

**Cross-Culture Immigrant Ministries USA Program
Cumberland Presbyterian General Assembly Resolution on the role of the Church and
Immigration education
185th General Assembly in Cali Colombia
185th General Assembly Minutes- Pages 42, 43, 149
June 20-25, 2015**

Role of the Church and Immigration Education:

The Cross-Culture Immigrant Ministries USA Program was created to assist presbyteries in the USA in starting new cross-culture churches. The CP Church is making a concerted effort to plant churches and develop ministries to meet the unique language and cultural needs of new arrivals to the USA. People from different countries are continuing to migrate to live in the USA as well as in other countries. This reality represents a great opportunity for the CP Church to welcome them as brothers and sisters by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with them in their own languages and culture through immigrant pastors familiar with their cultures and languages.

Unfortunately, there is no single unifying way to embrace the issue of human migration, often called immigration. The people of Israel migrated through the Middle East and scriptural accounts help us better understand our role when dealing with people migrating. There are different perceptions and understandings of the dynamics of immigration around the world. In some cases different perceptions can affect the effectiveness and intentionality of ministering to brothers and sisters who have recently migrated.

The Bible is full of stories of migration, refugees, and displaced people. Abraham, Israel, our Lord Jesus, and many first century Christians were migrants at some point in their journeys. The Confession of Faith declares that “The covenant community, governed by the Lord Christ opposes, resists, and seeks to change all circumstances of oppression—political, economic, cultural, racial—by which persons are denied the essential dignity God intends for them in the work of creation” (Confession of Faith 6.30). This declaration highlights the expression “change all circumstances of...” and it means that as CPs we are agents of change and transformation. The CP Church is called to care for and minister to all human beings, especially those who suffer based on their culture, race, social economics, migration status, and/or political preference.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights proposed in its report to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that there is not an objective definition of migrant and migration. However, “The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights has proposed that the following persons should be considered as **migrants**:

- a. Persons who are outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens, are not subject to its legal protection and are in the territory of another State;
- b. Persons who do not enjoy the general legal recognition of rights which is inherent in the granting by the host State of the status of refugee, naturalized person or of similar status;
- c. Persons who do not enjoy either general legal protection of their fundamental rights by virtue of diplomatic agreements, visas or other agreements.

The dominant forms of migration can be distinguished according to the motives (economic, family reunion, refugees) or legal status (irregular migration, controlled emigration/immigration, free emigration/immigration) of those concerned. Most countries distinguish between a number of categories in their migration policies and statistics. The variations existing between countries indicate that there are no objective definitions of migration.” (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/migrant/>)

Following the example of Christ and examples of migration in scripture, we are called to love our brothers and sisters who have migrated to live in the countries where the CP Church is present. Therefore, observing the reality of migration in the world, the need to educate our church, and effectively express the love of God to all human beings; we make the following recommendations,

RECOMMENDATION 3: That according to the Confession of Faith for Cumberland Presbyterians, and the example of Christ, the General Assembly affirms that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and all its judicatories and agencies are called to minister to all immigrants regardless of their nationality, culture, race, social economics, migration status, and/or political preference, who are coming to live in countries where the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is present. (Approved)

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the Missions Ministry Team through the Cross-Culture Ministries USA program assists the judicatories of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church regarding immigration education and/or resources to embrace ministerial opportunities among communities made up of immigrants within all presbyteries and synods. (Approved)