

Report from the Consultative Committee on Immigration,
for Consideration by Salem Quarter, 3/2007

As Friends, we are called to place our first loyalty and trust in the reign of God rather than in the ways of human society. When we call a human being "illegal," we deny the fundamental spiritual truth that we are all made in the image of our Creator, and turn away from our sacred mandate to participate in the Divine reign on earth. Isolated and divided, we allow ourselves to be used by fear, and are blinded to the power of Love. The fundamental call to follow the ways of God leads us to humility and to base our actions in the recognition of our common bond with our brothers and sisters, children of our one Creator. We are reminded that "You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deut 10:19)

Salem Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends calls upon individual Friends and Meetings in our Quarter to use our hands and voices in the service of prophetic justice in the light of our universal sacred kinship. We stand united in our understanding that no human being is "illegal."

- We call upon Friends to examine how we are implicated as citizens in our nation's political, military, economic, and immigration policies, which impoverish immigrants' countries of origin and intensify levels of violence.
 - We call upon all Meetings and Worship Groups, under guidance of that Power that allows the Light to shine on all, to consider if they are called to serve as visible Meetings of Sanctuary.
 - We call upon Friends to monitor actions and statements made by government leaders, agencies, and authorities, and by associations and organizations, at local, state, and national levels. We call upon Friends to speak out and respond, individually and corporately.
 - We call upon Friends to seek out experiential interaction with immigrants in our communities through direct service (such as ESL tutoring) and to listen to their stories; to collect and share information on aid and support resources and basic human rights; to participate in support efforts and material aid; and consider developing resources within our Meetings to fill gaps in our communities; and to share such information with each other.
 - We call upon Friends to critically read, hear, and view their local newspapers, and radio and cable access television programs; to respond to factual errors, xenophobia and racism, and incitement to hatred; and to monitor anti-immigrant websites and links among anti-immigrant and hate groups.
 - We call upon Friends to examine the extent to which our economy and our lifestyle depends on a low paid, vulnerable workforce to complete dirty, dangerous work at high human cost; and to oppose guest worker programs, part of a long history of deliberate US policy creating the conditions that foster a "low-cost," un-free work force.
 - We call upon Friends to speak out against militarization of the Mexican-US border, which has not diminished the desperation that drives immigration and has only increased the number of deaths.
 - We call upon Friends to speak out against the pressure on young immigrants to join the military, which is the only feasible route left open to them to achieve American citizenship.
- "Our gracious Creator cares and provides for all his creatures. His tender mercies are all

over his works; and so far as his love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable *that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives*" (John Woolman from "A Plea for the Poor" as cited in Faith and Practice of NEYM, 1985, p.174)