United Methodist Task Force on Immigration

Study Guide for “Made in L.A.”

Includes:
- Event Planning Tool Kit
- United Methodist Resolutions on Immigration
- Discussion Questions
- What you Can Do!

United Methodist Task Force on Immigration
Bishop Minerva Carcaño, chair, 1550 E. Meadowbrook Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85014 | (602) 266-6956 or 1-800-229-8622
Dear United Methodist Friends,

On behalf of the United Methodist Immigration Task Force I want to thank you for walking compassionately with our immigrant brothers and sisters, and for your willingness to host a screening of the film, Made in LA.

Made in LA is the story of three immigrant women, who have come to Los Angeles to work in the garment industry out of a desire to better care for their families. In the end, these women discover the power of their collective voice as they stand together in unity against exploitation by the retailer, Forever 21. The story beautifully illustrates the courage, perseverance, and strength that these women show daily in caring for their families, contributing to their communities, organizing to overcome exploitation, and building a life that is both inspiring and challenging.

I pray that you and members of your faith community will watch this important film with open hearts and open minds. Attached you will find materials that will help you organize and publicize a screening of the film in your community. We hope these materials will help equip you to lead a discussion of the film. We are also including two of the immigration resolutions of The United Methodist Church along with discussion questions specifically designed for them. It is so critical that we United Methodists know where we stand on the issue of immigration.

After watching Made in LA, I know you and your church will be inspired to join in the movement for comprehensive immigration reform. Attached are numerous opportunities for you and your faith community to extend God’s mercy to immigrants, and to advocate for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform. I hope you will take advantage of this momentous time and mobilize your bible study groups, Christian education classes, youth, women and men’s organizations, campus ministries, and your entire church to advocate for just and humane immigration reform. Such reform will bless all of us.

Your Sister in Christ,

Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño
United Methodist Immigration Task Force Chair
# UMC Made in L.A. Screening and Action Guide

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Materials from the *Made in L.A. Team*
MAKE AN IMPACT WITH
MADE IN L.A
Host a screening and put a human face on the issue of immigration reform

“An excellent documentary... about basic human dignity” –The New York Times

“Made in L.A. is a breathtaking and deeply touching depiction of the human cost of our immigration crisis. I’m thrilled my colleagues and I had the opportunity to screen this movie on Capitol Hill. I urge anyone who is uncertain about the need for humane reform to see this movie.” –Congressmember Luis Gutierrez, Chair of the Democratic Caucus Immigration Task Force

“This truly inspiring film beautifully depicts the courage and dignity with which immigrants face the consequences of our broken immigration system. By delving deeply into the struggles of Latina garment workers in Los Angeles, the filmmakers speak volumes to the powerful human stories behind the immigration debate.” –Janet Murguía, President and CEO, National Council of La Raza

“In order to transform hearts and minds we must highlight the personal and moral consequences of our broken immigration system in America. This film helps remind us of the human face and real stories of our immigrant brothers and sisters and the urgent need to unite organizations, churches and leaders from across the theological and political spectrum to bring about comprehensive immigration reform.” –Adam Taylor, Senior Political Director, Sojourners

Since its television broadcast on PBS’s P.O.V. series, Made in L.A. has been shown via DVD at hundreds of community and educational screenings around the country, where it has received an emotional, passionate response. Hosting a screening is easy and, according to a recent study, it’s a proven tool for social change:

- 98% of viewers who completed audience evaluations indicated that they “learned something new” from watching the film.
- 81% said that they had a much deeper understanding of the issues after watching the film.
- 69% said that they would probably “discuss the issues with friends and/or family.”
- Over a third of audience members also indicated that they would consider joining an organization working on the issues or organizing a workshop/training using the film.

Find out more on the reverse of this page or at:

www.MadeinLA.com/host
Host a Screening in Three Easy Steps

Putting a human face on the issues of immigration, immigrant workers' rights, and supporting humane immigration reform can be easy and fun!

Host a screening and share Emmy-winning Made in L.A. with your community, organization and friends. Your screening event can help advance your mission, engage your members, build strategic partnerships and even help you fundraise - all while building support for immigrants rights:

1. Purchase an inexpensive Fundraising Screening Kit or a Community-Licensed DVD for your community screening at www.MadeinLA.com/host. **Important Note:** To be sure that these screenings can be tracked, please enter the words "United Methodist" in the "Order Notes" box when you place your order. (The "Order Notes" box is located just below where you enter the billing & shipping addresses.)

2. Download a free Event Planning Toolkit, and begin planning your event. On our website you'll find free downloadable bilingual (English-Spanish) template materials, including flyers, e-mails, press releases and everything you need to organize a successful event with Made in L.A.

3. After your screening, discuss the issues using our free downloadable Immigration Conversation Guide. Take action using our free downloadable Action Guide, contacting local and national leaders, speaking with press, planning future events or working with local groups to highlight immigration issues in your community.

Web Videos

To promote a screening of Made in L.A. or actions around it, or to support online fundraising efforts, view our “Nation of Immigrants” Immigrants Rights Web Video at www.MadeinLA.com/Mayday

Free materials

At www.MadeinLA.com/host we provide free downloadable materials, available in English and Spanish, for planning, publicizing and creating a high-impact event:


Community Licensed DVDs and Fundraising Screening Kits

- **Community-Licensed DVDs** are inexpensive and specially designed for community screenings.
- **Fundraising Screening Kits** include full-size movie posters, postcards and extra DVDs – providing you with the materials you need to promote and host your event. These Screening Kits are designed for “pay for themselves” and can even help your organization raise funds because they come with additional DVDs that can be sold at the screening, potentially raising up to $400.

www.MadeinLA.com/Host
About the Film

Made in L.A. an Emmy-nominated documentary that follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles sweatshops as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from trendy clothing retailer Forever 21. In intimate verité style, Made in L.A. reveals the impact of the struggle on each woman’s life as they are gradually transformed by the experience. Compelling, humorous, deeply human, Made in L.A. is a story about immigration, the power of unity, and the courage it takes to find your voice.

Made in L.A. premiered nationwide on the PBS documentary series, P.O.V, as a 2007 Labor Day special and has received numerous international awards. For more information visit www.MadeinLA.com (bilingual English/Spanish)

About this Toolkit & Community Screenings

This toolkit is designed to be used by community organizations, nonprofits, faith-based organizations and grassroots and student groups that want to screen Made in L.A. in their communities in order to draw attention to local issues or to create a dialogue around the issues in the film.

We have tried to make this toolkit detailed and comprehensive to empower you to do the best event possible, and we realize that some sections will not be applicable in every case. For example, if you run a monthly screening series at a local church, you may decide that you don’t need to do any media outreach because you have a regular audience that normally comes to your events. That’s fine! We are making suggestions, but you will have to decide what is best to reach and impact your audience.

Community screenings require a community-screening licensed DVD or one of our special “Community Screening Kits” that contain posters, postcards and enough extra DVDs so that the kit “pays for itself”. For more details and to obtain a screening kit (if you don’t have one already) visit www.MadeinLA.com/get/host. (Our experience is that people normally want to buy DVDs after a screening! If you would like to buy more DVDs at a bulk rate to sell as a fundraiser for your organization, contact us at www.MadeinLA.com/contact).

Note that screenings held at universities, colleges, schools, public libraries and government institutions require the educational version of the DVD, which is available from our nonprofit educational distributor California Newsreel at www.newsreel.org. (Student groups, however, can often use a screening kit or a community licensed DVD. See special note at www.MadeinLA.com/buy/#Student.)

Portions of this guide were adapted from the “Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit”, developed by Active Voice with funding from P.O.V.
Getting Started With Your *Made in L.A.* Event

Consider your organization’s goals and needs – and use the film to support them in a practical way. Before any film screening, you should consider the following:

1) **IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES**

Identifying your objectives will lay the foundation for your event planning. Think about what you’d like to get out of the event, how it can benefit your organization, and what is realistic. Here are a few suggested objectives (these are not mutually exclusive!):

- **Raise awareness** about the issues faced by low-wage workers, the impact of immigration and globalization on labor and consumerism, and the benefits of labor organizing.

- **Heighten visibility** and spotlight the importance of your work by connecting it with the issues raised in the film.

- **Build bridges** between immigrant workers and community members.

- **Educate** immigrants and low-wage workers about their rights, and present them with opportunities that are available in your community.

- **Establish coalitions** with other organizations and inspire the development of new programs that address the needs of low-wage workers, the importance of conscious consumerism, and the need for fairer labor practices.

- **Engage general audiences** around how to be more conscious consumers.

- **Prompt local decision-makers** and business leaders to consider how addressing the needs of immigrant and low-wage workers benefits the community.

- **Raise visibility for your organization / Fundraise for your organization.** Note that you can buy more DVDs at a bulk rate to sell as a fundraiser for your organization. For more information, contact us at [www.MadeinLA.com/contact](http://www.MadeinLA.com/contact).

2) **TARGET AUDIENCE**

Once you determine your objectives, consider your target audience. Do you hope to cast a wide net and reach the community-at-large? Or do you want to narrow the focus to reach out to a specific sector or group? (e.g., low-wage workers, labor and immigrant-serving organizations, corporate reformists, unions, community organizers, activists, decision makers, foundations, etc.)?
3) **FRAMING EVENT TO MEET OBJECTIVES**

Will you choose to focus on one particular issue, or a range of issues? You may simply choose to do a screening with brief comments before and after, but it is best that you engage the audience in a way that enhances your work directly. Here are some suggestions:

- **Community screening**: A screening/panel discussion designed to attract a range of community members – from interested individuals to community leaders – in a broader conversation about the ideas raised in the documentary (e.g., the implications of globalization and corporate institutions on low wage workers and their rights, how immigration is impacting or impacted by a globalized economy, the effect of labor organizing to raise workers’ standard of living and rights, how cultural communities can work together to raise awareness of low wage-workers circumstances and to improve conditions, etc.)

- **Cross-sector policy review**: An event designed to engage specific sectors, such as policy analysts, local government officials and community leaders in a thoughtful solutions-based conversation. The dialogue would be carefully framed, focusing on ways to better meet the needs of low-wage workers. To keep the conversation focused, this type of event is better as a small, invitational screening.

- **Town hall meeting**: A screening and forum for members of the community to learn more about the intersection of labor and immigrants’ rights in a local context, with an opportunity to voice related ideas, questions or concerns. The panel can include a low-wage worker involved in improving workers rights, a representative from a corporation practicing fair labor laws, an elected or government official focused on immigration reform, labor and immigration experts, a professor or other academic studying the relevant issues and an experienced facilitator. Reserve as much time as possible for dialogue with the audience. **Note**: An event like this should be held in a neutral space so that all community members feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

4) **EVENT ENHANCEMENTS**

- **Keynote Speaker**: Invite a local leader or scholar to speak about some of the themes the film raises, such as the global economy, consumerism, immigration, and labor rights. Try to screen the film for her/him in advance!

- **Invite the Filmmakers**: Depending on availability, the filmmakers are sometimes available to come speak about the film and to lead discussions. For more information about availability and fees, contact us at www.MadeinLA.com/contact.

- **Action Steps**: Offer motivated audience members suggested ways they can help address labor issues. For example, they can volunteer at a local organization, become a more conscious consumer, get involved in a letter writing campaign to legislators to initiate labor law shifts, create a low wage worker committee to discuss issues facing workers regardless of industry, etc. For more ideas, visit our “Get Involved” page at www.madeinla.com/get.

- **Experienced Moderator**: This is especially useful if you’ll have a smaller group that wants to really tackle some of the tougher issues.
• **Reception**: Plan a special meet-and-greet with refreshments to allow opportunities for networking either before or after the screening. Depending on your budget and capacity, this could be open to the public or invite-only.

• **Exhibit hall**: Provide opportunities for co-sponsors to display information about their organizations and relevant programs/services they provide.

• **Performances**: Invite a local choir, band, playhouse or dance troupe to perform a piece dedicated to labor or the immigrant experience.

### Getting the Word Out

There are many ways to get the word out about your event. Remember that people will feel compelled to come to an event if it feels relevant, important and timely, and if it speaks to them as an audience. As you know, *Made in L.A.* covers many issues: labor rights, economic justice, immigration, Latinos/Latinas (culturally and politically), community organizing, interethnic organizing, women’s empowerment and progressive lawyering. At any given time there will be many possible tie-ins to current events and “hooks” for particular media outlets or communities. And, because Made in L.A. has been awarded several prizes – including an Emmy nomination and the Henry Hampton Award for Excellence in Film and Digital Media – you should be able to reach “beyond the choir” to more general audiences to persuade them that their attendance at your event will be a rich, emotional and cinematic experience, in addition to an exploration of “important issues”, which doesn’t necessarily appeal to everybody.

Take into account how best to reach your particular target audiences. Not everyone uses e-mail, and not everyone hangs out at progressive coffee shops. A clear understanding of how to reach each audience segment will make you more effective, and the best strategy is likely to be a combination of the techniques listed below. And remember, the best publicity will do more much than attract people to the screening: it will bring your message to a much wider audience than those that can attend the event itself!

Finally, be sure to send us your event information (www.MadeinLA.com/contact) so that we can publicize it for you on our screenings page!

1) **ELECTRONIC/VIRAL OUTREACH**

This is one of the most effective ways to reach people, but attention spans are short, and it works best when it is accompanied by other sorts of outreach and publicity. In all electronic outreach, be sure to include a link to www.MadeinLA.com so people can view the trailer, or better yet, embed the trailer from our website--people love seeing previews, and this trailer has proven to be very effective!

• **Newsletter or e-mail announcement**: Use the downloadable flyer templates at www.MadeinLA.com/get/host as the basis to create an email announcement to spread the word about your event. We recommend you send out these emails twice: two weeks before, and then a reminder several days before your event.

• **Blogs**: Reach out to any bloggers that you know and to bloggers who are popular with your target audience. Even a brief mention with a link to the event is helpful. Be sure to send
them information to link to or embed the *Made in L.A.* trailer from [www.MadeinLA.com](http://www.MadeinLA.com) onto their site.

- **Facebook and MySpace:** Social networks like Facebook and MySpace have become hugely important in reaching audiences that like to use them, and can be especially useful when there’s a Facebook or MySpace group connected to a specific local community such as a university, local organization, etc. We suggest setting up an “event” and inviting members of your community to forward and distribute the event information to friends. (Be sure to enable the features that allow people to forward the event information to their friends.) You can also just send a message with the event information to your friends and to groups that might be interested, including links to the *Made in L.A.* website and to our pages on Facebook and MySpace.

2) **POSTERS & FLYERS**

Putting up posters and flyers around your community, in the right coffee shops, and on community bulletin boards can be incredibly effective. We offer a number of downloadable flyers and mini-posters ([www.MadeinLA.com/get/host](http://www.MadeinLA.com/get/host)) that you can easily customize to include your event details and then print on your own printer and/or photocopy. Here are a number of ideas:

- Leave a stack of flyers at appropriate local businesses and ask if you can place a mini-poster in their window. Try video stores, coffee shops, restaurants, community centers, barbershops/salons, churches, synagogues, schools, campuses, and anywhere else that your audience likes to hang-out. You can also try placing an ad on local bus systems, on school shuttles, and similar places. (Some ambitious organizers have even gotten sponsorship from the local bus system in the form of free ad space!)
- Distribute flyers at events with similar themes. Be sure to print or e-mail flyers to co-sponsored organizations to distribute at their events.
- Go to local organizations that do work around *Made in L.A.*’s themes (worker centers, women’s organizations, immigrant rights’ organizations, public interest legal services, etc.) and ask if you can leave flyers at the entrance or if they’ll post the mini-poster.
- The screening kits available on our website include several 27”x39” full-size movie posters that are very striking and that can attract a lot of attention for your event! Put them up in strategic locations where they’ll really make an impact. We recommend attaching a simple flyer at the bottom with the basic details about your event.

3) **LOCAL MEDIA**

As mentioned earlier, we have designed this toolkit to be comprehensive in order to empower you to do the best event possible. We realize that some sections will not be applicable to every event and this section on local media is a great example – depending on your objectives and your audience, you may or may not decide to pursue media coverage. That’s fine, as it’s all about how best to reach and impact your audience. But read on for some great guidance for how simple media outreach can be!

If you or one of your co-sponsoring organizations has a communications department that can take the reigns on contacting press, get them involved right away. But we understand that
many community partners are small organizations that are limited in this capacity, so we’ve put together some basic tips that can be useful to those who are new to working with local media. Beforehand, we recommend you do a little background reading to get acquainted with the basic steps and terms.

For a “beginners” overview read:
http://www.causecommunications.com/diy/getnewscoverage.html

For a full tutorial on news releases from the SPIN Project check out:
http://spinproject.org/article.php?id=115

(The Spin Project has many other great resources on their site, a number of which are geared towards using media around economic justice issues.)

Before you make complicated plans about how to promote your event, spend some time thinking about who is most likely to understand and appreciate your event, and what your target audience listens to, reads and logs on to. By targeting your core audience, you might decide that it makes more sense to focus on, say, an alternative weekly paper that already covers innovative community initiatives vs. the headline-driven daily paper that tends to focus on crime and celebrity.

Below are some basic tips for your media outreach:

• Use the template press release available at www.MadeinLA.com/get/host as a guide to create your own. Interesting details to include would be information on local wages and efforts to improve workers’ rights, a summary description of each of the important issues impacting local workers, statistics on immigrant workers in your community, and a complete list of the co-sponsoring organizations. Be sure to make a special mention if your event will feature the filmmakers or other special guests! (Remember, you can contact the filmmakers at www.MadeinLA.com/contact.)

• Ten days before the event, issue the release to a wide range of mainstream, alternative, community and specialized media. Make sure to send it to reporters covering labor and immigration issues, women’s issues and the arts/entertainment and metro sections.

• If press wants photos or a press kit about the film itself, you can always direct them to www.MadeinLA.com/press where those materials are available for download.

• Get the event on calendar listings in your city’s weekly publication(s) and on the web.

• Make calls to local television and radio programs. Let them know about your event, and be prepared to give them contact and title information of local experts or advocates that can be available for interviews. Pay particular attention to local radio shows and shows that focus on themes in Made in L.A., as they frequently need guests and may be very happy to promote a local event! Here’s who to contact:
  • Local TV news: assignment editors
  • Public affairs or magazine programs: producers
  • Talk radio or local/community radio: producers or hosts

• A couple of days prior to your event contact the people to whom you sent press materials and encourage them to attend the event. Pitch the value of this unique screening and the
importance of educating people about the experiences of low-wage workers and immigrants in the community and the need for broader labor protections.

4) CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

We strongly encourage including other organizations in your event plans, as it helps you broaden your reach and establish new, potentially long-term coalitions. Allied organizations can get involved in a range of ways depending on their capacity. This can include getting the word out about the film through listservs or websites, contributing time or resources to the screening event and/or participating in a post-screening panel discussion.

There are many groups that would make good co-sponsors, including labor and immigrant rights organizations, low-wage worker coalitions, labor rights advocates, women’s organizations, universities, organizations devoted to human rights issues and media/film centers.

The key in approaching co-sponsors is to help them understand how your event fits into their priorities as an organization, and how they will ultimately benefit from being associated with your plans. Be sure to allow enough lead-time – building new relationships often takes time.

5) CAMPUS SCREENINGS

As with community screenings, finding on-campus co-sponsors is really important. Contact departments, research centers and student organizations that have an interest in the topic and ask them to be part of this event. This will increase the visibility and success of the event and will help put a spotlight on the issues in the film. (Note that depending how a campus event is sponsored, you may be required to use the educational DVD as opposed to a Community Screening Kit. See www.MadeinLA.com/buy#Student for details.)

In addition to the outreach strategies mentioned above, the strategies below have proven to be especially effective for campus events:

- Post information on websites, listservs and blogs at your school and at other schools in the area.
- Create a Facebook event and encourage students to forward it widely.
- Send press release to on-campus newspapers & publications, on-campus radio & TV.
- Flyer around campus, table in the student mailrooms and dormitories, do chalking.
- Make a big banner outside a particular building (like Student Union, etc) advertising the event.
- Ask professors to offer school credit –this is a great way to bring student to the event, and they’re never disappointed afterwards!
- Ask the departments involved to ask their professors to mention the event in their class.
- Ask all the organizations and departments involved to include the information about the event in their newsletters.
Before the Post-Screening Discussion Begins

Before the discussion begins, we recommend that you make any important announcements and that you:

**Pass out the postcards that came with your screening kit.** There should be enough postcards in your Made in L.A. screening kit so that each person can take two postcards. These postcards will help audience members carry the message of Made in L.A. with them, and provide all the information they need to let their friends know about the film. You should also distribute any other materials, flyers, etc., at this time, as some people may leave before the end of the post-screening discussion (to download the "Things you can do" and "Shop with a Conscience" flyers, visit our page at www.madeinla.com/host/get).

**Announce that you’ll be selling the DVDs that came with your screening kit.** In your screening kit, you received either 5 or 10 extra Made in L.A. DVDs that you can sell so that audience members can buy the film and so that you can recover the cost of the screening kit. We highly recommend that you announce that these DVDs are available at the beginning of the Q & A and that you have someone stationed with the DVDs at a table at the back of the room so that people will walk by that table as they leave.

(Our experience is that people normally want to buy DVDs after a screening! If you would like to buy more DVDs at a bulk rate to sell as a fundraiser for your organization, contact us at www.MadeinLA.com/contact.)

Tips for Post-Screening Discussion

Complex films like Made in L.A. can raise a range of emotions, questions and/or concerns from the audience, and we recommend you address this with a post-screening discussion. Below are some tips and ideas for framing the discussion, keeping the conversation moving and focusing the audience on important topics.

**Panelists**

Your post-screening discussion will vary depending on your event objectives, but it’s always a good idea to have a range of perspectives represented on a panel.

- Your co-sponsors are great resources for identifying potential panelists for the discussion. Also, they’ll have more incentive to promote the event if they’re being represented on the panel.
- For a cross-sector discussion, you might include a low-wage worker, a labor and immigrants’ rights advocate, a corporate representative, a policy expert, and an organizer with experience working on issues impacting low-wage immigrant workers. If you’re planning a town hall-style event, it’s good to include an experienced facilitator as well.
- If possible, ask panelists to screen the film before the event so they can prepare.
Give your panelists an idea of who will be in the audience, so they can tailor the discussion to the audience’s needs. For example, if you anticipate a general audience, ask panelists to tone down any sector-specific jargon.

Have a translator present if you’ll have audience members with limited English proficiency.

Meeting Your Objectives with the Discussion
The way the discussion is framed can be helpful in meeting your objectives.

- If you’re hoping to build coalitions or enhance existing programs, the discussion should be action-oriented. Focus on what needs to be done, how to facilitate action, and how various community sectors can contribute.
- If you’d like to raise visibility, showcase your organization’s work and make sure it’s made clear why your work is important to the community. You’ll also want to get key people in the audience, including press, potential funders and other influential decision makers.
- If your main objective is public education, set aside at least half an hour for Q&A with the audience and have fact sheets handy. You can download and photocopy “Things You Can Do” and “Shop with a Conscience” flyers from www.MadeinLA.com/get/host. Be sure to bring along other information about specific actions that people can take in your community.
- Offer your audience members ways to get involved, whether it’s as simple as visiting your website or www.MadeinLA.com to find out about upcoming events, or something more specific like volunteering at a local workers’ center.

Controlling the Discussion

- You might want to select an experienced moderator to keep the discussion moving and field questions from the audience.
- If you have more than one person lined up to speak it is up to you to decide whether each speaker should give a brief reaction to the film in context to their work or if you want to go straight into a moderated discussion. This is largely based on the time limitations you have, but if you have more than 30 minutes available it’s a good idea to allow some time for speakers to introduce themselves – who they are and how their work is relevant to the issues raised in the film.
- As the panelists speak, encourage them to choose specific scenes from the film and link them to their comments.
- Be prepared for potential criticism. Although it is a very small possibility, you must be ready in case the film or speakers come under scrutiny. For example, there may be a lack of sympathy for immigrants that don’t speak English or resistance to efforts to improve labor rights through union activity. A neutral moderator can help make sure that the conversation remains productive and many perspectives are heard.
- Guide any comments or concerns to a positive end that applauds the benefits of sharing information in an open forum. Encourage critical audience members to think about how the film might be a helpful way to address the tensions that they are feeling.
Additional Resources

The Made in L.A. website’s “Learn More” page www.MadeinLA.com/learn contains a huge number of additional resources and links to organizations that deal with the issues portrayed in the film. You may also want to explore these links to find potential speakers or partner organizations in your area. For more information about the film and to contact the filmmakers please visit www.madeinla.com

Acknowledgements

 Portions of this guide were adapted from the “Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit”, developed by Active Voice with funding from P.O.V.

Active Voice is a nationally recognized non-profit team of strategic communication specialists who use film, television and digital media to spark social change. From grassroots to grass tops; online or big screen; documentary or narrative; independent or "interdependent" Active Voice works with preeminent filmmakers, funders, advocates and thought leaders to put human faces on the big issues of our times. Since its inception in 2001, Active Voice has built a diverse portfolio of film-based campaigns focusing on a range of issues, including immigration, criminal justice, healthcare and sustainability. www.activevoice.net

Produced by American Documentary, Inc., the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. P.O.V. has brought more than 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, P.O.V.'s Borders. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. www.pbs.org/pov

Made in L.A. is a co-production of Semilla Verde Productions, Inc. and the Independent Television Service, with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. A co-production with American Documentary, Inc. 1 P.O.V. Additional funding provided by the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund, Pacific Pioneer Fund, Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society, Diane Middleton Foundation, Puffin Foundation, and by the generosity of nearly 300 individual donors.

Made in L.A.’s outreach activities have received support from American Documentary, Inc. | P.O.V., Latino Public Broadcasting, The Fledgling Fund, The Philadelphia Foundation, Diane Middleton Foundation, Agape Foundation and from individuals like you. Thank you!

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**Made in L.A. Event Planning Checklist**

Once you have defined your target audience, objectives, and framing, begin planning the event:

**Preliminary planning – at least 6 weeks prior**
- Book the venue and date for your screening.
- Recruit local organizational partners to broaden your reach, and help identify roles for each one – such as publicity, panelist coordination, reception planning, etc.
- Determine speakers (including filmmakers), panelists, and moderator (if applicable).

**Logistical planning – 3-4 weeks prior**
- Create a flyer to publicize your screening (template flyers at www.MadeinLA.com/get/host).
- Confirm that you have the right equipment to screen the DVD. You’ll either need a DVD player and a large TV, or a DVD player, a projector, screen and sound system. Remember to position the TV or screen so everyone can see the subtitles!
- Secure food for reception (if applicable).
- Draft agenda and vet with partners.
- Contact the filmmakers if you’d like to sell more DVDs as a fundraiser for your organization (see the “About this Toolkit” section).

**Logistical planning – 2 weeks prior**
- Create an email blast to publicize your event electronically. (You can base the e-blast on the template flyers available at www.MadeinLA.com/get/host). We suggest sending one announcement 2 weeks prior and another several days prior.
- Contact community calendars about your event.

**Media outreach – 10 days prior**
- Make calls to local television and radio programs.

**Final planning – several days prior**
- **Important:** test screen your DVD of the film in advance of the event to make sure there aren’t any glitches. Be sure that the screen is high enough so that everyone can read the subtitles!
- Send second round of email blasts.
- Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story.
- Finalize agenda.
- Make copies of handouts, including literature from your organization, fact sheets, etc. If it’s appropriate for your event, download and photocopy “Things You Can Do” and “Shop with a Conscience” flyers from www.MadeinLA.com/get/host.

**At the event itself**
- As people arrive, ask them to sign up to receive updates from your organization.
- Before the discussion, pass out the postcards that came with your screening kit, along with any other materials.
- Before the discussion, announce that you have DVDs for sale and that these sales will help cover the cost of the screening! Set up a table near the exit and have someone stationed with the DVDs during the discussion. If you’d like to sell more DVDs as a fundraiser for your organizations see the “About this Toolkit” section.
- If possible, pass a Made in L.A. sign-up sheet around at your event (for download at www.madeinla.com/get/host) and send it back to us so that we can add interested attendees to the Made in L.A. community & mailing list!
- Have a timekeeper so that panelists/speakers remain within their assigned speaking time.
- If possible, announce a call to action or have materials available for attendees to follow up.
- Encourage participants to spread the word and let them know that they can learn more about the film at www.MadeinLA.com.
María, Lupe and Maura are three Latina immigrants struggling to survive in Los Angeles sweatshops. But one day, determined to win basic labor protections, they embark on a three-year odyssey that will transform their lives forever. Compelling, humorous, deeply human, Made in L.A. is a story about immigration, the power of unity, and the courage it takes to find your voice.

- In English and Spanish with bilingual subtitles -

"An excellent documentary... about basic human dignity."
-THE NEW YORK TIMES
“A rousing true story of solidarity, perseverance and triumph.”
-VARIETY
“A valuable and moving film – entertaining as well... precious.”
-LOS ANGELES TIMES

Made in L.A. screening
Don’t miss this unique opportunity to watch the film everyone’s talking about!

This is a template flyer – enter the date, time, location, and any special guest information here. You can download an easy-to-edit version of this flyer in Microsoft Word format at http://www.madeinla.com/host#Materials

A Spanish-language version of this flyer is also available on the site.

For more information about the film and to view the trailer: www.madeinla.com
Made in L.A. screening

This is a template flyer – enter the date, time, location, and any special guest information here. You can download an easy-to-edit version of this flyer in Microsoft Word format at http://www.madeinla.com/host#Materials

If you photocopy this sheet on back and front, and then cut them in half, you will have half-page bilingual flyers with English on one side and Spanish on the other.

Maria, Lupe and Maura are three Latina immigrants struggling to survive in Los Angeles sweatshops. But one day, determined to win basic labor protections, they embark on a three-year odyssey that will transform their lives forever. Compelling, humorous, deeply human, Made in L.A. is a story about immigration, the power of unity, and the courage it takes to find your voice.

- In English and Spanish with bilingual subtitles •

For more information about the film and to view the trailer visit www.madeinla.com

Proyección de Made in L.A.

This is a template flyer – enter the date, time, location, and any special guest information here in Spanish. You can download an easy-to-edit version of this flyer in Microsoft Word format at http://www.madeinla.com/host#Materials

See photocopying suggestions on the left.

María, Lupe y Maura son tres inmigrantes latinas que luchan por sobrevivir en los infames talleres de costura de Los Ángeles. Pero un día, con la determinación de conseguir derechos laborales básicos, se embarcan en una odisea de tres años que cambiará sus vidas para siempre. Conmovedora, simpática y profundamente humana, Made in L.A. es una historia sobre la inmigración, el poder de la unidad, y el valor que se necesita para encontrar tu propia voz.

- En Español e Inglés con subtítulos bilingües •

Para más información sobre la película y para ver el trailer visite www.madeinla.com
COMMUNITY LEADERS [INCLUDE NAMES ACCORDINGLY] HONOR MAY DAY AND SHOW SUPPORT FOR HUMANE IMMIGRATION REFORM AS PART OF NATIONAL EFFORT TO PUT HUMAN FACE ON IMMIGRATION CRISIS

“MADE IN L.A.” Emmy-winning Documentary Continues Tour from Capitol Hill to [YOUR CITY] with Community Screening and Meeting on Immigration
[ADAPT TO SPECIFIC EVENT]

WHAT: Film screening and discussion of Emmy-winning Made in L.A.
WHERE: EVENT NAME, LOCATION ADDRESS
WHEN: DATE & TIME
SPEAKERS: NAMES & TITLES OF SPECIAL GUESTS, IF APPLICABLE
DETAILS: Free and open to the public; for more information, call or e-mail Name at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or e-mail address or visit website address.
The film will be screened in English and Spanish with bilingual subtitles.

YOUR CITY HERE — This May Day, local leaders are putting a human face on the issue of immigration at a screening and discussion of the Emmy-winning documentary Made in L.A. DATE AND TIME at VENUE HERE. This screening is part of a national campaign around the film that brings together faith-based groups, community organizations and grassroots leaders.

Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar’s Made in L.A. tells the story of three Latina immigrants finding their way in the U.S. It's a very personal, human story that puts a face on the immigrant experience and draws parallels between today’s immigrants and those whose families came to the U.S. generations ago.

"Made in L.A. is a breathtaking and deeply touching depiction of the human cost of our immigration crisis. I'm thrilled my colleagues and I had the opportunity to screen this movie on Capitol Hill. I urge anyone who is uncertain about the need for humane reform to see this movie," said Congressmember Luis Gutierrez, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus’ Immigration Task Force.

This screening is sponsored by SPONSORING ORGANIZATION(S) NAME(S), which is working to achieve ORGANIZATION(S) MISSION(S). The ORGANIZATION is screening the film as an example of INSERT SENTENCE CONNECTING EVENT TO ORGANIZATION’S GOALS AND/OR CURRENT CAMPAIGNS. IF APPLICABLE, INSERT SENTENCE DESCRIBING SPECIAL GUESTS’ ROLE AT THE EVENT.

For more information about Made in L.A. and to view the trailer visit: www.MadeInLA.com. For downloadable press materials (including production notes and high-res photos), visit
www.MadeInLA.com/press. For more information about SPONSORING ORGANIZATION visit WEBSITE.

[This is a template for a 1-page Media Advisory. You can download an easy-to-edit version of this document in Microsoft Word format at http://www.madeinla.com/host#Materials]
MADE IN L.A.
Immigration and Immigrant Rights
Conversation Guide

Made in L.A. is a story about immigration, the power of unity and the courage it takes to find your voice. Made in L.A. follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in L.A. sweatshops and their struggle for self-empowerment as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a clothing retailer.

Starting the Conversation

Immigration and immigration reform are key issues of our time. In recent years there has been a wide-ranging conversation about how recent and undocumented immigrants in the United States should be treated, and how the immigration system should be reformed.

This brief guide is intended to spark conversation, build awareness and motivate viewers of Made in L.A. to learn more and possibly get involved. We hope that participants using this guide try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively. Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. But by their nature, those same topics can also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. We hope the questions below help guide you through an engaging and enlightening conversation.

To find out more about Made in L.A. and how to get involved, to view the Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit or to explore conversation guides on other issues in the film, please visit www.MadeInLA.com.

General Questions

Do the stories of Maria, Lupe and Maura resonate with you? Do you know people with similar stories? How does hearing other people’s immigration stories impact the way you see the issues of immigration and immigration reform? If you’re not an immigrant yourself, how does it change the way you look at immigrants working in your own community? If you are an immigrant, how does it change the way you view yourself in the community?

In the film, Maria says, “I thought it would be different here … to study, to have a career … to be happy. I was full of dreams.” How do you think Maria’s dreams and hopes are different from or similar to those of immigrants from generations past? What reasons did the women in the film give for coming to the United States?

We see Lupe at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and at Ellis Island (the port of entry to the United States for millions of immigrants at the turn of the century) recognizing links to turn-of-the-century Jewish women garment workers, and we also hear Joann Lo from the worker’s center talking about her parents as immigrants. What similarities do you see between the way immigrants have been historically treated in the U.S. and the way they are treated today?

Made in L.A. highlights historical patterns where some immigrants in the United States end up in low-wage, often exploitative jobs. Why do you think these patterns still exist? How does lack of documentation make immigrant workers vulnerable to exploitation?

www.MadeInLA.com
How did Maria, Lupe and Maura overcome their fears and concerns? What were the sources of their strength?

What insights or inspiration did you gain from this film? What did you learn about the film’s subjects and/or about yourself?

**Immigration Policy**

What barriers kept Maura from seeing her kids for 18 years? What policy changes could have prevented this from happening? If it were up to you to make the decision, would you allow her to bring her children to the United States to live with her? Why or why not?

Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has raided factories where undocumented workers are employed. These workers are often detained and deported, in some cases after living in the US and paying taxes for decades. How do you feel about this? Did *Made in L.A.* change your perspective on this type of treatment? Why or why not?

What changes do you hope will be made in the years to come regarding US immigration policy? How might the lives of the women in *Made in L.A.* have been different if these changes were already in place at the time of their campaign? What does comprehensive immigration reform mean to you?

President Obama supports a system that “allows undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, learn English, and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens” (WhiteHouse.gov). What do you think of this policy? If you were President Obama what would be your top concern regarding immigration reform?

If it were up to you to make the decision, would you grant the undocumented workers that you meet in the film legal residence status and the opportunity to become U.S. citizens? Why or why not?

**Immigration’s Impact: Connections Between Immigration and Other Issues in Made In L.A.**

Why did Maura, Maria or Lupe feel they have to leave their countries? Why do they choose to come to the U.S.? More generally, what forces cause migration?

In *Made in L.A.* we see Maura migrate to the U.S. so she can make enough money to provide for her parents and three children in El Salvador. Why is this burden placed on Maura as a woman? Does her burden differ with the burdens placed on immigrant men?

Historically, work in the U.S. garment industry has been performed by poor, unskilled, mostly female immigrants. Why do you think sweatshops have been part of our economic system for so long?

What could be done to prevent employers from exploiting undocumented workers? Besides the workers themselves, who would benefit from protecting the rights of these workers? What might happen to the wages of other workers if undocumented immigrants were granted legal status?

Ultimately, the garments that Lupe, Maria or Maura produce end up in retail stores. What is the role of consumers in the situations that you see in *Made in L.A.?* What are our responsibilities as consumers?

[www.MadeInLA.com](http://www.MadeInLA.com)
Taking Action

What are some issues in your community relating to immigration or immigrants’ rights that you feel need community support? How would you go about nurturing support for these issues? What kind of support can you provide to immigrants in your community?

Did the film inspire you to take action in your life? What steps can you take today to start to build positive change around the issue of immigration?

Is there current legislation in your city, county, state or in Congress you can support to help create fair immigration reform?

Does the organization hosting this event have suggestions about how you can get involved in the issue of immigration reform?

If you want to express your views or influence the process, you may want to write or call your congressperson or other elected officials to let them know how you feel about humane immigration reform. Contact information is available at www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml.

[We encourage each screening host or coalition to determine the right “Action Ask” for their event, if any. Note that many organizations offer specific template e-mails or suggested talking points for contacting your elected officials around immigration reform. For samples, we suggest that you explore the organizations listed on our “Learn More” page]
UMC Ways to Get Involved
Ways to Get Involved in Welcoming Immigrants to the US

1. Support Interfaith Worker Justice by connecting with a local group (see attached list). This ecumenical group with strong UMC leadership advocates for just labor practices nationally and locally. Local groups challenge “wage theft” and provide support for workers confronted with unjust practices. [www.iwj.org](http://www.iwj.org), 773-728-8400

2. Learn more about the UM Immigration Clinic Program -- Justice for Our Neighbors (information below). See how you can become a volunteer in this church-based legal services program for immigrants, a program of UMCOR.

3. Find out more about the UMC’s stand on immigration. Read the two new General Conference resolutions on Immigration (attached) and use the study questions to explore faith perspectives, current realities, attitudes and potential responses.

4. Call 202-225-3121 and ask for each of your Senators and your Representative. Let them know that as a United Methodist, you support family unity and would like them to co-sponsor the Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085, HR 2709) [see details attached.]

5. Urge President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just immigration reform. You can do this through letters, via the web ([http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/CONTACT/)) or through letters to the editor of your local paper. See list of resource people in the United Methodist Church who can provide more information.

6. Urge Congress and the new Administration to make just, comprehensive Immigration Reform a legislative priority this year that unites families, respects the rights of all workers, puts human rights over enforcement as a priority for immigration policy, and enables undocumented immigrants to gain legal status. Go to [http://www.umc-gbcs.org/](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/) for information on how to contact your legislators.

7. At the state level, urge your state legislators to avoid legislation that penalizes undocumented immigrants or takes on federal authority in immigration enforcement. This includes opposing “287-G” agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).

8. Reach out to immigrants within our churches and in the community to explore how to support them, particularly through assistance to families impacted by raids, detentions and deportations.
INTERFAITH WORKER JUSTICE – WORKER CENTER NETWORK

Arizona
Interfaith Worker Justice of Arizona
331 E. Willetta
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(480) 522-4707 Rev. Trina Zelle
http://www.iwjarizona.com/

Arkansas
Interfaith Worker Justice Center
2200 West Sunset, Suite B-4 (In the Blake Business Center)
Springdale, AR 72762
(479) 750-8015 Rachel Townsend
http://www.nwawjc.org/

California
Young Workers United (San Francisco)
P.O. Box 15866
San Francisco, CA 94115-5866
(415) 621-4155 Dianne Enriquez
http://www.youngworkersunited.org

Illinois
Arise Chicago
1020 W. Bryn Mawr, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 769-6000 Adam Kader

Indiana
St. Joseph Valley Project - Workers’ Center
2015 W. Western Ave.
South Bend, IN 46619
(574) 287-3834 Gregor Koso

Michigan
Washtenaw County Workers’ Center
(No permanent address at this time)
Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 474-7107 Alicia Alvarez
http://workercenter.org/index.htm

Minnesota
Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
2604 East 22nd St
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 332-0663 Matt Glaude

Mississippi
MPOWER
383 South Fourth St.
Morton, MS 39117
(601) 732-1898 Marie Thompson
http://www.mpowercenter.org

New Jersey
New Labor
103 Bayard St., 2nd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 246-2900 Rich Cunningham
http://www.newlabor.net

New York
Capital District Workers’ Center
33 Central Ave.
Albany, NY 12210
(518) 482-5595 Gene Rodriguez
http://www.labor-religion.org/local_cd_wc.htm

Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) on New York
275 Seventh, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 343-1771 Rekha Eanni
http://www.rocnyc.org

North Carolina
Central Carolina Workers’ Center
Beloved Community Center, PO Box 875
Greensboro, NC 27406
(336) 200-0001 Marilyn Baird

Western NC Workers’ Center
PO Box 667
Morganton, NC 28680
(828) 432-5080 Francisco Risso

Ohio
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers’ Center
40 E. McMicken Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 621-5991 Don Sherman
http://www.cworkers.org

Tennessee
Memphis Workers’ Center
3035 Directors Row, B - 1207
Memphis, TN 38131
(901) 332-3585, Fax: (901) 332-3532 Rebekah Jordan
http://www.midsouthinterfaith.org

Texas
Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center
c/o Catholic Charities, 2906 Houston Ave.
Houston, TX 77009
(713) 862-8222 Annica Gorham
Workers’ Defense Project / Proyecto Defensa Laboral
PO Box 6423
Austin, TX 78762
(512) 391-2305 Cristina Tzintzun
http://www.workersdefense.org

Wisconsin
Madison Workers’ Right Center
2300 South Park St., Suite 6
Madison, WI 53713
(608) 255-0376 Patrick Hickey
http://www.workerjustice.org/wrc.html

Voces de la Frontera Workers’ Center
1027 S. 5th St
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 643-1620 x201 Cristina Newmann-Ortiz
http://www.vocesdelafrontera.net

This list is also available online at http://www.iwj.org/template/page.cfm?id=181
UMC Justice for Our Neighbors Legal Clinics information

Each Justice for Our Neighbors legal clinic is an opportunity for local congregations to "open their doors" with a warm and hospitable welcome for newcomers in their midst. JFON provides a place for community gathering and table fellowship where parishioners and newcomers may come together to seek peace and transformation in a troubled world.

**Church Based, Volunteer Led**

JFON provides free, professional legal services to immigrants in monthly clinics. This UMCOR program connects a national network of church-based, volunteer-led immigration clinics to asylum seekers and immigrants who need a helping hand to navigate the maze of rules and laws that affect their lives in the United States.

JFON represents the response of the United Methodist Church and its local congregations to the needs of immigrants seeking to reunify their families, secure immigration status, and enjoy the right to work.

The JFON model embraces the mandate of biblical hospitality. The program relies on United Methodist connectional relationships to bring together resources and commitment from local churches, districts, conferences, and UMCOR.

Trained and resourced by UMCOR’s national office, JFON volunteers advocate for just and compassionate immigration laws and public policy, networking with other advocacy groups where possible.

The JFON network is coordinated by a national staff in Silver Spring, MD. Some twenty clinic sites in nine annual conferences participate. JFON services are provided by qualified immigration attorneys.

**Getting involved…**

1. Learn more about JFON by visiting our website: http://justiceforourneighbors.org and / or watching a short video about JFON on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLLXhLTrAdE

2. Support your local JFON project by volunteering your time and energy or by becoming a donor. Visit http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/work/immigration/jfon/clinic-site-list/ to find a project near you.

3. If there is no JFON in your Annual Conference, consider starting one. Contact Alice Mar, JFON Program Manager for more information. AMar@gbgm-umc.org

4. Donate to the JFON Advance # 901285
Call Your Senators and Representative Today
Urge Them to Support and Co-Sponsor
The Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085, H.R. 2709)

Call 202-225-3121 and ask for each of your Senators and your Representative, and tell them:

Hi, my name is __________ and I’m from __________. As a United Methodist, I believe family is the bedrock of society. Please keep families together by supporting and co-sponsoring the Reuniting Families Act (S. 1085, HR 2709).

The Reuniting Families Act is a bill to help family members reunite in America in a timely manner. This bill would reform America’s family-based immigration system to end lengthy separations of loved ones, promote family stability and foster the economic growth that immigrant families have provided throughout our history. As a result of current long waits, many family members who apply for visas in the prime of their lives are not granted admission until they reach retirement age. The current system has not been updated in 20 years — it keeps spouses and children and their parents apart for years and even decades. Specifically, the bill would:

• **Recapture unused family-based and employment-based visas previously allocated by Congress which remain unused:** Unused and unclaimed visas from 1992 to 2007 would be placed back into the pool of current visas for families and employers to utilize, and unused visas in future fiscal years would “roll over” to the next year.

• **Allow green card holders to reunite with their spouses and minor children:** The bill classifies the children and spouses of lawful permanent residents as “immediate relatives.” This would allow lawful permanent residence spouses and children to immediately qualify for a visa.

• **Increase the per country limits of family and employment-based visas from 7% to 10%:** Right now, each country only has a 7% share of the total cap of visas that Congress allocates each year. Small countries and large countries get the same percentage under current law. Increasing each country’s percentage of visas would eliminate the absurdly long wait times for individuals to immigrate from large countries like China and India.

• **Allow widows and widowers to immigrate despite death of a petitioner:** Every year, a number of immigrants are deported because the U.S. citizen relative or lawful permanent resident relative who sponsored them has died before the government adjudicated their applications. The bill addresses the immigration-related hardships caused by these family tragedies by clarifying that the government should continue to process the applications of immigrants who are already in line to receive a family visa at the time of their sponsoring relative’s death.

• **Promote family unity by allowing more people to use the system:** The bill would also allow more people to use our family immigration system by giving the Attorney General more power to waive barriers for immigrants who have been present unlawfully in the past. Similar to other provisions in current law, this provision allows an already eligible individual to immigrate to the U.S. if he or she demonstrates hardship to a family member or eligibility for an immigrant visa.
United Methodist Women’s Immigrant Rights/Civil Rights Initiative

Steps for Action – April 2009

The major advocacy focus of UMW on immigrant/civil rights at the national level in 2009 is:

a) Urge President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just immigration reform; and

b) Urge Congress and the new Administration to make Comprehensive Immigration Reform a legislative priority this year that unites families, respects the rights of all workers, puts human rights over enforcement as a priority for immigration policy, and enables undocumented immigrants to gain legal status.

c) At the state level, we urge states to avoid legislation that penalizes undocumented immigrants or takes on federal authority in immigration enforcement. This includes:

• Opposing “287-G” agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).

• Encouraging municipalities to become “sanctuary” cities. This guarantees services like health care and public education without asking for documentation, without fear that a person’s status will be reported to Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

• Ensure that undocumented immigrants will continue to be able to obtain driver’s licenses, without questioning their immigration status. This is essential to guarantee public safety and to avoid a proliferation of unlicensed, unregulated drivers, as well as to enable immigrants to get to work.

What you can do:

1. Write to President Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano urging them to declare a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations until the broken immigration system is addressed through just Reform.

2. Visit your Congressional representatives to get to know the staff working on immigration, find out their views, and urge them to push for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

3. Let your state officials know you oppose state involvement in immigration enforcement, including “287-G” agreements between the Department of Homeland Security and local law enforcement which deputizes police as immigration agents. This has led to racial profiling and undermines public safety (people are less willing to report crimes).
4. Write letters to the editor to raise concerns about current immigration policy at the federal, state and/or local level; to call for a moratorium on raids, detentions and deportations; and to call for just immigration reform.

5. Reach out to immigrants within our churches and in the community to explore how to support them, particularly through assistance to families impacted by raids, detentions and deportations. Have a house gathering to watch the movie The Visitor (www.thevisitorfilm.com). A study and action guide by Active Voice is available on line at www.scribd.com/doc/6338125/The-Visitor-Discussion-Guide. Find out how you can visit immigrants in a local detention center.

6. Read new UMC Resolutions, Welcoming the Migrant to the US, #3281, p. 412; Global Migration and the Quest for Justice, #6028, p. 754

**Background:**

United Methodist Women have been actively engaged in an initiative on Immigrant Rights/Civil Rights since 2006. The initiative affirmed by the Women’s Division views immigrant rights as a racial justice concern that calls us to live out the Charter for Racial Justice both within the organization of United Methodist Women and in society. United Methodist women affirm United Methodist Church policy, which states that “To refuse to welcome migrants to this country and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the US is demonized…is complicity to sin.” [Welcoming the Migrant to the US, United Methodist General Conference 2008] United Methodist Women have held vigils to challenge ICE raids in Tennessee and to protest detentions in New York City; they have petitioned to support the right of education for children in detention; they have provided material support to families whose loved ones are in detention; they have advocated for just immigration reform with elected officials. In Iowa and Colorado they circulated petitions calling on elected officials to make this a welcoming nation for immigrants. They rallied for Immigrant and Civil rights in Ft. Worth at General Conference, and for the labor rights of immigrant workers in Houston. They have challenged anti-immigrant hate groups in local communities and advocated for the civil liberties of all immigrants.

In early 2009, United Methodist Women supported 17 “Family Unity Hearings” spearheaded by Congressman Gutierrez. The faith-based hearings enabled families to share stories with elected officials of how detentions and deportations are separating families and impacted citizens as well as new immigrants. United Methodist Women participated in some of the 170 prayer vigils held across the country in February led by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. UMW have lifted up immigration in Legislative Events, held educational events, attended seminars through the Seminar Program, and shared through the UMW online community.

United Methodist Women’s Immigrant/Civil Rights Initiative, April, 2009
Contact: Carol Barton, Community Action, 777 UN Plaza, 11th floor, New York, NY 10017; 212-682-3633; cbarton@gbgm-umc.org; www.umwmission.org (see quick link to “immigration” at bottom of home page); www.umwonline.org (join immigration community).
June 1 National Faith and Immigration Conference Call-In Day
June 1 is International Children’s Day, and so at 4 pm EST we will have a brief conference call where we will provide legislative updates on family immigration and a specific message in support of family immigration reform. Once the brief conference call is over, participants will call their Representative and Senators through the Capitol Hill switchboard, as well as other members in their local faith communities to make the same calls. We want to begin to “flood” House and Senate offices with calls in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

June 3 Campaign Launch and Summit Faith Caucusing Time in Washington DC 9-11:30
Key faith leaders from strategic states will be coming to attend the larger summit and during the first day we will be meeting together to hear what is happening in strategic states and sharing with one another our plans for future possibilities of engagement to help move comprehensive immigration reform in the fall. The Reform Immigration for America Summit will continue through June 5.

July 6 National Faith and Immigration Conference Call-In Day
As the United States celebrates independence on July 4, at 4 pm EST on the next Monday, we will have a brief conference call where we will offer legislative updates on immigration, specifically focusing on citizenship. We will discuss specific messaging in support of a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants. Once the brief conference call is over, participants will call their Representative and Senators through the Capitol Hill switchboard, as well as other members in their local faith communities to make the same calls. On both call-in days, emphasis will be given to developing a strategy around creating local networks to call in and make the faith voice heard on Capitol Hill.

Summer Made in LA screenings
A number of the groups within the IIC are encouraging their local groups/congregations to host community screenings of the film to help spread awareness and mobilize advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform.

August-September 7 Month of Action
The focus is to mobilize faith communities in strategic states and districts to have contact with Members of Congress and urge their support for comprehensive immigration reform in the fall. The means of Member contact will vary, based on what the local faith communities feel is most effective and appropriate for their context:

• Host a prayer vigil and invite your Member of Congress
• Neighbor to neighbor in-district lobby visit
• Invite your Member of Congress to a potluck/town hall meeting called, Breaking Bread and Barriers, hosted by several congregations, with the purpose of having Congressional Representatives share their stance on comprehensive immigration reform, answer questions, and for the community to highlight positive contributions of immigrants.

Resources for how to put together each of these events will be sent to interested faith communities.
UMC For Further Study
Welcoming the Migrant to the United States
The United Methodist Church 2008 Book of Resolutions
Adopted by General Conference on May 1, 2008

The Historical Context

From the dawn of creation human beings have migrated across the earth. The history of the United States is a migration narrative of families and individuals seeking safety, economic betterment, and freedom of religious and cultural expression. The reasons for those who immigrated willingly are numerous and varied depending on the context, but what all immigrants share is the promise of what they believe lies in another land other than their own. Migrants today continue to travel to North America because of the effects of globalization, dislocation, economic scarcity, persecution, and other reasons.

The arrival of migrants to the United States from so many parts of the world has also meant that there is a diversity of cultures and worldviews. The diversity of cultures, worldviews, and languages has placed an enormous strain upon migrants. To effectively deal with this trauma and ease the process of acculturation, migrants should be encouraged to preserve strong cultural and familial ties to their culture of origin.

The arrival of new cultures has also felt threatening to U.S. citizens and this has too often resulted in conflict and even violence. Throughout the history of the United States, the most recently-arrived group of migrants has often been a target of racism, marginalization, and violence. We regret any and all violence committed against migrants in the past and we resolve, as followers of Jesus, to work to eliminate racism and violence directed towards newly arriving migrants to the United States.

The Biblical and Theological Context

Reflecting upon the Scriptures, we are reminded that United Methodists are a global church. In the United States, we may be descendents of economic immigrants or forced migrants, or we may have recently arrived in the U.S. We may have formal documents proving U.S. citizenship, or we may be undocumented. Regardless of legal status or nationality, we are all connected through Christ to one another. Paul reminds us that when “one member suffers, all members suffer” as well (1 Corinthians 12:26). The solidarity we share through Christ eliminates the boundaries and barriers which exclude and isolate. Therefore, the sojourners we are called to love are our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers, our sons and daughters; indeed, they are us.

Throughout Scripture the people of God are called to love sojourners in our midst, treating them “as the citizen among you” and loving them as we do ourselves (Leviticus 19:33-34). Love for the sojourner is birthed out of the shared experience the Israelites had as a people in sojourn searching for the Promised Land. The attitudes and actions required of God’s people were to emanate from the reflection of their liberation from slavery by God’s hand. As the people of God were liberated from oppression, they too were charged to be instruments of redemption in the lives of the most vulnerable in their
midst – the sojourner (Exodus 22:21, 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19, 16:12, 24:18, 24:22).

In the New Testament Jesus’ life begins as a refugee to Africa when he and his family flee to Egypt to escape Herod’s infanticide (Matthew 2:13-18). Jesus fully identifies with the sojourner to the point that to welcome the sojourner is to welcome Jesus himself (Matthew 25:35). Jesus teaches us to show special concern for the poor and oppressed who come to our land seeking survival and peace.

In Scripture, Jesus continually manifests compassion for the vulnerable and the poor. Jesus incarnated hospitality as he welcomed people and ministered to their greatest need. Jesus’ presence on earth initiated the Kingdom reality of a new social order based on love, grace, justice, inclusion, mercy, and egalitarianism, which was meant to replace the old order, characterized by nepotism, racism, classism, sexism, and exclusion. The broken immigration system in the United States and the xenophobic responses to migrants reflect the former social order. The calling of the people of God is to advocate for the creation of a new immigration system that reflects Jesus’ beloved community.

The fear and anguish so many migrants in the United States live under are due to federal raids, indefinite detention, and deportations which tear apart families and create an atmosphere of panic. Millions of immigrants are denied legal entry to the U.S. due to quotas and race and class barriers, even as employers seek their labor. U.S. policies, as well as economic and political conditions in their home countries, often force migrants to leave their homes. With the legal avenues closed, immigrants who come in order to support their families must live in the shadows and in intense exploitation and fear. In the face of these unjust laws and the systematic deportation of migrants instituted by the Department of Homeland Security, God’s people must stand in solidarity with the migrants in our midst.

In Scripture, sojourners are also identified as heralds or messengers bringing good news. This is seen in many stories of the Bible, including:

- Abraham who welcomed three visitors and then was promised a child even though Sarah was past the age of bearing children (Genesis 18:1-11),
- Rahab who hid the spies from Israel and whose family was ultimately spared (Joshua 2:1-16),
- the widow at Zarephath who gave Elijah her last meal and received food and ultimately healing for her dying son (1 Kings 17:7-24), and
- Zaccheus who, upon welcoming Jesus into his home, promised to share half his possessions with the poor and repay those he stole from four times the amount owed. As Jesus entered Zaccheus’ home he proclaimed that salvation had come to his house (Luke 19:1-10).

All of these stories give evidence to the words of the writer of Hebrews who advises the listeners to “not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (13:2). God’s people are called to welcome the sojourner not only because of God’s commands to do so, but because God’s people need to hear the good news of the gospel incarnated in their stories and in their lives.
Welcoming the sojourner is so vital to the expression of Christian faith that to engage in this form of hospitality is to participate in our own salvation.

There is theologically and historically an implied nature of mutuality in migration. Both the migrant and the native are meant to benefit from migration. Welcoming the migrant is not only an act of mission, it is an opportunity to receive God’s grace. The globalization of international economies and the continuing movement of migrants have created an increasingly diversified U.S. population and should be reflected in United Methodist congregations and national church leadership.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church understands that at the center of Christian faithfulness to Scripture is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner. We call upon all United Methodist churches to welcome newly arriving migrants in their communities, to love them as we do ourselves, to treat them as one of our native-born, to see in them the presence of the incarnated Jesus, and to show hospitality to the migrants in our midst believing that through their presence we are receiving the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Current Context

Immigration to the United States has changed in the last twenty years largely because the world has changed. Globalization has lessened the geographical distance between the poor and affluent, but yet, it has also greatly exacerbated the chasm between those with access to resources and those denied that same access. Vast inequities between the global north and south are a continuing source of conflict and a draw of resources and people from the south to north. Globalization has localized issues which used to be hidden or detached by geographical boundaries, but has not created forms of accountability or mediated the necessity of cross-cultural reconciliation between those victimized by international economic policies and those who benefit from them. Global media enable the poor of the global south to see the lifestyles of the affluent in the global north, while rarely seeing the intense poverty that also exists there. This creates both tensions and a draw to attain that same lifestyle.

Although unregulated trade and investment have economically benefited some, many more have been sentenced to a lifetime of poverty and marginalization. In poorer countries natural resources have been removed by transnational corporations which have no stake in the continuing welfare of the local people, the enhancement of their cultural traditions, or their ecological environment. The lack of these resources often leads to a drastic reduction in jobs, wages, and labor protections. Public social benefits are eliminated and the nation sinks deeper into debt as it turns to such institutions as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. As the affluent North continues to expand its wealth, this expansion occurs at the expense of the impoverished South. Every region in the world is affected in some way by the global economic divide. Yet, while money and products easily flow across borders, the movement of people who have been forced to migrate because of intolerable economic conditions is increasingly restricted.
When those, whose livelihoods have been eradicated in favor of corporate globalization, attempt to sojourn to North America to work and provide for their families, they receive a mixed message that is confusing and ultimately oppressive. Immigrants have moved into areas of the United States where there are economic opportunities that U.S. citizens have largely ignored. Employers often prefer undocumented workers in order to increase profit margins. Until all jobs provide a livable wage employers will be able to pit U.S. citizens against undocumented workers in a downward spiral that undermines the labor rights for all.

Because the U.S. immigration system has not kept up with the changing pace of migration and the U.S. economy, the population of undocumented migrants has grown dramatically. Yet, the growing population of undocumented migrants has not yet been harmful to most U.S. workers because they are not competing for the same jobs. While the United States labor force is growing older and more educated, the need for unskilled workers remains strong. The Migration Policy Institute reports that the economic necessities for repairing the immigration system are clear as they predict by 2030, immigrant workers will comprise between one-third and one-half of the U.S. labor force. Testifying before the Senate Committee on Aging in 2003, then-Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, called for increased numbers of migrants to sustain an aging labor force and a continued economic vacuum among low-skilled workers.

Although the economic necessity of migrant workers is clear, any immigration or economic system which calls for a perpetual class of second class workers cannot be supported by people of faith. Undocumented immigrants are exploited for their labor and economic contribution to the United States. They are denied their rights to collectively bargain for livable wages and safe working conditions, and they are shut out of access to the social services of which they support through their difficult labor. Any reform of the immigration system must also allow for the full protections of all workers which includes the opportunity to gain legal status for all migrants.

Even though migrants have proven a tremendous benefit to the United States’ economy, migrants have been systematically excluded from receiving any benefits. Excluding access to health care promotes an increase in the demand on emergency rooms to provide that daily care or it forces migrants who are fearful to seek medical care to live in continued pain and suffering. The United States benefits from migrant labor, but migrants have been forced to live in the shadows, unable to fully contribute or receive appropriate care.

Immigration: A Human Rights Issue

Since 9/11 the debate surrounding immigration has unfortunately been framed as an issue of national security. All of this emphasis on border security has not stemmed the flow of undocumented migration even though the United States has poured millions of dollars into militarizing the border.
The use of local law enforcement as immigration agents should be stopped as well. When local law enforcement officials engage in immigration enforcement, migrants are often unwilling to report crimes and are forced to live in situations where they are exploited, abused, and victimized.

All nations have the right to secure their borders, but the primary concern for Christians should be the welfare of immigrants. Between 1995 and 2004 more than 2,640 migrants have died crossing the border between the United States and Mexico, and since 2004 more than one migrant has died per day.³

Raids of workplaces, homes and other social places have often violated the civil liberties of migrants. Migrants should be given due process and access to adequate legal representation. Due to these raids and the ensuing indefinite detentions and deportations that follow them, families have been ripped apart and the migrant community has been forced to live in a constant state of fear.

To refuse to welcome migrants to this country and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the United States is demonized by members of Congress and the media, is complicity to sin.

A Call to Action

The United Methodist Church affirms the worth, dignity and inherent value and rights of every person regardless of their nationality or legal status. United Methodist churches throughout the United States are urged to build bridges with migrants in their local communities, to learn from them, celebrate their presence in the United States and recognize and appreciate the contributions in all areas of life that migrants bring. We call upon all United Methodist churches to engage in the following:

• Advocate for legislation that will uphold the civil and human rights of all migrants in the United States and provide an opportunity to attain legal status for all undocumented migrants for those currently in the United States as well as for those arriving in the future.
• Begin English as a Second Language classes as a part of ministry to migrant communities and advocate for federal and state support of expanded ESL classes.
• Denounce and oppose the rise of xenophobic, racist, and violent reactions against migrants in the United States, and to support all efforts to build relationships between people, instead of building walls, between diverse ethnicities and cultures.
• Oppose the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico, which the communities of both sides of the border are in opposition to.
• Call the United States government to immediately cease all arrests, detainment, and deportations of undocumented immigrants, including children, solely based upon their immigration status until a fair and comprehensive immigration reform is passed.
• Provide wherever possible pastoral care and crisis intervention to refugees and newly arrived migrants, identifying and responding compassionately to their spiritual, material, and legal needs.
• Work with civic and legal organizations to support migrant communities affected by harsh immigration laws and over-reaching national security measures.
• Support those churches that prayerfully choose to offer sanctuary to undocumented migrants facing deportation.
• Continue the work of the Immigration Task Force composed of staff from the general boards and agencies, representatives of the Council of Bishops, and members of caucuses and national plans that was created by the resolution, *Opposition to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Resolution Act* (2004 Book of Resolutions, #118).

Further, The United Methodist Church is urged to advocate for the comprehensive reform of the U.S. immigration system. Any legislation to reform the U.S. immigration system must affirm the worth, dignity and inherent value and rights of migrants, and must also include:

• An opportunity for legal status for all undocumented migrants. Any pathway created for undocumented migrants should have minimal obstacles and those requirements should not be designed to preclude migrants from eligibility for legalization.
• Clearing the backlogs and reunifying families separated by migration or detention.
• An increase in the number of visas for short-term workers to come into the United States to work in a safe, legal, and orderly way. Opportunities for legalization should be available for those who wish to remain permanently.
• The protections of all workers who come to stay for a certain period of time as well as for those who stay permanently. The right to bargain for higher wages, to protest against poor working conditions, and to preserve their human rights should be maintained by all workers, documented and undocumented alike.
• Elimination of privately-operated detention centers, which are not regulated by the federal or state governments.4
• Elimination of indefinite detention, incarceration of children, and the expanding prison population, which also benefits privately-owned detention centers and prisons.
• Preservation of due process and access to courts and to adequate legal representation for all migrants regardless of legal status.

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In the 2004 Book of Resolutions, “Prison Industrial Complex,” it states that “Many states where private prisons are now operating have no laws regulating their operations (including health, safety, security, legal access for prisoners, and disciplinary policies). Many private prisons are under no obligation to ensure access to information about prisoners held in them or how they are classified, and often regard this as proprietary information.”
Welcoming the Migrant to the U.S. – Discussion Questions

1. *Throughout the history of the United States, the most recently-arrived group of migrants has often been a target of racism, marginalization, and violence. We regret any and all violence committed against migrants in the past and we resolve, as followers of Jesus, to work to eliminate racism and violence directed towards newly arriving migrants to the United States.*

   The resolution views treatment of immigrants as a racial justice issue. Share your own experiences—locally or in the media—of how racism is a factor in the portrayal and treatment of immigrants in the US and in our church today. What are some ways we can address this in our own communities?

2. *Reflecting upon the Scriptures, we are reminded that United Methodists are a global church. In the United States, we may be descendants of economic immigrants or forced migrants, or we may have recently arrived in the U.S. We may have formal documents proving U.S. citizenship, or we may be undocumented. Regardless of legal status or nationality, we are all connected through Christ to one another...The sojourners we are called to love are our brothers and sisters...indeed, they are us.*

   We are reminded that United Methodists are in both migrant sending and receiving countries, and immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are members of our church. While migrants have been made to be the “other”, this reminds us that they are “us”—part of one family. How does this challenge dominant views of immigrants? How does it challenge our own practices as individuals and as the church?

3. *Millions of immigrants are denied legal entry to the U.S. due to quotas and race and class barriers, even as employers seek their labor. U.S. policies, as well as economic and political conditions in their home countries, often force migrants to leave their homes. With the legal avenues closed, immigrants who come in order to support their families must live in the shadows and in intense exploitation and fear. In the face of these unjust laws and the systematic deportation of migrants instituted by the Department of Homeland Security, God’s people must stand in solidarity with the migrants in our midst.*

   A common question that US citizens ask is “why don’t immigrants obey the laws by coming in legally?” As the resolution notes, there is a push of precarious economic and political conditions at home, and a pull of US employers seeking labor for millions of migrants, yet very few slots for legal entry (often with 20 year waits). If we are called to reach out to migrants in our midst, what will it take to help them “come out of the shadows” and share the same rights as US citizens? Why do you think this is such a contentious issue?
4. Any immigration or economic system which calls for a perpetual class of second class workers cannot be supported by people of faith. Immigrants are exploited for their labor and economic contribution to the United States, and are being intentionally marginalized, denied their rights to collectively bargain for livable wages and safe working conditions, and shut out of equal access to the social services of which they support through their difficult labor. Any reform of the immigration system must also allow for the full protections of all workers which includes equal access to gain legal status for all migrants.

How does the film “Made in L.A.” help to illustrate this point, that a central aspect of migration is the exploitation of migrant labor? How are migrants themselves organizing for labor rights, and what role can others play as allies?

5. Since 9/11 the debate surrounding immigration has unfortunately been framed as an issue of national security. All of this emphasis on border security has not stemmed the flow of undocumented migration even though the US has poured millions of dollars into militarizing the border...All nations have the right to secure their borders, but the primary concern for Christians should be the welfare of immigrants.

Much of the rationale for an increase in policing, border security, raids and deportations is that of National Security. Yet the majority of immigrants are not criminals and the millions spent on enforcement has not impacted flows of migrants. How would policy differ if viewed from the lens of human rights for all, rather than protection of “us” from “them?” How does our faith challenge us in this context?

6. Read through “A Call to Action” at the end of the resolution.

What are actions that you can do as an individual, a congregation, and within the larger community? What is a first step your congregation can take towards action?

Regarding immigration legislation, what are some of the principles affirmed by the United Methodist Church regarding any new federal immigration policy? How do these compare with current proposals or debates in the media? Discuss your reactions to these principles. Where do they challenge you? What are the tensions between Gospel mandates and our lived realities? How can we continue to wrestle with these tensions?
Global Migration and the Quest for Justice

“Ways must be found to share more equitably the resources of the world.”

Social Principles, The United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church has frequently addressed general and specific topics related to migration. The Social Principles affirm:
1). “We commit ourselves as a Church to the achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community.” (64)
2). “In order to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and other necessities, ways must be found to share more equitably the resources of the world.” (58).
3). “We advocate for the rights of all migrants and applaud their efforts toward responsibility self-organization and self-determination.”(163F)

Human migration is as old as human history. Individuals, families, tribes, and nations have been on move since the days of Abraham and Sarah and before. Throughout the centuries, political and economic factors, including wars; health and environmental challenges; and racism, xenophobia, and religious discrimination have at times uprooted people and at others lured them to new venues across continents and oceans as well as national and ethnic boundaries.

Today, migration is at once a critical international issue and a necessary option for millions of human beings. Some people seek to move; others have no alternatives. Contemporary migration involves the linked realities of abundance and poverty and racial/ethnic/religious identities and exclusion. The current global economic system reflects an expectation many people will live in poverty, or have their nations torn by conflict, so that others may live in abundance. That many people will resist poverty and war through migration is an ancient and modern fact of human existence. As a consequence, elaborate national and international systems of containment and classification based on national origin have been developed over the past quarter-century with regard to migrants.

Global migration as a factor in the quest for justice is of major concern to The United Methodist Church as a denomination that is global in its vision, mission, and ministries.

I. Contemporary Migrants

Four categories of contemporary migrants can be delineated:
Refugees—persons outside of their country of origin who are unable or unwilling to return for fear of persecution based on race, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation or opinion; official “refugees” are so recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which is charged by the international community to oversee service to, and protection of, refugees.

Asylum seekers—a type of refugee, persons who have left their homeland to petition for refuge in the country to which they have fled; asylum seekers must be so recognized by the countries whose protection they seek.

In 2007, recognized refugees and asylum seekers totaled 13.9 million.

Internally displaced persons—those who are displaced within their own country because of military, economic, and social upheaval, and natural disasters such as famine, earthquake and flood; they are generally not protected by the international community, but must depend primarily for protection and assistance primarily on their country of residence, which may be implicit in the cause of displacement. In 2007, such persons numbered 24.5 million.

Economic migrants—are people who move from one country to another to find work. Most frequently they seek to flee from poverty to economic opportunity, and often permanently relocated so they may feed their families. Some are allowed into more affluent nations as immigrants; some enter without documentation and may be welcomed in times of labor shortages and deported in times of economic downturn or public disapproval. Such migrants are among the most vulnerable in any society; many are women and children who become the objects of abuse and brutality. One subcategory in this classification consists of migrant workers, people who move from place to place, often with the agricultural cycle, to find employment. Some return on periodic or eventual permanent basis to their homelands; others make domestic and other ties in places of employment and wish to remain. The number of current economic migrants is difficult to calculate. Some estimates run as high as 100 million globally, with large numbers in the affluent regions of North America and Europe.

II. A Context of Migration

Virtually all groups of today’s migrants and refugees are battered by the divide between the rich and the poor, a divide rooted in nineteenth and twentieth century colonialism and directly caused by rapid corporate globalization in agriculture, industry, and commerce. Currently, slightly more than 10% of the world’s population consumes 85% of the world’s wealth while the rest make do with just 15% of that wealth. For example, agricultural subsidization in Europe and the United States results in the dumping of commodities in the poor countries of the global South, resulting in the disruption of family farming and unemployment. Trade policies and arms deals further enrich the rich and undercut economies in the global South without providing new contexts for prosperity or hope. These realities, along with armed conflict, environmental spoilage and natural disasters force people to find new homes within their own countries or across national borders. Every region of the world is affected in some way by the global economic divide.

Yet, while money and products easily flow across borders, the movement of people is increasingly restricted, leading to concentrations of the poor along borders and, often, to the building of literal and figurative walls of exclusion, notably around the rich nations of the
northern hemisphere and the affluent enclaves in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific. While the legal and physical walls seek to exclude flows of undocumented migrants, in fact, there is growing demand in wealthier nations for cheap labor. Millions of migrants do enter—through formal guest worker programs or through informal business networks that actively seek undocumented workers while maintaining them in an exploitative non-citizen underclass. Many of those who are shut out or who migrate without legal status are at the bottom of racial, ethnic and caste hierarchies. They are often poor women and children. On either side of the divide, families are relegated to intense human suffering, inadequate nutrition and health service, lack of educational opportunities, and the reverberating, debilitating experience of oppression. Ironically, and horribly, with regard to economic migrants, the rich say, “Come in, do our dirty work at low wages, and then go away.” Significant percentages of the work force are migrants in affluent countries, with the figure exceeding more than 50 percent in parts of the Middle East. Such “guest workers” enjoy limited civil and human rights.

The global South is particularly concerned with the migration of people from rural to urban areas and with the loss of young generations to other countries, the departures dictated either by economic need or wooing by affluent societies seeking to fill jobs with cheap labor. Such émigrés often do not want to leave; they may feel pressured by promises of education, jobs, and economic security for themselves and their families. They become entrapped in unjust global systems that drain the resources of poor, southern countries for the benefit of the affluent societies of the global North.

III. Biblical Perspectives: Justice and Shared Resources

Attitudes toward and treatment of migrants are usually conditioned today, even within the church, by nation-state considerations expressed in the language of “us” and “them”—or “we” the homefolks and “they” the intruder/alien. A beneficent attitude sometimes prevails: “‘We’ will allow X number of ‘them’ to come among ‘us’ provided they acknowledge our generosity and become like us; so long, of course, as they do not threaten our comfort.”

There are more biblically and theologically sound perspectives. In the biblical understanding, it is not about us and them, but about one people of God, called to seek justice and share equitably, at the very core of our spiritual and physical survival.

The Prophet Isaiah put the matter in context and posed the daunting question: “You serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers…Such fasting that you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house…” (Isaiah 58: 3-7) Not only does God’s understanding of faithfulness entail the achievement of justice, but for the comfortable, the promise of healing and salvation depends on that action. It was only when the people turned from false religiosity to operative justice that they would receive the promise of spiritual wholeness. “Then, the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places…you shall be like a watered garden…whose waters never fail.” (Isaiah 58:10-11).

The Hebrew Scriptures contains many references to “strangers” and “sojourners” among the
people of Israel and to provisions for treatment that reflect a tribal framework that had stipulated rules for hospitality and also limits on the outsiders. However, the Books of the Law, and to an even greater extent in the prophetic literature, concern for the stranger focuses on justice and the sharing of resources that flow from the bounty of God. Ezekiel anticipated a time when foreigners would share with the ancient Jewish nation all the blessings of the land, which was understood to belong to God alone (Leviticus 25:23). In a real sense, the ancient scriptures understand both the people of Israel and sojourners to be aliens since the people of Israel had been sojourners in Egypt. God’s providence for Israel extends to others (Psalm 146:9; Malachi 2:5), and everything, and everyone, belongs to God (Psalm 24:1-2).

The breadth of God’s love permeates the New Testament; that love incorporates faith community and goes beyond it. This is clearly emphasized in a short passage in I Thessalonians (3:12), where St. Paul prays that God will provide the grace for Christians to “abound in love for one another, and for all (people).”

Christians do not approach the issue of migration from the perspective of tribe or nation, but from within a faith community of love and welcome, a community that teaches and expects hospitality to the poor, the homeless, and the oppressed. The Christian community not only welcomes and embraces migrants but can be led by them toward clearer understandings of justice and hospitality. Furthermore, many migrants in many parts of the world today are themselves members of the Christian community, brothers and sisters of the same baptism, gathered around the same sacramental table. And people beyond the Christian community deserve no less hospitality than Christians extend to themselves.

United Methodists should harbor no doubt about their responsibility to all those who live here on the earth, especially the poor, the homeless, and the mistreated. John Wesley’s concern for the poor and outcast was constant and extended far beyond acts of charity. He worked for just systems in which persons could with dignity stand on their own feet. Wesley advocated just relationships within the social order. When some have great abundance while others are homeless and hungry, the biblical task is not merely to help those in need, but to seek justice—to shift resources and opportunity so that all are at the table, all are fed, all experience the abundance of God’s love both physically and spiritually.

IV. Critical Issues Relating to Migration Today

United Methodists and all Christians face numerous critical situations, causes, and effects relating to migration today, especially in regard to war and economic systems and policies that perpetuate poverty. As a global, denomination, The United Methodist Church experiences the dilemmas of nations that both “send” and “receive” migrants. Citizens and undocumented immigrants are within the church’s membership, as are employers and migrant workers, police and detainees, and affluent and poor families. The United Methodist family is a microcosm of migrant issues, a church that through God’s grace seeks to respond to the needs of the most physically vulnerable and also address the spiritual needs of the privileged.

The following are among the critical issues demanding attention:
1). The volume of refugees, asylum seekers, and persons displaced within their own countries is
growing, as are the numbers of economic migrants with and without documentation.

2). Wealthy nations, especially those with decreasing populations, are increasingly dependent upon migrants to maintain their current economies. They seek both high skilled professionals and low wage workers for jobs in construction, health care, agriculture, meat packing, and domestic service. The “receiving” nations or areas on a world scale include Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, the United States and some countries of the Middle East (such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon). Regional migration, often in the form of contract labor, is common in Brazil, Hong Kong, Lebanon, South Africa, and South Korea and other nations.

3). The critical loss of skilled workers and potential leaders in “sending” countries undermines the future economic and social advancement of those societies. Doctors from poorer nations can often earn more in the U.S. as a nurse than as a physician in their country of origin. The “brain drain,” often deliberately encouraged by rich countries for their own benefit, affects teachers, engineers, medical personnel, researchers, and technicians.

4). Old wars and territorial occupations have left a critical migration crisis and new wars add to the problem. This can be illustrated in the Middle East where many Palestinians remain as refugees more than a half century since they lost their homes in Israel. In recent years, millions of Iraqis have fled their country, adding to displaced population of the greater Middle East.

5). The passage of stricter enforcement of anti-immigrant legislation and the building of exclusionary walls, often in response to increased migration, intensifies cultural tensions, marked by racial, class, and religious “backlash.” Restrictive policies also intensify migrant resistance based on fear of arrest and deportation, substandard wages, physical and mental abuse, and even death for crossing a border. Migrants fall prey to trafficking for economic or sexual purposes and sometimes become virtual slaves in their new place of residence.

6). The increasing percentage of migrant women, who now make up half of the international migrant population and as much as 70 to 80 percent in some countries. Many of these women are domestic workers, who may raise other peoples’ children while being separated from their own. Some women and girls who migrant are subjected to physical and sexual abuse and fear reprisals if they complain.

7). Migration today divides families across generations. Filipino contract workers in Saudi Arabia may serve in those countries for their entire careers, and then watch their children step into their roles as they retire. Families are also divided by deportation of undocumented parents, while children hold citizenship.

8) Remittances (sending “home” the paycheck) have become major sources of financing for poor countries; revenues that threaten to undercut aid assistance from rich nations. The monies migrants send home is massive, an estimated $230 billion in 2005. Some nations, including the Philippines or El Salvador, depend on remittances to support the financial system. In an effort to escape responsibility for the sharing of resources, some officials in the global North tout remittances as replacements for development aid. This attitude violates the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals and other United Nations accords. Through international instruments, northern nations have set the goal of providing 0.7% of their gross national product in development aid to poor nations, as well to cancel some debt and alter trade policies in ways that benefit poor nations.

V. Response of the Church

The United Methodist Church commits itself to:
1). Provide real help for refugees, asylees and migrants.
2). Engage in strong, coordinated advocacy on migration issues and on behalf of actions that overcome poverty, war and other causes leading to the displacement and marginalization of people.
3). Organize through institutional channels and prepare educational resources for the achievement of these objectives.

Assistance includes:
1). Relief to refugees and displaced persons around the world, including the resettlement, when possible, of refugees through congregations and through economic development programs for both those who permanently resettle and those who may return to homelands, this work to be coordinated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief in collaboration with all other levels and organizations of the church;
2). Congregational and annual conference programs that humanely respond to migrants within their borders--defending their human rights, advancing just immigration policies by national governments, and tending to their spiritual, material, and legal needs as required, with the General Boards of Global Ministries and Church and Society, in collaboration with other general agencies, responsible for resource materials to help in equipping conferences and congregations for these ministries;
3). Education of church members and communities on the causes and realities of migration, including international treaty commitments, the issues of economic and environmental justice, and the obstacles to a just, peaceable world created by anti-immigrant racism and xenophobia;
4). Building bridges between diverse races, ethnicities, religions and cultures, opposing violence against and abuse of migrants;
5). Work with civic and legal organizations to help communities to alleviate social conditions caused by harsh immigration laws and heavy-handed national security measures; and
6). Recognizing the right of sanctuary in any United Methodist local church for migrants subject to detention or deportation by government security forces.

Advocacy includes promotion of:
1). Just and equitable trade and development policies that support human rights and counteract the root causes of migration such as war and militarization, environment spoilage, and corporate greed;
2). Engagement with other Christian and religious organizations in North-South dialogues, study of international economic policies, and joint action;
3). Protection for uprooted women and children from all forms of violence and abuse, including full legal protection of children in situations of armed conflict;
4). Unification of families divided by borders and legal status wherever this occurs;
5). Denunciation of xenophobic and racist reactions against newcomers;
6). Defense of civil liberties regardless of the legal status of persons;
7). Abolishment of governmental anti-terrorism policies and practices that criminalize or profile refugees and immigrants as threats to national security; and
8). Adoption by all nations of the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and their Families, and mobilize to promote compliance with the terms of the convention.
Institutional Organization includes:
Continuation of a United Methodist Task Force on Immigration to lead the church in a prophetic response to refugee and migrant issues by interpreting official policy in light of current realities, coordinating vision, analysis, education and action. Said task force will be convened by two bishops designated by the Council of Bishops, organized and staffed by the General Boards of Church and Society and Global Ministries, and composed of representatives from all appropriate general agencies (GCORR, GBOD, GCFA and others), as well as persons from jurisdictions, central conferences, annual conferences, partner churches, denominational ethnic/racial caucuses, and ethnic and language ministry plans as situations dictate. General agencies will each bear the cost of their participation in the task force and those agencies may underwrite the costs of non-agency participation as needs require and resources permit.
Global Migration and the Quest for Justice

Study Questions:

1. This 2008 General Conference resolution points to systemic causes of migration linked to economic and political policies that intensify divisions of “abundance and poverty and racial/ethnic/religious identities and exclusion. The current global economic system reflects an expectation that many people will live in poverty, or have their nations torn by conflict, so that others may live in abundance.” Migration is most often driven by a “global economic divide.” When people move in response to poverty and war, systems and walls are erected to contain, classify and exclude.

Where do you see this happening in the world? Are you familiar with US or other governmental policies that affect migration from Global South to Global North? How does this challenge us to address economic and political policies, as well as immigration policy, in seeking solutions?

2. The resolution describes a global labor system where wealthy nations (US, Europe, Japan…) have a growing demand for cheap labor, often met through exploitative guest worker programs or by permitting undocumented workers to hold jobs while relegating them in a “non-citizen underclass” denies civil and human rights. Race, class and gender are all factors in the global labor hierarchy. “The rich say, “Come in, do our dirty work at low wages, and then go away.”

How does the film “Made in LA” reflect this global division of labor? What race, class and gender factors are present here? How are economic migrants such as the women in the film responding to this reality? In what other parts of the world do you see this labor hierarchy in place? For those with the security of legal status (citizens, residents), what are the moral challenges in terms of becoming allies of exploitation?

3. “Attitudes toward migrants are usually conditioned today, even within the church, by nation-state considerations expressed in the language of ‘us’ and ‘them’—or ‘we’ the home folks and ‘they’ the intruder/alien. A beneficent attitude sometimes prevails: ‘We’ will allow x number of ‘them’ to come among ‘us’ provided they acknowledge our generosity and become like us; so long, of course, as they do not threaten our comfort.’ In the biblical understanding, it is not about us and them, but about one people of God, called to seek justice and share equitably, at the very core of our spiritual and physical survival…For the comfortable, the promise of healing and salvation depends on (action for justice)...Christians do not approach the issue of migration from the perspective of tribe or nation, but from within a faith community of love and welcome…” While the Hebrew Testament speaks in the framework of a tribe (the Israelites) with the mandate to “welcome the stranger”, Christ calls us as Christians to drop barriers of tribe and nation and to embrace all as children of God.
How does this shift the predominant theology around migration? What are the demands for us as Christians who have national allegiances and identities yet are members of a global church that equally values all God’s people? Think about current immigration policies in the US: how would they look different from within this biblical starting point?

4. “When some have great abundance while others are homeless and hungry, the biblical task is not merely to help those in need, but to seek justice—to shift resources and opportunity so that all are at the table, all are fed, all experience the abundance of God’s love both physically and spiritually.”

What are the implications of a more equal distribution of the world’s resources? What policies may be needed to address the gap in wealth between North and South? What are the moral implications of the fact that the US consumes 85 per cent of the world’s wealth? In what ways might the Holy Spirit empower us to overcome fears around material security, so we can reach out to others in love?
UMC Task Force Information
United Methodist Task Force on Immigration

Council of Bishops
- Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, Desert Southwest Area, chair
- Bishop John Innis, Liberia Annual Conference
- Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, Germany Central Conference
- Bishop Julius C. Trimble, Iowa Area

General Board of Church and Society
General Board of Discipleship
General Board of Global Ministries
General Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns
General Commission on Finance and Administration
General Commission on Religion and Race
United Methodist Committee on Relief
United Methodist Communications
United Methodist Women
Black Methodists for Church Renewal
Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans, MARCHA
Methodist Federation for Social Action, MFSA
National Hispanic Plan
Native American International Caucus, NAIC
National Federation of Asian American United Methodists, NFAAUM
Pacific Islanders National Caucus United Methodist, PINCUM
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