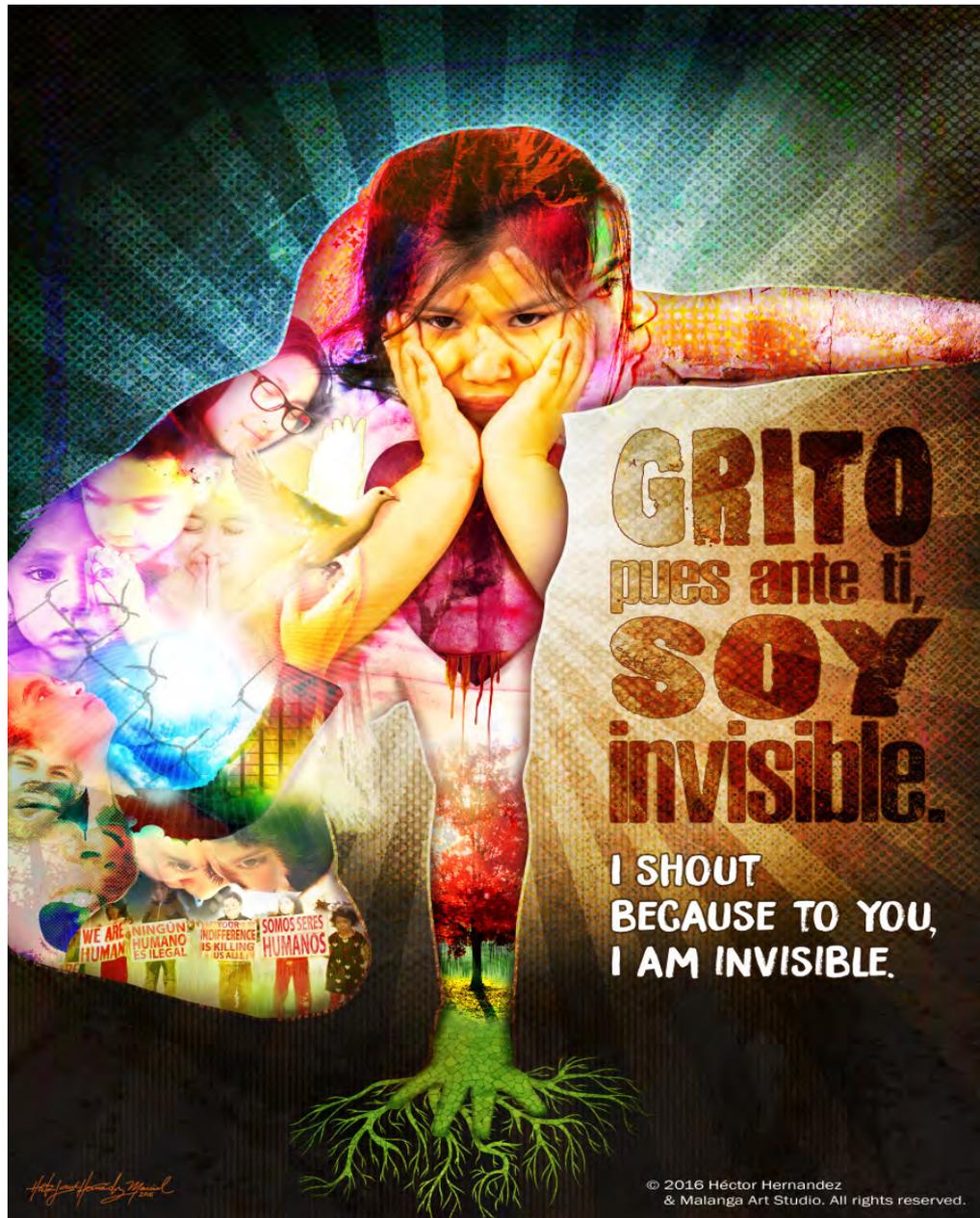
Co-Signers:

- *Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (Obra Hispana)*
- *Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*
- *Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel*
- *Iglesia Alas de Salvación, Chandler, AZ*
- *Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel, San Benito, TX*
- *National Benevolent Association (NBA)*
- *National Convocation*
- *North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD)*
- *Disciples Women*

Why Resolution GA-1723

These are uncertain times for those living in our communities who have emigrated and settled in the United States. Harsh and negative rhetoric abounds, and families are being torn apart and separated every day.





Héctor Hernández

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Why Resolution GA-1723

Followers of Jesus Christ – himself part of a family forced to leave its homeland – are all called to respond to this crisis!

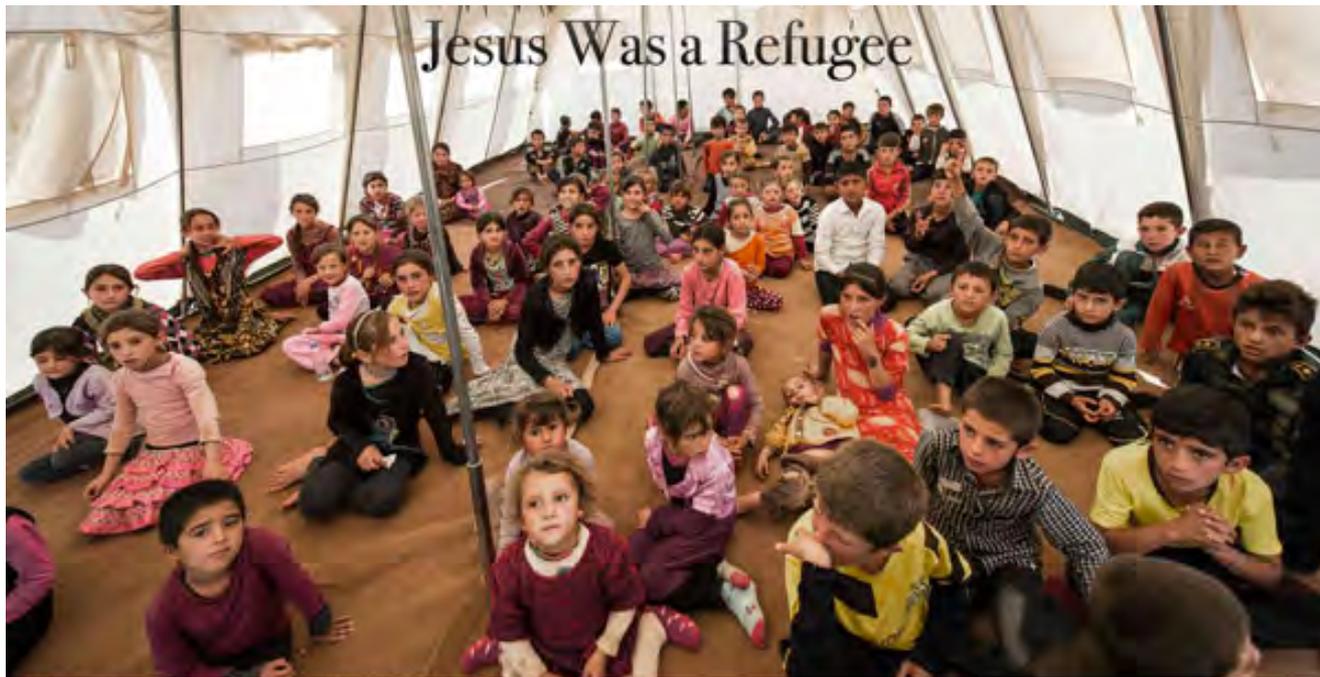


Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan for World Relief

Why Resolution GA-1723

As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), together, we can create safe, welcoming spaces for those whose lives are unsettled by the imposition of new laws and policies.



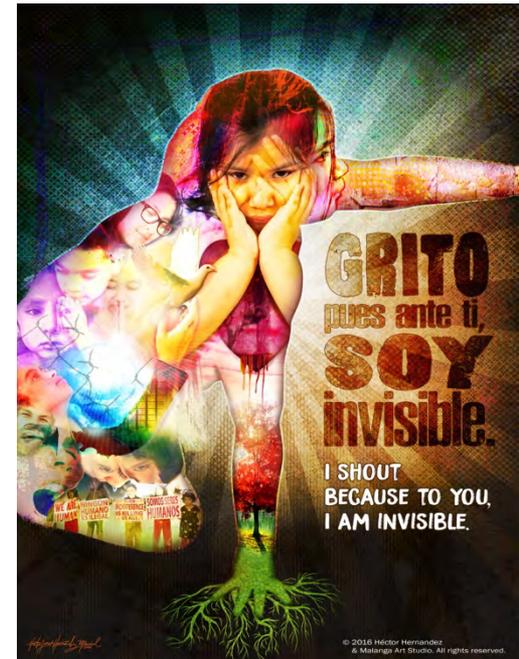
What Has Brought About This Crisis?

Church World Service and Nation Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S. issued an Ecumenical Declaration on March 3, 2017, opposing the executive order, "Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Attacks by Foreign Nationals." The executive order:

- Drastically reduces refugee admissions
- Temporarily suspends the entire U.S. resettlement program
- Ends the resettlement of Syrian refugees
- Indefinitely bans individuals from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia and Sudan and preferences religious minorities
- Accelerates the deportation of undocumented community members

Protecting Welcome, Restoring Hope

On February 18, 2017, the new Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security issued a memo that implemented the latest Executive Order on Border Enforcement and expanded the boundaries of expedited removals, placing individuals and their families across the country at risk of immediate deportations.



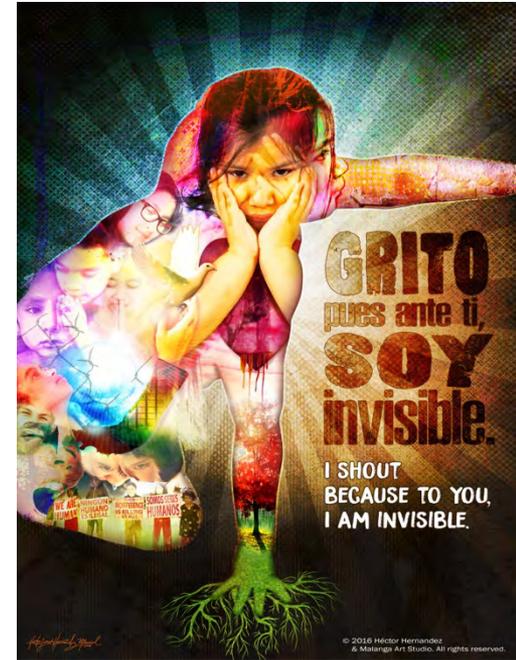
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Why Should We Care?

- The Bible instructs, “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV); and
- Jesus commands us to welcome the stranger, for “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40 NRSV); and
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes that it was founded partly by immigrant ministers, such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell; and
- Immigrants are pastors, congregation members, and leaders in our church and denomination.

Why Should We Care?

- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada has historically fought for social justice and has advocated in favor of the poor, dispossessed, and marginalized; and
- The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is committed to serving all of God's people; and recognizes all persons are created by and valuable in the eyes of God.



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The Immigrant's Creed, by Jose Luis Casal

I believe in Almighty God, who guided the people in exile and in exodus, the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon, the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean, who was born away from his people and his home, who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger.

When he returned to his own country, he suffered under the oppression of Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power. Jesus was persecuted, beaten, tortured, and unjustly condemned to death.

But on the third day Jesus rose from the dead, not as a scorned foreigner, but to offer us citizenship in God's kingdom.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us, who speaks all languages, lives in all countries, and reunites all races.

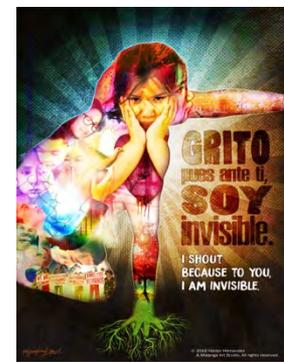
I believe that the Church is the secure home for foreigners and for all believers. I believe that the communion of saints begins when we embrace all God's people in all their diversity.

I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal before God, and in reconciliation, which heals our brokenness. I believe that in the Resurrection God will unite us as one people in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time.

I believe in life eternal, in which no one will be foreigner, but all will be citizens of the kingdom where God reigns forever and ever.

Amen.

GA-1723 Calls for a Response

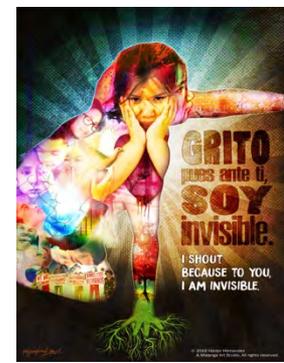


Healing

That all members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and their respective Disciples ministries consider:

- engaging in congregational prayer, listening conferences, and action around immigration policies;
- offering mental health training and resources to immigrants and immigrant families, and to those from communities providing support and solidarity to these immigrants and immigrant families, such as clergy and other leaders;
- supporting immigrant families when facing and experiencing separation; and
- promoting ministries of healing for trauma resulting from immigration travel and trafficking.

GA-1723 Calls for a Response

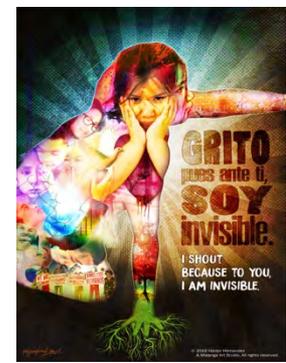


Prevention

That all members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and their respective Disciples ministries consider:

- establishing preventive measures that help immigrant families and individuals avoid fraud and obtain credible legal resources and guidance;
- offering planning and resource materials for individuals and families in the face of detention and deportation risks; and
- offering support for those immigrants and families living in border communities and beyond.

GA-1723 Calls for a Response



Protection

That churches of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada seek to:

- build solidarity between immigrant and non-immigrant congregations;
- consider becoming or assisting congregations offering sanctuary protections to immigrants;
- develop community protection and response models for families facing separation due to detention or deportation;
- educate themselves and others about those immigration policies that support the rights of immigrant families;
- offer support for current Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, border communities, and victims of hate crimes, fraudulent activity, and sex trafficking.

Join Us in Unity at the Start of General Assembly in Indy for a

DISCIPLES RALLY 4 FAMILY JUSTICE



Saturday, July 8, 3-5 p.m.

**Gather 2:45 p.m. in Room TBD
of the Convention Center**

3:15 March to State Capitol Grounds

3:30 Rally/Press Conference

& Action Options

4:45 Return to Convention Center

***HEAR VOICES of Impacted Family Members**

***SUPPORT efforts for Peacebuilding & Environmental, Immigrant,
Refugee, Racial, Native American, Children's, & LGBTQ+ Justice**

***ACT as Disciples to Promote Justice!!**

Questions? Contact: ssstanley@dhn.disciples.org, 202-957-7826



To Do:

Review and prepare to support the resolution, "On Becoming Immigrant-Welcoming Congregations," GA-1723, coming to General Assembly on Monday, July 10:

<http://ga.disciples.org/resolutions/2017/ga-1723/>

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Helpful Resources for Your Congregation

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/>

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Disciples-Sanctuary-Resources-for-Churches-4-10-17-updates.pdf>



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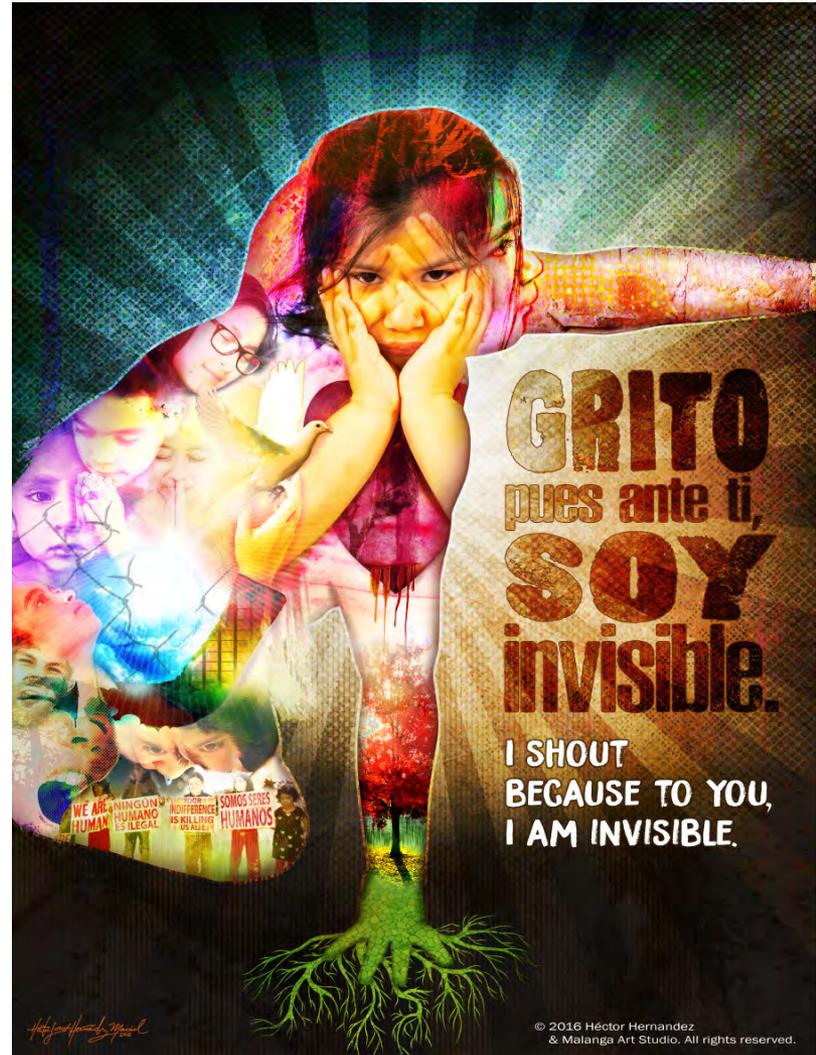
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