

ON THE CRISIS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

June 2006

WHEREAS, The crisis of illegal immigration in the United States impacts tens of millions of people in many different ways; and

WHEREAS, Christians have responsibilities in two realms: as citizens of the nation (Matthew 22:21) and as citizens of the heavenly Kingdom (Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9); and

WHEREAS, As citizens of the nation, Christians are under biblical mandate to respect the divine institution of government and its just laws, but at the same time, Christians have a right to expect the government to fulfill its ordained mandate to enforce those laws (Romans 13:1-7); and

WHEREAS, As citizens of the heavenly Kingdom and members of local congregations of that Kingdom, we also have a biblical mandate to act compassionately toward those who are in need (Matthew 25:34-40), love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), and to do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matthew 7:12); and

WHEREAS, The federal government's failure to fulfill its responsibility in the area of illegal immigration, during both Democratic and Republican administrations, has caused severe consternation among a sizable constituency of Americans and has led to the crisis we now face; and

WHEREAS, The federal government has not only failed to control the borders but failed in its responsibility to enforce the immigration laws, not only with regard to the individuals who are here illegally, but also with regard to the employers who knowingly hire them; and

WHEREAS, There are reportedly 12 million immigrants and counting who are living and working in America without legal status, many of whom have children who are American citizens by birth; and

WHEREAS, Many of these hardworking and otherwise law-abiding immigrants have been exploited by employers and by others in society, contrary to James 5:4; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, June 13-14, 2006, urge the federal government to provide for the security of our nation by controlling and securing our borders; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the United States Congress to address seriously and swiftly the question of how to deal realistically with the immigration crisis in a way that will restore trust among the citizenry; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge the federal government to enforce all immigration laws, including the laws directed at employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants or who are unjustly paying these immigrants substandard wages or subjecting them to conditions that are contrary to the labor laws of our country; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge citizen Christians to follow the biblical principle of caring for the foreigners among us (Deuteronomy 24:17-22) and the command of Christ to be a neighbor to those in need of assistance (Luke 10:30-37), regardless of their racial or ethnic background, country of origin, or legal status; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Christian churches to act redemptively and reach out to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of all immigrants, to start English classes on a massive scale, and to encourage them toward the path of legal status and/or citizenship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we encourage all Southern Baptists to make the most of the tremendous opportunity for evangelism and join our Master on His mission to seek and save those who are lost (Luke 19:10) among the immigrant population to the end that these individuals might become both legal residents of the United States and loyal citizens of the Kingdom of God.