

# Peace News Notes



## **. . .for I was a stranger and you welcomed me. . . (Matt 25:35)**

The Brethren have answered the call to ‘welcome the stranger’ by helping refugees for over 100 years. We helped victims of the Armenian genocide in 1915 and continue helping refugees when ever and where ever we can<sup>1</sup>. When contacted by the Huffington Post about the Church of the Brethren position on refugees, Jay Wittmeyer, executive director of Global Mission and Service said: “We are the church, we’ll continue to be the church, and we will welcome refugees in need from all religious backgrounds. This is in keeping with our Christian faith.”<sup>2</sup>

General secretary David Steele on behalf of the Church of the Brethren has signed a letter to President Trump and members of Congress expressing support for refugee resettlement. The letter, which has now been signed by more than 2,000 religious leaders from across the country--and is still open to receiving more signatures--is an initiative of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition.

The coalition is “a partnership of faith-based organizations committed to enacting fair and humane immigration reform that reflects our mandate to welcome the stranger and treat all human beings with dignity and respect.” The coalition is connected with Church World Service (CWS), which is a longterm partner organization of the Church of the Brethren and the denomination’s disaster ministries.<sup>3</sup>

Find the letter, and the list of who has signed it to date, at [www.interfaithimmigration.org/2000religiousleaderletter](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2000religiousleaderletter).

Church World Service (CWS) is providing resources for church members, congregations, and others concerned about the status of refugees under the new US administration. An online “tool kit” of resources from CWS is available at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eXNsf8rX4CqW1qHCsItIKYciYXwRBV-z2FHB1yXF77k/edit> .

The Brethren are also participating in TOGETHER, “a global initiative that promotes respect, safety and dignity for everyone forced to flee their homes in search of a better life.” This United Nations initiative also strives to promote “tolerance, tear down the walls of discrimination, and reveal the cruelties in xenophobic behavior and policies towards migrants and refugees. The UN Department of Public Information (DPI), of which Church of the Brethren is a member, launched TOGETHER at the first 2017 NGO (non-governmental organization) and DPI briefing Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. For more on Brethren involvement in TOGETHER go to Church of the Brethren Newline: January 28, 2017<sup>4</sup>. For more on TOGETHER go to [together.un.org](http://together.un.org)

<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman Turks tried to destroy the Armenian people living in Ottoman Turkey. See the article on the Armenian genocide: “100th Anniversary of the First 20<sup>th</sup> Century Genocide” in the spring issue of the *Peace Advocate News*, vol. 8:4, p. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> “Mission executive responds to question on refugees, denomination supports work of CWS.” Church of the Brethren Newline: January 26, 2017. [brethren.org](http://brethren.org)

<sup>3</sup> “Church of the Brethren general secretary among 2,000 religious leaders signing letter supporting refugee resettlement.” Church of the Brethren Newline: January 27, 2017. [brethren.org](http://brethren.org)

<sup>4</sup> “TOGETHER global initiative is launched by United Nations.” Church of the Brethren Newline: January 28, 2017. [brethren.org](http://brethren.org)