

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH and the IMMIGRANT

Contents (Note: NOT FOR DISPLAY)

- Opener & a (very) few immigration facts
- General Convention Resolution as model of comprehensive immigration reform; I.e. BOTH enforcement AND immigration reform
 - Fundamental immigration principles
 - Problems with solely enforcing the border & employment without immigration relief
- Action: personal & organizational

The Episcopal Church and the Immigrant

Just as you did it to
one of the least of these
who are members of my family,
you did it to me.

(Mt 25:39b)

Who do you think is “illegal”?



Photos by The Rev. Jay & Lillian Watan, “Weaving God’s Beautiful Pattern” Event



**Who do you know
who's here without
documentation?**

**How do you know that the
person next to you is a
citizen or has a visa?**

**Who do you know
who's here without documentation?**

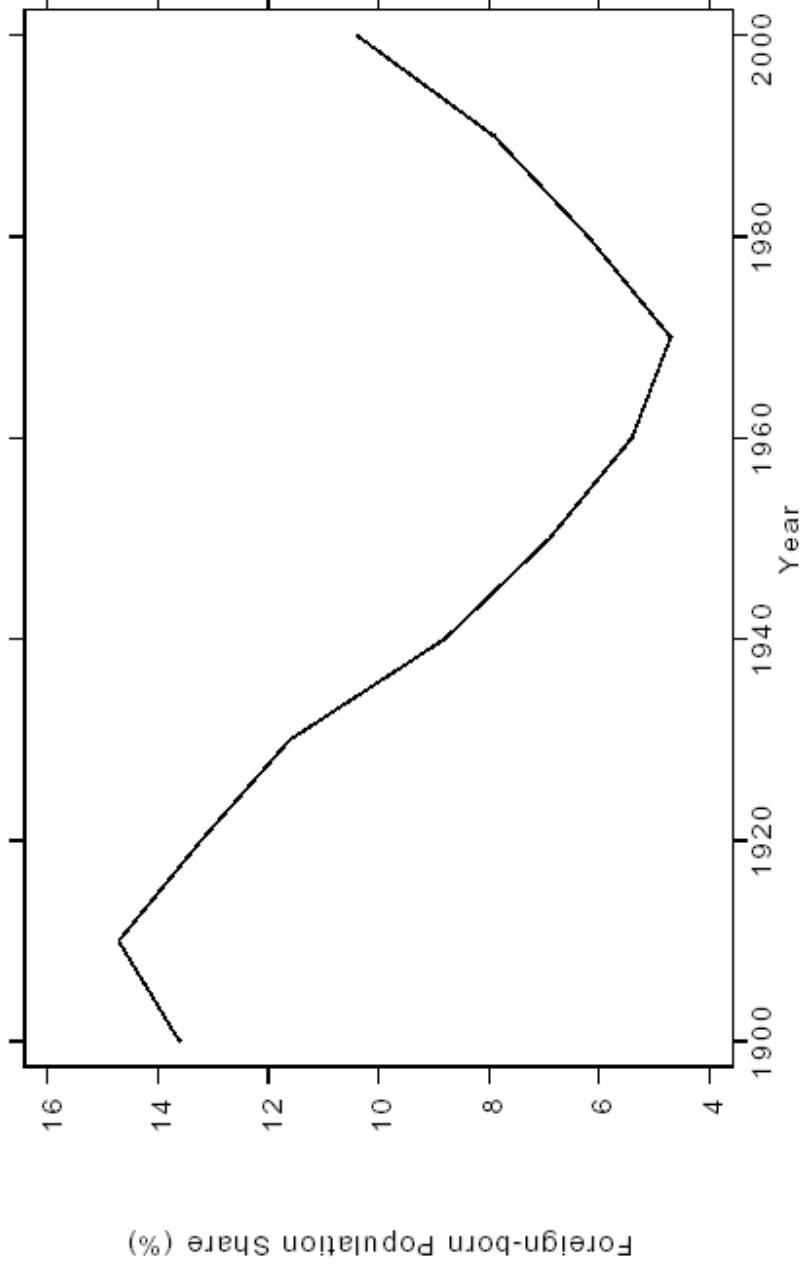
**How could you
possibly know?**

What makes you think that?

**More than 11 million
undocumented immigrants
live in the U.S.**

Myth: Too Many Immigrants to be Assimilated

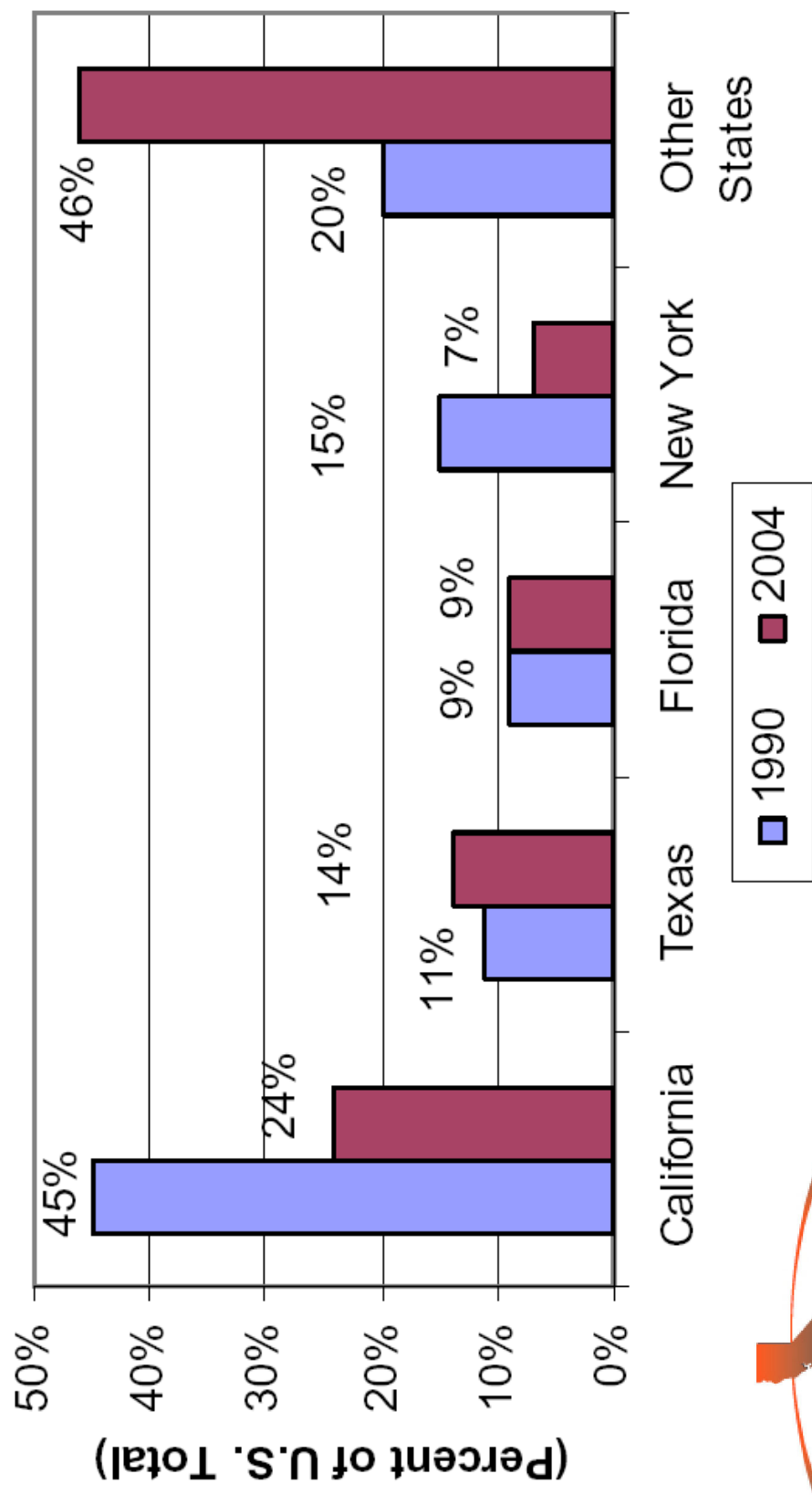
Figure 1.1 Share of Foreign Born in U.S. Population



Gordon H. Hanson
UC San Diego and NBER

Where Illegal ^(sic) Immigrants Live

Where Unauthorized Immigrants Live



General Convention 2006

Re: Enforcement

- **1st Resolve:** “ ... while recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders”
- **2nd Resolve:** “deplores any action ... which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work”

General Convention 2006

Fundamental Immigration Principles

- Reasonable opportunity for permanent residency.
- Legal workers allowed to enter U.S. as needed by U.S.
- Reunite family members without undue delay.
- Legal due process should be granted to all persons.
- Border enforcement should be proportional and humane.

Not Asking for a Free Ride

Sample provisions for “earned adjustment”:

- Working in the U.S., 5 years or longer
- No criminal record or gang activity
- Forgiven some crimes to enter, live or work in U.S.
- Must go to a port of entry to apply.

But, “Enforcement Only” Is Just a Partial Answer

- Undocumented immigrants already in the U.S.
 - If they leave, they can't return
 - If they stay, they can't visit their families abroad and their families can't visit them.
 - Eventually, they'll be deported - you won't be lucky forever.
- Undocumented people who grew up in the U.S.
 - Some have been here all their lives
 - Many don't know their native tongue.
 - Some are ready for college and many are offered scholarships.

Consider the cruelty of “enforcement only”

- Splits “mixed” families (with documented & undocumented members)
- Splits border communities & wrecks their economies
- Children experience greater fear and poverty.
- The shadows in which they live get darker.
- While jobs remain open, trained & available workers can’t be employed, e.g. the harvest.

General Convention 2006

Education

Resolved, that the Episcopal Church
undertake a campaign
to educate Episcopalians
as to the plight of
refugees, immigrants, and migrants,
which will include information about the
root causes of migration

General Convention 2006 Convention's Call to the Church

- Commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility
- Advocate for their wellbeing and protection
- Urge its members to resist legislation and actions which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.

What Can I / We Do?

Advocacy

- **Communication with Congress**
 - **Participation in
Community Advocacy**

Organizational Work for parish, diocese, etc.

Example given here:

Resolution by
Diocese of California

Diocesan Immigration Resolution

Create a Task Force on
Migration and Immigration Issues To:

- Implement and support others who are implementing General Convention Resolution A017
- Provide Opportunities and resources for education

Diocesan Immigration Resolution

And call the Diocese of California's people to:

- Commitment regarding Convention's call to the Church.
- Extend our resistance to legislation and actions which further criminalize undocumented immigrants.
- Welcome strangers and offer them humanitarian aid when needed, regardless of immigration status.

Resources

- episcopalchurch.org/emm
 - Episcopal Migration Ministries
- www.aila.org
 - American Immigration Lawyers Association
- madreanna.org
 - Personal web site with immigration information
- www.immigrationforum.org
 - Non-profit immigration advocacy group
- www.cirnnow.org
 - Non-profit immigration advocacy group

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