

# **MCC U.S. Immigration Policy Principles**

## *Legislative Talking Points*

(Compiled by the MCC U.S. Washington Office in 2004, updated in 2007)

### **Mennonite Central Committee:**

MCC is the relief, development and peace agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America. The following principles come from MCC staff in the United States and their experience attempting to demonstrate God's love by working among people experiencing poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disaster.

### **Vision:**

Immigrants to the United States, whether documented or undocumented, often face a culture of unwelcome: suspicion, isolation, militarized borders, workplace raids and visa backlogs.

The Biblical tradition is one that instructs its followers to welcome strangers and to practice the "Golden Rule." Harsh immigration enforcement measures, family separation and widespread suffering fall short of these goals.

In the long run, immigration reform must address the root causes of migration. The United States must find foreign policy solutions and trade agreements that promote economic opportunity and stability in migrants' home countries. Until that goal is achieved, however, the following policy changes can help us welcome newcomers to the United States and honor the rule of law.

### **MCC U.S. Policy Principles:**

1. Pass legislation that provides the option of earned legal status followed, eventually, by citizenship, for immigrants currently living in the United States without requiring unworkable fines or "touchback" provisions.
2. Maintain the current family-based immigration system, and increase the number of available family visas, so that families can reunite and immigrate together in a legal and timely way.
3. Create just and fair guest worker programs that ensure labor rights, fair wages, employer choice and due process protections, as well as the opportunity for immigrant workers to apply for permanent status and, eventually, citizenship.
4. Preserve access to social security, healthcare and other benefits and services for lawfully-present immigrants while avoiding policies that seek to deter access to public services by immigrant communities.
5. Enact oversight mechanisms to support community security, accountability and rights on the border while opposing policies that contribute to deaths on the border and that create fear among immigrant communities.
6. Address political instability and economic disparity in migrants' home countries caused, in part, by U.S. foreign policies and trade agreements. Create incentives for sustainable development.