

Evangelical Statement of Principles for Immigration Reform (2012)

Our national immigration laws have created a moral, economic and political crisis in America. Initiatives to remedy this crisis have led to polarization and name calling in which opponents have misrepresented each other's positions as open borders and amnesty versus deportations of millions. This false choice has led to an unacceptable political stalemate at the federal level at a tragic human cost.

As evangelical Christian leaders, we call for a bipartisan solution on immigration that:

- **Respects** the God-given dignity of every person
- **Protects** the unity of the immediate family
- **Respects** the rule of law
- **Guarantees** secure national borders
- **Ensures** fairness to taxpayers
- **Establishes** a path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents

We urge our nation's leaders to work together with the American people to pass immigration reform that embodies these key principles and that will make our nation proud.

I Was a Stranger Challenge Challenge

"I read verse after verse about how God desired his followers to treat the foreigners in their midst. How had I not noticed all these passages before? The single thought that kept swirling in my mind was, 'Immigrants matter to God.'" -Bill Hybels, Senior Pastor, Willow Creek Community Church

At the heart of why evangelical Christians believe we should love, welcome, and seek justice for immigrants is our commitment to the authority of Scripture over every aspect of our lives. The Bible speaks clearly and repeatedly to God's concern for the immigrant, guiding the Christ-follower toward principles that we believe should inform both the interpersonal ways that we interact with our immigrant neighbors and the public policies that we support.

However, in a time when immigration has become a polarizing political issue, most Protestant Christians (91%, according to a 2010 Pew Research Center poll) admit that

they do not primarily think about immigrants or immigration primarily through the lens of their Christian faith. In order to encourage those—both in local churches and in the halls of Congress—who profess to follow Jesus to allow their response to immigration to be infused with biblical values, we invite you to participate in a new initiative called “I Was a Stranger...,” which takes its name directly from Matthew 25:35, where Jesus says that by welcoming a stranger, we may be welcoming him. The focus of the challenge will be on inviting believers to read a short passage of Scripture each day for forty consecutive days that speaks to God’s heart for immigrants and to pray for the immigrants in their community.