

## **Synod of WALES**

### **Emergency Resolution: Refugee Crisis**

The Moderator invited Synod to suspend standing orders in order to consider an emergency resolution from the Synod Executive Officers on the Refugee Crisis. It was agreed to suspend standing orders in order to ponder the resolution.

Following the showing of a video from Christian Aid reflecting on the commandment to 'love the stranger' which Jesus repeated in words and lived in deeds, the Moderator invited stories of churches and communities responding to the refugee crisis.

The following resolution was considered and discussion invited.

It was noted that it is vitally important that, as well as challenging the government, the Synod and its churches also need to be challenged to pray, to give and to act in response to the refugee crisis. It was agreed to return to this later in the meeting with a separate resolution.

**The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales calls on Her Majesty's Government to:**

- a. Recognise its responsibility to help protect refugees arriving in Europe**
  - b. With European partners to provide safe and legal routes into Europe to tackle people smuggling and traffickers**
  - c. Promote the establishment of proper, EU run processing centres at key borders**
  - d. Accept its fair share of refugees who have arrived in Europe, in cooperation with other member states of the European Union**
  - e. Make necessary arrangements to provide immediate shelter and support for refugees and longer term to arrange for full resettlement for those wishing to remain**
  - f. To provide local authorities who are taking refugees with additional financial resources to help meet the costs**
- It was agreed to note key points that were made rather than make amendments. These included: the need to challenge ourselves to respond;
  - the need to see refugees as fellow humans and understand that a 'fair share' may still be inadequate; concern over addressing the root causes of the crisis and the contributory role of the UK in the past;
  - and the need for a negotiated peace to allow displaced people to return home.

The resolution was approved by overwhelming agreement.

## **Synod of SCOTLAND**

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland, meeting on Saturday 12 September 2015, at Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen:

- (a) joins with other faith communities in affirming that care for refugees, sojourners, and strangers is an integral part of our life of faith;**
- (b) urges congregations to educate themselves about the refugee crisis, paying particular attention to the language used in describing the crisis;**
- (c) encourages congregations to take action on the crisis, which may include prayer, financial giving, writing to politicians, and donating goods to charities and groups supporting refugees;**
- (d) asks the Church & Society Committee to promote, or provide, an event in each Link where people may gain an insight into the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.**

## **EASTERN SYNOD - October 2015**

An emergency resolution, produced by the East Midlands Synod, was brought and proposed by Revd Duncan Goldie, Synod Faith in Action Advocate, and seconded by Lindsey Brown. Duncan Goldie introduced the resolution, giving reasons. Comments were invited and made, with responses given by Duncan Goldie.

The resolution was put:

**RESOLUTION D1: the Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church calls upon Her Majesty's Government:**

- to recognise its responsibility to help protect refugees arriving in Europe;
- with European partners, to provide safe and legal routes into Europe to tackle people smuggling;
- to promote the establishment of proper, EU run, processing centres at key borders;
- to accept its fair share of refugees who have arrived in Europe, in cooperation with other member states of the European Union;
- to make necessary arrangements to provide immediate shelter and support for refugees, and longer term to arrange for full resettlement for those wishing to remain;
- to provide local authorities who are taking refugees with additional financial resources to help meet the costs.

Consensus voting was used. *The resolution was passed by agreement.*

## **URC Resolutions**

### ***General Assembly 2003 (Racial Justice Committee Resolution)***

#### ***Refugees and Asylum Seekers***

General Assembly, noting the strength of feeling on the issue of refugees and asylum seekers in our society today, urges all members and local churches of the United Reformed Church to:

- a) acknowledge the unequivocal call of the Bible to care for the stranger in our midst and to respond to the needs of strangers in our own neighbourhoods with compassion and practical friendship;
- b) seek to address our own attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers with honesty and in ways that reflect the quality of our faith and commitment to our caring God;
- c) seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in relation to refugees and asylum seekers through challenging the selfishness and racism that their presence has exposed, and by resisting any attempts to make this racism socially acceptable, whilst being aware that honest attempts to do so may lead to ridicule by many in British society;
- d) to join with other Non-Government organisations in active local and national campaigning to further the above aims.

## *Mission Council - May 2011*

### *Impact of Funding Cuts on asylum seekers and young people*

Mission Council resolves:

- i) to ask the Joint Public Issues Team to speak out at the highest level against the injustice of cuts to agencies providing support and legal advice services to people seeking sanctuary in the UK;
- ii) to ask the Communications Department to launch an on-line petition campaign to support this initiative;
- iii) to encourage local churches to continue to extend hospitality and welcome people seeking sanctuary in the UK as a deliberate and strategic focus of their pastoral care in areas local to them and in the UK, in a time of economic austerity;
- iv) to encourage Synods to identify strategic partnerships with other agencies to expand the model of multi-agency drop-in centres for asylum seekers and refugees and for the URC to explore funding streams to support these centres.