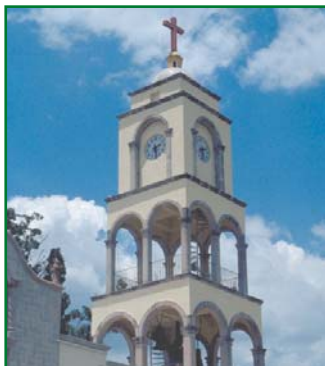
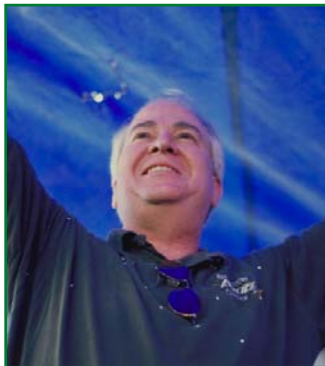


A GUIDE FOR  
CHRISTIANS AND CHURCHES

# WELCOMING



# NEW IOWANS

The University of Northern Iowa New Iowans Program  
Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa

Anne C. Woodrick, Ph.D. and Mark A. Grey, Ph.D.



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## Preface

Immigrant and refugee newcomers have an important role in Iowa. These newcomers have revitalized many Iowa communities, workplaces and faith-based institutions. The arrival of immigrants and refugees poses challenges as well as rewards; understanding and addressing these issues is vital to welcoming and accommodating new Iowans and assuring their part in the long-term economic and social health of our state.

This handbook represents a unique collaboration between the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) and Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa (EMI). The goal of this collaboration is to create a guidebook for Iowans to learn more about Iowa's growing immigrant and refugee population and discover ways to welcome these newcomers and accommodate them in our communities and churches.

The unique nature of this joint publication between a public university and Christian churches acknowledges that both institutions have a stake in accommodating immigrants in Iowa. UNI and all institutions of higher education need to support population growth to assure future enrollments. Churches and many other community institutions need immigrants and other newcomers to help maintain their viability. Universities and churches also need healthy local economies. Newcomers can provide much needed skills and labor to make this happen. In short, this collaboration recognizes that making immigration in Iowa work has important long-term implications for us all.

This book was written and compiled by two university faculty members, but it is not an official university endorsement of Christianity as the only religion practiced and accepted by Iowans, and no university funds were used to print or distribute this handbook. This handbook is written for Iowa's Christian community and is based on the Biblical mandate to welcome newcomers, but we acknowledge Iowa's other religious groups and their role in accommodating newcomers as well. We readily acknowledge that other faith-based organizations also welcome newcomers and have a stake in making immigration a positive experience. In order to accommodate the perspectives and needs of these groups, the UNI New Iowans Program is planning to develop similar handbooks for Iowa's Jewish and Muslim communities.

This handbook includes a number of resource lists for individuals, newcomers, churches and others. Of course, as soon as these lists are printed, they may become out-of-date. In order to obtain the most up-to-date information, please visit the UNI New Iowans Web site:

[www.bcs.uni.edu/idm/newiowans/](http://www.bcs.uni.edu/idm/newiowans/)

The UNI New Iowans website also makes this handbook available in a PDF format.

## **A Message from UNI President Robert D. Koob**

According to the experts, too many Iowans are choosing to leave the state. We're at a crossroads. We have two choices. We may choose to grow, or we may choose to continue to stagnate.

It seems obvious that growth is the only realistic choice. But growth comes with a price tag. People, companies and communities will need to make a conscious choice to encourage growth. We must adjust the way we think and the way we conduct ourselves.

It's not all gloom and doom, however. Iowa needs 310,000 new people. That's a great challenge, but it's also a great opportunity— an opportunity for economic and social growth. This is an exciting time.

Iowa's economic future depends on our ability to attract a significant number of new residents. The keys will be to open our minds to new ideas, and to open our hearts to new Iowans. This will take courage. Iowans are courageous people.

Iowa's Christian community has a long tradition of extending a helping hand to immigrants. This special edition of "Welcoming New Iowans," by UNI Professors Anne Woodrick and Mark Grey, will help Christian organizations recognize and deal with the issues surrounding immigration.

I'm confident that the people of Iowa in general, and Christians in specific, will embrace the challenge before them with the courage and insight that has helped make Iowa one of the best places to live.

My thanks and congratulations to Anne and Mark for their tireless work on this book, and for helping plant the seeds of knowledge that will help Iowa grow.



Robert D. Koob, President  
University of Northern Iowa

## **A Message from Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa Executive Director Rev. Sarai Schnucker Beck**

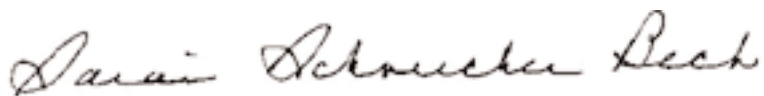
“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (Romans 15:7). these words Paul offered the church in Rome during the 1st century are at the heart of what it means to be the church in Iowa at the beginning of the 21st century.

Increasing numbers of immigrants are coming to Iowa, from many countries and for many reasons. Even through virtually all of us who live in Iowa have immigrant roots, we find ourselves with divided minds and hearts about immigration. We value the Statue of Liberty, we appreciate the new tastes and signs and sounds offered to us by our multicultural neighbors, we are happy that new influxes of immigrant children help keep some of our schools open and operating.

Yet we are also uncomfortable. Immigrants are strangers, people we do not know. They look different, they act differently, they speak different languages. Many of us hold them responsible for rising crime rates, worsening public schools and fewer job opportunities. Their presence evokes a nascent racism we must work to quell.

In such divided times, surely the church has a story to tell, a story of God’s love for the stranger. And surely the church has responsibility to act. The Christian community’s responsibility is to love and welcome the stranger in whom we meet Jesus Christ. So who are these newcomers, many of whom are already Christian? What is the church called to be and what is the church called to do? These are the questions to which this handbook seeks to help congregations around Iowa find faithful answers.

We thank the University of Northern Iowa’s New Iowans Program, and it’s staff, Anne Woodrick and Mark Grey, for the opportunity to work with them on this handbook. We offer it now to Iowa’s congregations with the prayer that it be an opportunity for the movement of the Holy Sprit in your midst. May the wind and fire of Pentecost find you speaking in new languages again!



Sarai Schnucker Beck  
Executive Director  
Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa



# INTRODUCTION

## The New Iowans

Iowa is a state of immigrants. Iowa as we know it today would not exist without immigrants. Indeed, with the exception of small groups of Native Americans, without immigrants there would be no Iowans. The thousands of European immigrants who arrived in the 1800s and early part of the 1900s settled this state and established its many towns and cities. They built churches, schools and colleges and created one of the most important agricultural economies in the entire world. These immigrants and their descendents can be proud of their role in making Iowa a vital and progressive state.

In the early part of the 21st century, immigration has once again become critical to Iowa's social and economic health. Without immigrant newcomers, Iowa faces some difficult times ahead. There are four population trends that pose problems for Iowa's economy.

- ***Iowa's population is aging.*** In 2000, 17.8% of Iowans were aged 60 or older. In 2020, one in every five Iowans will be age 65 or older.
- ***Iowa's workforce is aging.*** In one typical community, Ft. Dodge, the median age of all employed persons in 2001 was 42. Among highly skilled workers, the median age was even higher at 46. One-third of Ft. Dodge schoolteachers are eligible to retire by 2005. Thirty percent of those in professional, paraprofessional and technical positions in the Ft. Dodge area are eligible to retire by 2010. At some major Iowa employers, 40% of salaried workers and 50% of hourly employees will be eligible to retire by 2005.<sup>1</sup>
- ***Birth rates have declined sharply.*** Live births in Iowa have dropped from 14.2 per 1,000 in 1990 to 13.1 per 1,000 in 2000. This drop was particularly sharp in rural areas. Only 14 Iowa counties met or exceeded the 2000 state average birthrate and only four of these counties were rural. Rural live birthrates as low as 6.9 per 1,000 were recorded in 2000.

- ***Nearly half of Iowa's public university graduates leave the state.*** In 2000, almost 60% of University of Iowa graduates took jobs out of state. In the same year, 46.9% of Iowa State University and 30.4% of University of Northern Iowa graduates left the state.

By the 1990s, immigrants were already making up for some of Iowa's population loss. During this decade, Iowa's Hispanic population—spurred by an influx of Latino immigrants—grew by 153% to 82,472, making Hispanics Iowa's largest minority. Seven Iowa counties experienced ten-fold increases in their Latino populations,<sup>2</sup> with some towns experiencing comparable growth in Latino populations.<sup>3</sup> Smaller influxes of African and Bosnian refugees and immigrants from Asia, Micronesia, South America and Eastern Europe have also arrived, revitalizing many Iowa communities. Immigrants have brought population to shrinking communities, schools and churches. They have provided labor to desperate employers. They have opened businesses, bought homes and become active in community organizations.

Recognizing the growing importance of immigrants in Iowa, *Governing* magazine noted that “while Americans often view immigration as an act of graciousness on our part, for many communities, it is becoming an economic development strategy as well, possibly making the difference between prosperity and economic decline.”<sup>4</sup> Population, economic and workforce trends indicate that immigrants will continue to come to Iowa and their importance to the state's social and economic health will continue to grow.

## **Christians Welcome New Iowans**

The purpose of this guidebook is to help Iowa's Christian community understand and welcome immigrants and refugees. Iowa's Christians have a responsibility to welcome immigrants to their communities, workplaces, schools and churches. God calls Christians to welcome the stranger, to open their homes and hearts to newcomers. “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34). A similar call is found in Jeremiah's Temple Address, in which he said, “if you practice strict justice toward one another, if you do not oppress the resident alien, the orphan and the widow...I will establish your home in this place” (Jeremiah 7:5-7).

Translating the Biblical call to welcome New Iowans into real-life, day-to-day activities is often difficult. For the New Iowans, Iowa is a new and foreign land. The newcomers might not speak English. They might be unfamiliar with local norms and values. To most established residents, immigrants appear as strangers with odd cultures, languages and customs. The transition for newcomers and native Iowans alike can often be difficult and painful. This guidebook offers some guidance, helping Iowa's Christians welcome newcomers and invite them to become members of our communities in ways that respect the cultures and ways of both newcomers and established residents.

This guide is sponsored by the Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa (EMI), which represents 10 different Protestant denominations, 16 judicatories, and some 500,000 Iowans. EMI recognizes that welcoming immigrants and refugees to Iowa is critical to the state's future and the long-term health of our communities, schools, and churches. In many ways, immigrants represent the future of Iowa, and Christians play a vital role in making that future positive. Recognizing the importance of welcoming newcomers, EMI joined the University of Northern Iowa New Iowans Program to produce this book.

## **A Guide For Christians and Churches**

This guidebook provides a variety of information and resources. In **Part I: Meet the New Iowans**, we address some of the basic concepts and history of immigration in Iowa. Who are these New Iowans? Where do they come from? Why are they here? Then, we take a look at the church's role in meeting the New Iowans, discussing the Biblical basis for a Christian responsibility to welcome strangers.

**Part II: Christian Practices Among New Iowans** describes some of the religious and cultural backgrounds of Iowa's newcomers. Throughout this section, you will read the stories that Iowa's newcomers tell. In addition to speaking other languages and having different life ways, newcomers also bring unique perspectives on religion, Christianity, worship styles, and how God works in their daily lives. We will discuss these different approaches to religion for Latinos, Africans, and Southeast Asians. With this information, Iowa Christians can develop a deeper appreciation and respect for the spiritual life of newcomers and understand that being a Christian can mean different things in different cultures.

In **Part III: Ministering to New Iowans** we take a look at the ways in which newcomers can be integrated into existing congregations and churches, providing examples of how churches throughout Iowa have already developed relationships with Iowa's newcomers.

You will find a variety of resources in **Part IV: Resources for Christian Churches**. A glossary of immigration and other relevant terms will help your congregation find the resources needed by your community's newcomers. A series of individual and group Bible Studies and activities is provided to help individuals or entire congregations think about the Biblical call to welcome strangers and to consider ways that Christians can be actively involved in integrating newcomers into their communities, workplaces, schools and churches.

Finally, an extensive set of **Appendices** includes Christian resource guides and suggested readings, lists of Christian immigration and refugee resources, Iowa immigration and refugee ministries, Iowa immigration and refugee resources and advocacy centers, Iowa diversity committees, other immigration and refugee services, recommended readings on immigrants and refugees, and newcomer resources at the University of Northern Iowa.



### Early Immigration to Iowa

Iowa's growth has always been fueled by immigration. In 1836, only 10,531 people inhabited the state, but by 1855, Iowa's population had mushroomed to nearly 500,000. Virtually all of this growth was due to massive immigration. The influx of newcomers was so rapid that state leaders of the day speculated that in 1860 "Iowa will be peopled by more than a million hardy, energetic, and intelligent inhabitants."<sup>5</sup> Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, Iowa continued to attract immigrants, encouraged by such publications as the 1858, *Northern Iowa: Containing Hints and Information of Value to Emigrants. By a Pioneer*,<sup>6</sup> which provided practical information about homesteading, starting farms and buying land.

With the state still needing more immigration in the late 1800's, the Iowa legislature created the Board of Immigration in 1869. Board secretary, Alexander R. Fulton wrote *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants*,<sup>7</sup> and sixty-five thousand copies of this handbook were printed in five languages: German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish and English. Handbooks were shipped across the United States and Europe, and the ancestors of hundreds of thousands of today's Iowans came to Iowa after reading this guide.

In the first 150 years of Iowa history, immigrants arrived mostly from Europe, exhibiting a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Early immigrants brought a keen sense of their national and ethnic heritage with them. The legacy of their ethnic pride is still seen in the Danish Tivoli Fests in Elk Horn and Kimballton, the Dutch Tulip Festivals in Orange City and Pella, German Oktoberfests in Whittemore and the Amana Colonies, Nordic Fest celebrating the Norwegian heritage in Decorah, and Ireland's St. Patrick's Day in Emmetsburg, a town named in honor of an Irish patriot who died fighting for Irish freedom.

### Immigration Today

Iowa has always attracted immigrants for its economic opportunities; for the chance to start a new life; for an opportunity to provide a better life for their children. For most

immigrants who arrived a hundred years ago, economic opportunities were found in Iowa's rich agricultural potential. As that economic potential realized itself, these newcomers created towns, built schools and formed churches. Today, economic opportunities for immigrants are found in jobs made available by Iowa's declining population and aging workforce. To these newcomers, Iowa still offers opportunities to earn incomes, buy homes, and give their children a quality education.

### ***A Global Migration***

The world has become a global community. Advancements in communication bring "instant" information about the lives and activities of people throughout the world into our homes. In today's world, decisions, policies and events that occur on all continents affect the lives of Iowans. These processes connect Iowans to the lives of newcomers who have migrated to Iowa in the last ten to twenty years, and they help explain why people from Mexico, Somalia, and Laos have settled in our communities.

Today's immigrants come not just from Europe, but also from around the world. They arrive from dozens of nations in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, bringing a new collection of cultures, religions and languages even more diverse than those brought by Iowa's first European settlers. Further, modern day refugees and immigrants do not always intend to settle in a particular new territory. Many had to leave their own countries unwillingly, moving wherever they could to start a new life. Thus, many of our newcomers were already relocated once outside of Iowa, and then chose to move here to join family, take jobs, or live in a different climate. Many of the ethnic Lao refugees in Storm Lake, for example, are "secondary migrants" who initially settled in Oklahoma and Minnesota before migrating to Iowa.

Although we tend to think about our own ancestors in terms of their nationality, today's immigrants often come from countries with tremendous varieties of ethnicities, languages and religions, and they might have adopted the practices of additional cultures as well. National boundaries are less relevant today than the economic, political and family forces that drive global migrations.

### ***Economic Forces***

The globalization of a capitalistic economy affects every community in the world.

Economic policies, such as international trade agreements and decisions made by multinational corporations touch our lives directly and indirectly. What might be a beneficial policy for some of us in the United States can cause significant difficulties for residents living in another county, and vice versa. For example, the North American Free Trade Alliance (NAFTA) opened new markets in Mexico for Midwestern products at a reduced cost to the producers, but subsistence farmers in Michoacán and other Mexican states cannot profitably compete with the cheaper United States corn. It simply costs them more money to buy seed corn, which is frequently very poor quality, and harvest it than they can get when they sell the crop. In addition, due to its huge debt crisis in the early 1980s, the Mexican government had already removed many agricultural subsidies before NAFTA. Consequently, by the mid-1990s many small-scale agriculturalists had to abandon farming.

On the other hand, Iowa companies like Ertl Toy in Dyersville, Fisher Controls in Marshalltown, and Hon Industries in Muscatine have relocated production plants to countries outside of the United States in order to take advantage of cheap labor, fewer environmental controls, and reduced taxation. When these companies relocated, however, the loss of jobs and tax revenues had a severe impact on the local economy. These towns are now at risk, unless they can find an immigrant labor pool to build a new economic structure.

Across the globe, agribusinesses dominate the farming industry just as large food chains and “super” stores supply our food, clothing, and numerous other needs. The tremendous growth in the size and wealth of multinational corporations has led to an increasingly disparity between the rich and the poor around the world, forcing many groups of people to move from their traditional homes to countries where a decent standard of living is possible.

### *Mexico*

Extremely low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of economic opportunities in Mexico are all reasons Mexicans migrate to the United States, and the migration between Mexico and the United States is not new. The National Population Council reports that migration between Mexico and the United States is “a permanent, structural phenomenon...built on real factors, ranging from geography, economic inequality and integration, and the intense relationship between the two countries.”<sup>8</sup>



Mexican immigration to the United States has occurred for several generations, but the permanent settling of Mexican immigrants in Iowa is a recent phenomenon. The expansion of meatpacking facilities all over Iowa since the late 1980s has attracted Mexican immigrant wage laborers. In 2000, 70 percent of the production workers at the Swift and Company plant in Marshalltown were Latinos. In Storm Lake Laotian refugees and Latino immigrants form the majority of production workers at the local IBP, Inc plant.<sup>9</sup> Low wages and poor working conditions by American worker standards are a blessing for sojourners who have left far worse conditions.

Although many immigrants who work in meat packing facilities are poor, working class individuals, Mexican production workers at the IBP plant near Sioux City include a veterinarian, a lawyer and a university professor. These highly skilled individuals and many others like them cannot work in their own professions because they lack an expertise in English, they must acquire additional training or education in the United States, or in some cases they arrived without the proper immigration or refugee documentation.

“Thank God for the United States!  
The United States takes care of everyone. The United States is for everyone. Its mission is to help everyone, to guard the world, to keep the world in peace. I am so grateful for the opportunity to come to the United States and work.”  
—“Rosita,” Mexican immigrant





## *Africa and Asia*

Globalization has similarly affected countries in Africa and Asia. John Kemoli Sagala, a Kenyan who attends the University of Northern Iowa, has identified many problems that are emerging from globalization in Africa:

- increased poverty and food scarcity
- reduced national revenues due to tax breaks and foreign investment incentives
- increased problems of balance of payments and national debt by African countries to multi-lateral agencies like the World Bank
- increased inequality between the rich and poor
- increased environmental degradation
- cultural displacement
- capital flight<sup>10</sup>

These economic forces have caused the displacement of people throughout Africa and Asia, bringing groups to the U.S. and to Iowa. Marshalltown's Swift and Company plant, for example, employs Nuer refugees from the Sudan and Southeast Asians.

## *Political Forces*

Major ethnic conflicts, underlain by obscure economic, religious and political issues, explode on our television screens, and we are often confused about who are the “good” guys and “bad” guys. It is difficult for Iowans in our stable, settled country to understand why groups continually seem to fight each other. Regardless of the historical causes, ethnic conflicts often result in the displacement of one or more communities of people. In 2000, the United States resettled more than 72,000 refugees,<sup>11</sup> and within the last ten years more than 8,000 refugees have made Iowa their new home. These include members of some of the largest refugee groups in the world: people from Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone in Africa; and Bosnians and Vietnamese.

Mat Wur was born in Malakal, a small town in Southern Sudan. When he was 14 years old the Sudanese Muslim Militia attacked his hometown because it offered assistance to the Southern Sudanese Liberation Army. His father was killed in this attack and Mat, who became separated from his family, fled to a refugee camp in Ethiopia. In 1986, he was granted an educational scholarship by the United Nations to attend school, and he studied for four years. Mat then returned to the refugee camp and married his wife,

Rebecca. Civil War broke out in Ethiopia in 1991 and the camp was attacked. He and Rebecca, who was pregnant, became separated. Mat escaped to Kenya and Rebecca returned to Southern Sudan. When they discovered they both had survived, Rebecca joined Mat in Kenya. In 1993, Mat was the first Nuer refugee to be resettled in Des Moines. A few months later Rebecca, their son, and Mat's brothers and sister were able to join him in Iowa.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Family Forces***

Immigrants to Iowa in the last century typically came with the understanding that they were leaving their old countries—and even their families—behind forever. Times are very different now. In this electronic age, newcomers can maintain regular communication with family members in their countries of origin. Some are able to travel back and forth from the United States to their home communities. Many send money home to help support family members and/or community projects in their hometowns. The term “transnationalism” refers to the processes by which immigrants establish on-going networks that link their community of origin and their country of settlement.<sup>13</sup>

Concern for the well-being of family and community back home should not be interpreted to mean that recent migrants do not want to be a part of Iowan communities. Rather such commitments reflect the importance of family and friends in their lives and their desire to make life better for those who are not living in Iowa.

### **Newcomers in Iowa**

Newcomers in Iowa today have many faces. They are Sudanese cattle herders, indigenous Maya from Guatemala, and Vietnamese. Many of the new immigrants are people of color. Their languages, food, and appearances are very different from most resident Iowans who descended from Northern European German, Scandinavian, and English families.

Despite a shared “immigrant history” few residents empathize with the immigration experience of recent Latin American, African, and Southeast Asian newcomers. Third and fourth generation immigrants who did not experience the migration themselves tend to minimize the difficulties that are associated with settlement in a foreign environment. Comments like, “Well, my grandparents learned English” and “Earlier immigrants did their best to assimilate” disguise the difficulties faced by German, Norwegian, and Irish

immigrants faced when they first settled in Iowa. In 1887, for example, the American Protection Association was founded in Clinton to argue for laws prohibiting Catholics from being elected to public office.<sup>14</sup> Germans and Irish were targeted groups whose “drinking habits” stood in contrast to the ideals of the temperance movement supported by other established immigrant groups.<sup>15</sup>

Just as our own ancestors did, Iowa’s new immigrants and refugees face many challenges.

### *Cultural Differences*

Nothing is familiar. All too often, newcomers arrive with few personal possessions, little ability to speak English, and a set of cultural beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are very different from those of their new community. Unfortunately, instead of trying to identify similarities shared with immigrants or refugees, established residents tend to focus on the differences. Behaviors or physical appearances that are contrary to expectations make people feel uncomfortable. Deeply engrained cultural expectations determine what is considered “common sense” social rules and “proper” behavior, and both newcomers and established residents surprise each other by the ways they interact and behave. Unfortunately, differences tend to be viewed as negative, either because we do not understand what we observe or because we misunderstand the intentions and assumptions of others.

### *Language Differences*

For newcomers who have no or very few English skills, living in an English-speaking community can be daunting. Simple things that established residents take for granted, like enrolling children in school or getting a driver’s license, can be intimidating and difficult. Often, adults in the family must spend long hours at work, leaving little time to learn English, which can take several years to master. As a result, they must rely on others to interpret for them. Because their children are the only family members who can enroll in school, some parents are forced to rely on them to translate, a situation that puts children in a relative position of power that many cultures find inappropriate.

### *Professional Differences*

The work of immigrants and refugees is very different from the small farming and family industries that sustained European immigrants a hundred years ago. Newcomers to Iowa typically work in low paying, entry-level jobs in the service or meat packing

industries. Individuals work long hours, sometimes working two jobs simultaneously. Parents will work opposite shifts so that one parent can always be home for childcare responsibilities. Time spent commuting back and forth to work and the actual hours worked means that immigrants and refugees rarely have extra leisure time to spend studying English or volunteering in community activities.

### ***Hostility to Differences***

For virtually all immigrants, interaction with established residents is difficult. Language differences make communication difficult. So do cultural differences, which go beyond foods and family life. Newcomers and established residents have different worldviews that are not always compatible, and minority newcomers often feel that established residents consider their culture inferior. Resident Iowans do not understand the newcomers' cultural traditions, and the lack of understanding creates fear and prejudice. At times there is open racism and hostility towards newcomers.

"I can understand though, if I lived in a small town where everything was peaceful and everyone knew everyone else. Then all of a sudden new people came...there are many elderly living here and you have to be understanding. It is logical that they are going to be scared. I try to put myself in their place and I think in a certain way they are right. Some people are frightened but others are just mean. They hate because they are mean, not because they are frightened. I have met people who hate because they are racist. My daughter told me she was having problems with a girl at school and she would always come home crying. She told me that the girl bothers her a lot, calls her names and hits her. The girl told her one day that her father said he wanted to get a whole bunch of dogs to kill the Mexicans because he hated them...I get sad sometimes and I tell the Lord I feel like He did in the little town in Israel, that we are pilgrims. We are in a land where we do not belong. Although we do not belong here, we are here and maybe You have a plan for us."

—*"Rita," Latina immigrant*

### **Religious Challenges of Immigration**

Immigration into new countries involves difficult transitions and conflicts, not the least of which is the struggle to maintain a vibrant spiritual life in a strange new country. All of the key elements of the typical immigrant experience have an impact on an individual's religious identity.<sup>16</sup>

## *Religion and Culture*

Culture is one of the most basic and essential concepts of human life. Culture can be thought of as the collection of behaviors that define us as part of a community—how we dress, what we eat, where and how we live, and how we work. Culture also includes the assumptions and values that guide us as we figure out things like what makes a “family,” or what is “health.” Behaviors and values are learned, so culture is passed from generation to generation. Culture can also be passed from population to population as the people of one culture learn new values, languages and behaviors from others. Therefore, culture is flexible, and people often adjust their behaviors to fit different situations. This is especially true of immigrants and refugees who arrive in new communities where they must adapt to a different culture to survive.

Religion is an important part of culture, which includes beliefs and behaviors that relate to spiritual and moral issues along with food and dress customs. Religion in Judeo-Christian cultures does three things:

- Religion confirms the existence of God and helps us understand God’s nature.
- Religion provides important stories and documents about the historic deeds of God’s power such as those found in the Bible, in miracles, and in the deeds of saints.
- Religion provides rituals (such as prayer and worship) intended to ask God to intervene on our behalf.

Rituals are the formal events that are performed in sacred and public places like churches and at set times. Rituals also include sequences of words and actions, such as a communion service, that are learned before the ritual takes place and repeated every time. Also, rituals are social events during which people acknowledge their acceptance common ideals that transcend their status as individuals.

Of course, the nature of these cultural understandings, stories and rituals varies from culture to culture. Even though God’s nature is the same all over the world, human beings understand it in terms of the language, values and behaviors of their own communities. Religious stories might tell the same underlying message, but with plots, characters and settings that change to match the life in each culture. All people ask for God’s protection and help, but every culture’s religious rituals will reflect its own places, times and social customs.

## *Religion and Language*

People use language to communicate with one another. Language may be verbal, written or visual. Most Iowans share verbal English and can read and write English as well. English serves a practical function in our jobs and families. It also helps us understand who we are because language lets us get a handle on such concepts as religion, nature, and emotions. Therefore, language is an important part of creating community. Language is a critical part of culture and ethnicity, and thus an important part of religion.

Our own immigrant history illustrates the importance of language in church life. For decades, Iowa was a polyglot state, with German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Czech and other languages spoken widely in schools, community organizations and churches, and it was the Christian churches that fought the forced use of English.

In 1918, Governor Harding issued the so-called “Babel Proclamation” to ban the use of non-English languages in public places, including schools, trains and over the telephone. He also banned “foreign” languages in churches, requiring that, “those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes,”<sup>17</sup> and even went so far as suggesting that prayer should be in English only. “There is no use in anyone wasting his time praying in other languages than English. God is listening only to the English tongue,” he said.<sup>18</sup>

Christians around the state were enraged, particularly those who clung to their language as a crucial part of their religion and relationship with God. For example, many Danish immigrants still believed the Bible was actually written in Danish and that “God had a preference for prayers in that language. When suggestions about using English came up at church meetings, many of the elders nodded disapprovingly and muttered about ‘den Engelske Syge’—the English Disease.”<sup>19</sup>

The ban on “foreign” languages was particularly hard on parishioners who did not speak English. Many churches actually closed for the duration of the ban and World War I. “Others seized upon the solution the Amana colonies found—the congregation sat in silence during the entire ‘service,’ since even German prayers were specifically forbidden, rising, at the appropriate intervals, to sing their German hymns. Detailed as [Governor] Harding had been, he had not thought to outlaw singing in a foreign language.”<sup>20</sup>

In many places and churches in Iowa, languages other than English continued to be used in worship and prayer for several decades after World War I. For example, German was the language of worship in Postville's Lutheran church until the 1950s. As recently as 1975, Norwegian Lutheran church services were performed throughout Iowa to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Norwegian immigration. Annual services in Norwegian continue to be held in the Decorah area.

These are wonderful examples of how Iowa's first immigrants and their descendants valued the importance of incorporating their original languages into their religious lives over several generations. The same holds true for today's newcomers. They will also cling to their first language of worship until the time they or their children feel comfortable worshipping and praying in English. If Iowa's first wave of immigrants is any indication, we must be patient for this transition to take place and allow newcomers the opportunity to worship and pray in their own languages.

### *Ethnic Pride*

Iowa's first groups of immigrants preserve their past in ethnic heritage museums, like the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn or the Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids. Even today, many Iowans refer to the ethnicity of previous generations, and the continued celebration of Czech and Slovak heritage is a good example. Numerous publications recall the early days of Czech settlement and their contemporary communities,<sup>21</sup> and continue to embrace the unique characteristics of Czechs, including their language, food and music. For example, the 1984 book *Czechoslovak Wit and Wisdom* provides a sketch of "The Czech Character" and answers the question, "What is a Czech?" In addition, traditional recipes, songs and stories are provided in English and Czech.<sup>22</sup> This little book, and so many like it from other ethnic groups in Iowa, continues to be published more than a hundred years—and several generations—after the first immigrants came to Iowa.

The museums, books, festivities and foods all demonstrate the enduring power of ethnicity. For decades, Iowa had several newspapers printed in languages other than English, and the many cemeteries in Iowa with graves stones in languages other than English create a lasting testimony to our ethnic heritage. Many place names reflect the home regions and communities of immigrants, and many of our social and fraternal organizations began as ethnic clubs. Many of Iowa's towns continue to celebrate their ethnic roots. Manning, for instance,



still celebrates several German festivals every year, including Maipole Dances, Kinderfest, Oktoberfest and Weihnachtsfest. In June 2002, the town hosted its 119th annual Skueten Verein King Shoot.

Holding on to the “old” customs and language provides a sense of community and honors the good things about one’s own family, history, and traditions. A sense of ethnic pride can also provide comfort to small groups of “strangers” who find themselves in a new land. Many Iowans still tell stories of how they or their ancestors were considered “foreigners” in some communities because they did not come from the same European country as most of the town’s established residents.

Iowa’s newest immigrants exhibit the same sense of ethnic pride, which includes honoring the religious practices their families have been following for generations. We cannot expect them to leave their ethnic selves behind any more than previous generations of immigrants, and we ought to appreciate their desire to surround themselves with the best parts of their own heritage as they make a new home in the United States.

### ***Religious Refugees***

The root of the word refugee is “refuge.” Refugees are people who seek refuge because they are no longer able to live in their home countries. Most refugees flee war-torn parts of the world, like Southeast Asia, Sudan or Bosnia. Refugees also flee environmental disasters, political persecution, or religious or ethnic intolerance. In any of these circumstances, refugees leave their homes under a great deal of stress, often taking great risks to save their lives, and many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. When they flee their homelands, refugees usually find themselves in temporary camps. When influxes of refugees are anticipated, international organizations such as the Red Cross or Catholic Relief set up camps to provide basic necessities such as water, shelter and health care. Sometimes refugee movements are not anticipated and the international community must act quickly to provide even basic services.

Some refugees are able to return home after living in camps, but most wait for opportunities to start new lives in other countries, which can take years. Not all refugees are able to go directly to the countries where they will eventually settle and must stop for long periods in another country on the way. Refugees receive a special immigration status



from the United States government that gives automatic admission into the United States to ease their reunification with family members and allows them to work. Funding for settling refugees and providing short-term assistance comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, some state governments and private organizations. Some employers also provide short-term financial assistance if refugees agree to take jobs.

Refugees are often seen as innocent victims and people are thus eager to offer assistance. Iowans have a rich history of welcoming refugees and providing opportunities to start new lives. Such humanitarian concerns have led hundreds of Iowa families, churches and other organizations to sponsor refugees and help them establish themselves. In this sense, refugees are “invited” by established residents and community leaders. Many Christian churches in Iowa have begun or assisted refugee programs, sometimes offering shelter to people of their own faith and sometimes providing assistance to refugees from nations where other religions predominate.

### ***Immigrants and the Law***

Unlike refugees who are, in a sense, invited to come to the United States to start new lives, immigrants ask to enter this country for one of two reasons: they are joining family members who already live in the U.S., or they are seeking work. The latter immigrants are often referred to as “economic immigrants” and their status in communities is often complicated by their social and legal situation.

Whereas refugees often enjoy support from government and private agencies and their travel to the U.S. is paid for, the majority of immigrants have no such formal support systems. Economic immigrants are often socially isolated, separated from family and friends for long periods until they can find work and establish a home in this country. They might lack contacts in this country who can explain U.S. laws, social customs and neighborhood expectations. Often they are simply poor. Having spent all their money to get here and lacking language skills or professional certifications, they must work long, hard hours simply to survive.

The immigrant’s status is further complicated by the legal complexities of U.S. immigration law. The only set of U.S. regulations thicker than immigration law is the federal tax code, and the complicated rules reflect the great variety of immigrants who wish to enter the U.S.

Under federal immigration law, all foreign-born people enter the United States with an immigration status that either allows them to freely enter the country or that makes their presence here illegal, but the variety of immigration visas is tremendous.

In some years, people from one country are allowed into the United States and the next year they are not. Also, Congress sets quotas for the number of people from some countries that are allowed to enter the U.S. on an annual basis. The application processes for Immigration and Naturalization (INS) services, from getting visitors' visas to becoming a naturalized citizen, can be daunting and take years. When immigrants come to Iowa to take jobs, they can have a variety of work-eligible immigration statuses. For example, immigrants who take highly skilled jobs, for which there is great demand and few American applicants, may have an H1B or H2B visa. Long-term immigrants who are eligible to work in the U.S. are issued Resident Alien cards or "Green Cards."

Of course, not all people who seek jobs in the United States are eligible to do so. There are potentially thousands of immigrants working in Iowa who do not have an official INS document. These "undocumented" workers sometimes obtain forged immigration and other documents to make themselves eligible to work, giving false names, addresses or social security numbers. Employers who hire these immigrants are legally required only to make reasonably sure that the documents workers provide are genuine, but for the undocumented workers, their legal status overshadows every aspect of their lives here.

"Of course, you could say I am stuck, or up against a wall. I am a person who has been here illegally for many years and in those years I have worked for this country without getting anything back. You could say that nothing has changed because I am working to survive and to eat without taking anything from anyone. I am not doing anything wrong or hurting anyone else. I just do the work that they offer me. They are benefiting from my work, and I keep working. Sometimes there is work I can hardly do, but I do it because I have to eat. And we need to be here, although sometimes they do not accept us."

—*"Patricia," single mother and Latina immigrant*

Many undocumented workers and their family members have paid exorbitant border crossing fees and risked their personal safety for an opportunity to work for a decent living in Iowa.<sup>23</sup> Once in the United States, they live in continual fear that they or a family

member will be arrested by the INS and deported back to their country of origin. In order to be able to work, undocumented workers will purchase false documents, typically at a very high cost. They run a greater risk of job exploitation; women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment while on the job. In addition, undocumented workers are often unfairly depicted as criminals.

“I know that I’m doing something wrong, that it’s illegal with the government, but it is the only way that I can survive here. As a Latin American woman, I have to work and take care of my children. I would like to get ahead, but I cannot get a government loan to go to school.”  
—“Amelia,” *Undocumented Latina and single mother.*

Although some immigrants are living in Iowa as undocumented residents, many are in the process of applying for legal resident status. It can take the INS up to ten years to process a family unification petition, which is filed by an immigrant who has his/her “green card,” or the authorization to work in the United States. The petitioner requests that members of his/her immediate family (parents, spouse, children, siblings) also be granted legal status to reside in the United States.

Virgencita de Guadalupe. Te pido que cobras con tu manto a todos las personas que no tienen papeles para trabajar, protegelos de la migración y concedeles que algún día puedan arreglar papeles así como nos ayudaste a algunos de nosotros. Te lo pido por tu hijo que al igual un día tuvo que navegar, junto contigo para que no lo matara Herodes. Así nosotros navegamos a este país para conseguir el pan de cada día. Virgen Santísima, cubranos con tu manto. Cristo Jesús detro de tus llagas escondenos de todo mal.

Virgencita de Guadalupe, I ask that you cover all those who do not have papers to work with your cloak. Protect them from the immigration authorities and one day grant them their papers as you have already helped some of us. I ask this through your Son, with whom you equally suffered when Herod sought to kill him. Thus, we suffer in this country in order to obtain our daily bread. Blessed Virgin, pull us into your cloak. Christ Jesus, in your sorrow hide us from all evil.

—*Prayer written by a Latino immigrant living in Sioux City.*

The ethical questions of illegal entry and forgery are not taken lightly by Iowa’s Christians,

but neither are they taken lightly by immigrant Christians. These individuals have taken a grave risk to obtain work in the United States, chancing arrest and deportation in order to find a job. Most come from poverty-stricken parts of the world where the long-term prospects for an income and quality life are poor. Migration, with or without immigration documents, is their only way to improve the quality of their lives. For the God-fearing breadwinner in Mexico, or the Christian mother in war-torn Central American, the choices are not always easy, but these families have chosen to do what they must to provide for themselves and their families.

“I see my future clearly. As long as I do not have documentation, I do not have a future. I cannot get a vehicle, or buy a house, and for the fact that I am always hiding and scared that immigration is going to catch me. They take you away like a delinquent and you lose everything. So it looks bleak, more because we feel trapped here by the economic situation in Mexico. And we will be in this country for many more years, always hiding from immigration.”  
—*Patricia,* undocumented worker and single mother.

## **A Christian Response to the Sojourner**

Of course, the biblical explanation for human cultural and linguistic diversity is found in the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). God took exception to the people’s defiance against his commandment to “multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1) by building a city to keep people from scattering and a tower designed to reach into heaven. The result was that God “confused their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech,” and thus “scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:7-8).<sup>24</sup>

### ***Hospitality to Strangers***

Despite the scattering of people described in Genesis, Christians are challenged to reject racism, ethnocentrism and nativism. Christians are challenged to get past nationality, ethnicity and language and welcome newcomers as a matter of Christian responsibility. Leaders of all Christian churches—Protestant and Catholic—are committed to human rights for all people, regardless of immigration status. In addition, they call all Christians to reach out to newcomers to assure their basic needs, including housing, food, fair wages, safety, education, and medical care. As the 221st Assembly of the Presbyterian Church noted, “In Christ, barriers no longer divide and alienate; reconciliation is the

new reality. All persons in all cultures are our neighbors. Jesus identified with the stranger in his own context and clearly emphasized hospitality as one sign of the reign of God” (Matthew 25:35-40; Luke 10:29-37).<sup>25</sup>

Biblical scripture has a strong mandate for Christians to embrace the stranger among us, and to make him or her feel welcome. In Exodus 22:21 God reminds us that “You shall not wrong or oppose a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” Indeed, stories about the migration of tribes, families, and individuals abound throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the Bible we learn that Abraham, David, Joseph and Ruth were all sojourners at some times in their lives, just as our great-grandparents may have been sojourners to Iowa a hundred years ago. Many of our own children will leave home communities, travel to new places and perhaps settle outside of Iowa. Hospitality extended to sojourners in the past, present and future informs our faith experience as Christians.

The powerful message that pervades the Old and New Testaments is that when we humbly offer hospitality to a stranger we meet on the road—even someone who might be among the least worthy to receive our attention and help—we encounter God.

- Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).
- In the book of Genesis (18:1-16), the Lord appears to Abraham as a weary traveler. After tending to the needs of the traveler, the Lord as traveler reveals to Abraham that his wife, Sarah, will bear a child.
- Christ tells us in Matthew 25 that when one extends hospitality and aid to strangers, to the sick and to prisoners, “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”
- In Luke 24:13-31, the morning after Christ’s crucifixion, two grieving disciples meet a stranger on the road to Emmaus. At the end of the day the disciples urged the stranger to spend the night with them, and they offered him food and drink. As they shared bread, they recognized Christ at their table.

God reminds us to love our neighbors, to love strangers, as ourselves.

- The story of how a Samaritan showed mercy to a foreigner provides a model of how we should treat others. The Samaritan cared for a fellow traveler even though the two did not share a common ethnic background (Luke 10:25-37).
- Jesus reached out to marginal members of society, to women, outcasts, and the unclean; and Jesus healed, prayed for and took care of Samaritans and Canaanites as well as Jews.

Economic globalization means that sojourners come to Iowa who are as exotic and as challenging as the strangers of Biblical times: Nuer and Rwandan refugees escaping persecution in their African homelands, undocumented Mexican workers seeking opportunities to make a decent living, Laotian settlers looking for new communities. Each new sojourner to Iowa is deserving of our hospitality and generosity, offering an opportunity to challenge our own faith and accept the stranger who travels our roads.

“These are not times when it's easy to welcome strangers. These are times of suspicion and caution and fear of folks who are different. The world situation today just makes it that much more important that the church—the body of Christ in the world—speak the message of reconciliation that God has entrusted to us, and that we act as faithful ambassadors for Christ, by receiving and welcoming the newcomer in our midst.”

—Rev. James Altenbaumer, *United Church of Christ*.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Welcome to Believers***

Not every immigrant is a stranger. Many of the immigrant and refugee newcomers moving to Iowa are Christians. Their Christian backgrounds are quite varied; immigrants might be Presbyterian, Catholic, or Assembly of God. They may have been raised in just one Christian denomination, or they may have converted from one faith tradition to another. They may have been religious lay leaders in their home communities or infrequent participants in religious services.

Regardless of national or ethnic background, Christians are always commanded to treat each other with love and respect. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Bible states, “For in one

spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we are all given to drink of one spirit.” In his 1999 *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II called for a rich communion of all peoples, a communion “willed by God, begun in time and destined for completion in the fullness of the kingdom.”<sup>27</sup>

The image of the “alien” can be unsettling. Xenophobia is a fear of others, of those who seem alien. We are fearful of strangers because we tend to focus on superficial differences like skin color, clothes, language, and because we allow stereotypic images of “the other” to dictate our interpretations of who the stranger is. When we really give it some thought, we share more in common with our newly arrived brothers and sisters than we have differences. For all of us, religion is an important part of our lives. We value our families and our communities, we enjoy fellowship through food, music and sporting events, and we share a common love for God that we express in unique and beautiful ways. The arrival of people who are different from us should be celebrated as a gift to the Christian community and church.

Regardless of their particular religious background experiences, Christian or otherwise, all newcomers to Iowa are children of God and find themselves as strangers in a foreign land. Immigrants and refugees are separated from loved ones and familiar environments. As much as newcomers may need “things,” they need friends more. They need to feel welcome, and wanted. They need friendship and respect.



Sojourners among us, however, are not simply recipients of charity. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, our own religious lives are enhanced and our faith in God and Christ deepened when we immerse ourselves in new spiritual realms. Christ’s disciples discovered this when they began evangelizing in foreign lands after the crucifixion (Acts 13). When we create opportunities for the marginalized to become truly integrated in our religious lives, we receive multiple



and unanticipated blessings. When we open ourselves up to novel religious expressions, through music, performance or festival, we allow the Holy Spirit to “stir-up” what it means to each of us to be Christian.

In a Message for World Migration Day 2000 Pope John Paul II reminds all Christians of their responsibility to immigrants and refugees in today’s global economy:

*The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their Own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid Changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She Senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the Mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their Unhappiness. (no. 6)*



## PART II CHRISTIAN PRACTICES AMONG NEW IOWANS

The next section of this handbook explains in greater detail the immigrant and refugee stories of Iowa's recent newcomers. Each section begins with an overview of why immigrants have chosen to settle in Iowa, followed by a description of the important religious and cultural beliefs and practices of Iowa's newcomers. The objective of these sections is to encourage resident Iowan Christians to develop a better understanding of how these Christian newcomers express their faith.

### Latinos

In response to the availability of jobs in meat processing plants, Latino immigration has increased dramatically throughout the rural Midwest. The majority of new residents who have moved into Iowa since the late 1980s are Hispanic or Latino newcomers from Mexico, Central America and South America. According to the 2000 Census, which certainly underestimated the Hispanic count, almost



83,000 Latinos now reside in Iowa, which is an increase of 153% over the 1990 census. The majority of Latino newcomers have migrated north to the United States to work and to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Although they share the census designation of “Hispanic origin” and often Spanish as a native language, Latino immigrants differ in ethnic and cultural identity, class

background, and personal experiences. A personal identification with a particular state, or even a particular community, is more important than is identification with a country or with the broad category Hispanic or Latino. In fact, outside of the United States there are really no Hispanics or Latinos. The terms are used only in the United States to designate a category of individuals who share a Spanish or Portuguese colonial history.

It is thus a mistake to think of Hispanics or Latinos as representing a homogenous group. Countries of origin include Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil and Venezuela. Newcomers include manual workers and college educated professionals; urban residents and farmers; men, women, and children, and the very young and the elderly.

Today in the United States, it is estimated that at least one in four Catholics are Latino and more than 23 million Latino Catholics currently reside in the United States. But, not all Latinos are Catholic. Missionaries from various Protestant churches, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and other church organizations have successfully evangelized peoples in Latin America for more than one hundred years. In Guatemala, for example, Protestant missionary activity increased dramatically after World War II, and now almost one-third of the population is affiliated with a Protestant Church.<sup>28</sup> The reasons for conversion are varied and include spiritual, economic, social and political factors.

Recent Latino immigrants to large U.S. cities are often drawn to small, charismatic congregations because of the personal contact with existing members of the congregation, the emotional and physical support of the entire congregation, and the leadership opportunities available to the laity. These small congregations mitigate the effects of isolation, uncertainty, and fear that occur among newcomers in an unfamiliar environment. In addition, some people have had interaction with or converted to other religious traditions, including Assembly of God, Presbyterian, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormon, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventists.

In the United States today, many Christian denominations, including the United Methodist, Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, American Baptist and Lutheran, have national Hispanic Ministry plans.

## *Mexico*

Almost three-fourths of new Latino immigrants come from Mexico, and most of these come from a few states located in west central Mexico, which include Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí and Guerrero.<sup>29</sup> The relationship between Latino immigrants and their hometowns in Mexico remains strong, especially among first generation newcomers. Direct phone communication, the availability of Spanish language media, and the proximity of Mexico to the United States means that immigrants are often in daily contact with family, friends and neighbors back home. Annual trips back and forth across the border are common.

“To go to Mexico is nothing. I mean people just go in a car. I will ask someone, what are you doing next week? People will say, oh, work. And, all of a sudden, the family will come and say, Sister, will you give us a blessing? We are going to Mexico. When are you going to leave? Oh, in a few hours. They decide just like that. And they can go. And it is very important that they go.”

—*Sister Karen Thien, former Hispanic minister, Sioux City, Marshalltown*

Social networks established between sending communities in Mexico and receiving communities in Iowa are an advantage to both Mexican newcomers and Anglo residents. Hometown networks assist the recent arrivals with housing, employment opportunities and community services. Such networks also provide a steady source of employees for many U.S. companies. Frequently social networks are established between a particular sending community in Mexico and a town in Iowa. For example, a large number of Latino residents in Storm Lake are from Santa Rita, Jalisco. In Marshalltown, more than 3,000 Latino newcomers are also residents of Villachuato, Michoacan. In Postville many are from El Barril, San Luis Potosi. In the Sioux City area, one of the primary sending communities is San Julian, Jalisco.

“I prefer [people] call me Mexicana because they know where I am from, not from any other place like Puerto Rico. I think it is from so much pride [laughing] that the Mexicans have in saying where they are from, from a small town or a city.”

—*“Gloria,” 23 year old Latina immigrant*

Latino newcomers in Iowa provide crucial financial assistance to their families, communities,

and churches back in Mexico. Nationally it is estimated that during the year 2000 Mexicans living in the United States sent more than 6.6 billion dollars, or 17 million per day, back to their families in Mexico.<sup>30</sup> Monies are used for family life expenses, community improvement projects (electricity, water, plaza and street renovation, church construction) and to support annual patron saint fiestas. Typically each village or community has one or more chapels or churches in which resides a statue of a Catholic saint, the Virgin, or Christ. In Villachuato, Michoacan, the patron saint is a statue of the crucified Christ, whom the Villachuatans call El Señor de la Salud. The annual fiesta is held each year during Semana Santa (Holy Week). In 2001, more than \$40,000 was sent to Mexico by Villachuatans living in Iowa and Nebraska to pay for the annual fiesta.

Prayer to El Señor de la Salud, patron saint of Villachuato, Mexico.

Señor de la Salud

Tu eres mi bienhechor

Porque me creaste, te adoro

Porque eres mi fin, te deseo

Porque eres mi bienhechor, te doy gracias

Porque eres mi salvación, te invoco

Cuidanos y socorrenos.

Señor de la Salud

You are my creator

Because you create me, I adore you

Because you are my end, I want you

Because you are my creator, I give thanks

Because you are my salvation, I invoke you

Take care of us and rescue us.

—Villachuato, Michoacán, Mexico. 1999

### ***Central America***

Some Latino newcomers are political refugees who fled from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador during the revolutionary conflicts that occurred in these countries from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. The largest group of refugees is from Guatemala, and many of them live in the greater Sioux City area. The majority are

members of the same indigenous language and ethnic group, the Kanjobal Maya from the Western highlands of Guatemala.

Although political refugees qualify for legal immigration status, many Central American refugees fled their home without the help of official refugee organizations. Instead, individuals came alone, or perhaps with the private help of family members or U.S. churches. Asylum cases are often difficult to process and approve when the refugee enters the United States without proper authorization, and for some countries the legal status of political refugees has been hindered by U.S. intervention into Central American conflicts.

### ***Southwestern United States***

In some cases Iowa's Latino newcomers were born and raised in Texas or California, or lived in these states for many years before they moved to Iowa to find work and a more tranquil life. In contrast to places like Los Angeles, Iowa towns offer greater security and provide a healthier environment for families. Language barriers, the cold weather, and a completely different socio-cultural milieu make adjustments difficult even for Latinos born in the United States.

### ***Religious Background***

The religious practice of Latinos varies from one region of Latin America to another, but since the majority of Latino newcomers in Iowa are from Mexico, the following discussion will provide a greater in-depth description and understanding of Mexican culture. Of course, as in any large nation, even all Mexicans are not the same. Variations in class, gender, ethnicity, and length of time in the United States, influence the particular beliefs and practices of any individual.

Historically, the indigenous peoples of Mexico, Central America and South America converted to Roman Catholicism during the Spanish/Portuguese colonial regimes. Conversion to Catholicism did not, however, eliminate indigenous religious beliefs and practices. Many Native American customs, beliefs and cultural symbols were incorporated into daily expressions of Catholic faith and devotion. As a consequence, the popular religiosity of Latinos developed along different paths from Catholicism practiced in Europe, where the earliest Christians incorporated Celtic and Anglo-Saxon traditions into important Christian celebrations.

According to theologian Father Orlando Espin, popular religiosity is how Latinos experience God in a culturally authentic way, and it is extremely important in the reinforcement of family and community values.<sup>31</sup> Popular religiosity reflects a normative set of religious beliefs and practices and should not be viewed as either superstitious or inferior.

### **The Story of the Virgin of Guadalupe.**

The Spanish conquest of the Aztecs was finalized in 1521 when Cortes captured the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan and the colonial capital, Mexico City, was constructed upon the ruins of the majestic city of the Aztecs. In 1531 a commoner, Juan Diego, was walking along the side of Tepeyac Hill, located just north of Mexico City. The Virgin Mary appeared to him and spoke to him in Nahuatl, his native tongue. She told Juan to ask the bishop to build a shrine for her at the site. Juan Diego made the request to the bishop, but no one believed him. Juan returned to the hill, and Virgin again appeared before him. She told him to gather up the flowers that were blooming on the hillside and ask the bishop again. Juan gathered the flowers and when he shook out his mantle in front of the bishop, the Virgin's image appeared miraculously impressed upon the cloth. She appeared as a dark-complexioned mestiza, or Indian woman with long, black hair. A new shrine was constructed to house the image. Tepeyac Hill, the location of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, had been a sacred location for the indigenous peoples of central Mexico prior to the arrival of the Spanish. The Aztec goddess, Tonantzin had been venerated on that location for many generations.



What immigrants share in common is a desire to worship God in their own language, with familiar music, and to be able to incorporate their most important religious symbols and celebrations into their expressions of faith. In this way an immigrant congregation is able to develop a sense of community identity as well as personal identity.

### **Importance of Religion**

Religion is one very important way to keep alive all an individual's relationships with family and community. Mexicans understand their faith as a legacy that is bequeathed

from parents and grandparents. Faith is a core component of Mexican cultural identity along with language, an emphasis on family and community responsibility, a strong work ethic and formality.<sup>32</sup> Many times it is difficult to separate religion from other domains of life and it is central to one's daily existence. *Gracias a Dios*, "thanks be to God," is a phrase that introduces many conversations. It is not just a cliché, but a heart felt acknowledgement of the ever-present God in people's lives.

Many Mexicans see life as a constant struggle, and they describe suffering as a part of life. Indeed, the challenges that most newcomers face on a daily basis are reminders of this. Although life in the United States has many advantages over living conditions in Mexico, big and small problems must be solved all the time. During Holy Week, the Christ many Mexicans most closely identify with is the crucified Christ—the Christ who suffers the mental and physical abuses of others.

Pobre Mexico. "Tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos." A Mexican saying:  
"Poor Mexico. So far from God and so close to the United States."

The health of self, family members and friends is always a concern. Prayers and other devotions frequently reflect the desire for good health and protection from harm and evil influences. Traditional curers, such as curanderos/as, remain important sources of healing for many Mexicans. Curanderos combine herbal remedies and massages with religious items, such as Holy water, colored candles, and prayers.

"I think that Mexico is a country where religion has been strongly inculcated so even if someone comes to the United States, their faith and principles are very strong. You know what you want, what you love, and what you bring in your heart. These are very precious values in our culture, our faith."  
— "Rita," *Latina immigrant and mother of four*

## Devotions

Most Mexican newcomers to Iowa have a Catholic background, and daily prayer is probably the most common expression of personal devotion. Individuals pray privately and together as a family at least once a day. Prayer may be formal prayers like the Our Father or the rosary, or might be a more informal conversation with God, Christ or the Virgin.



"Every night I pray to God for the next day, and for the day that passed. God listens to me. He sees that I am asking from my heart. I humbly believe that He listens to me. I am asking sincerely because you do not have anyone else to ask except God. So He knows He has to hear us."

— "*Gloria*," *Latina immigrant*

Miracles are signs of God working in people's everyday lives and reflect the deep faith of men and women. A common way to share faith experiences is to talk about the miracles one has experienced. Miracles cover a wide variety of life situations, but most commonly will refer to recovery from illnesses or health related problems and protection from harm for either self or a family member.

"My [youngest] child was born with a heart defect and well, he is still living. I think that is a big miracle. He survived two operations and he is here... God gives us the means. We pray but we have to use the means He gives us to heal."

— "*Rosita*," *Latina immigrant*

A *manda* is a sacred promise that an individual makes to God, the Virgin, or a saint as a thanksgiving and recognition of the fulfillment of a prayer or personal request. Safe trips back and forth across the border, good health, or employment may be recognized by religious devotions. At St. Mary's Church in Marshalltown a man who arrived safely back in town from a trip to Mexico expressed his thanksgiving, or completed his *manda* to the Virgin, by walking from the back of the church to the altar on his knees and then prostrating himself in front of the altar.

"There are so many things that cannot be explained. First, when my son was only a little baby two days old, I was told he was dying. He had a very high temperature, and the doctor said he could not do anything because the baby was only two days old. With all my heart, I asked God not to take him away. He was my first son, and one cares so very much for her children. I promised God I would go wherever he chose to send me to complete my *manda*. I put the baby in water, and he recovered."

— "*Anita*," *Latina immigrant*

Another expression of a *manda* is the completion of a pilgrimage to a holy location. In



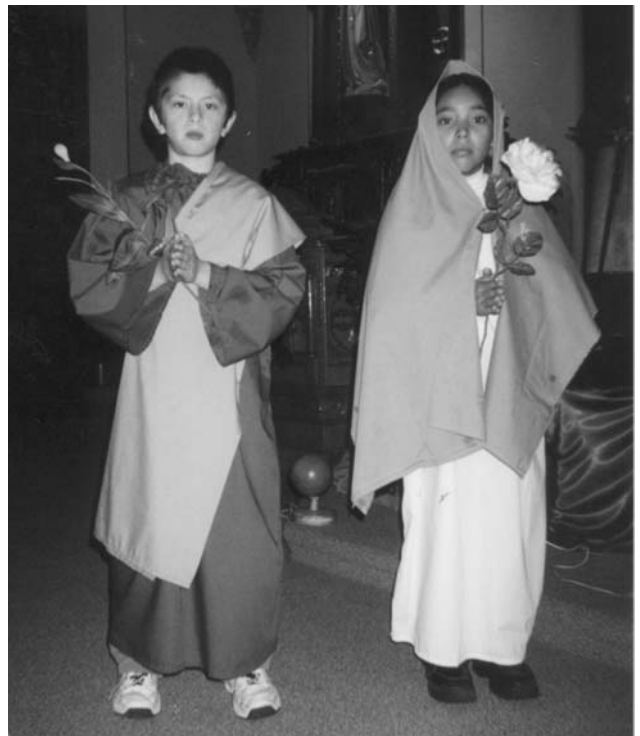
Mexico, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is an important pilgrimage site and each day hundreds of people visit the site where the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego. Many approach the main altar walking on their knees, with the hands reaching out, reciting prayers. In Iowa, the Grotto of the Redemption, located in West Bend, is a pilgrimage destination for Latino immigrants living in the small towns of Hampton, Clarion, Belmont and Iowa Falls. Visits to the grotto, called *la iglesia de piedra* (the stone church) by the immigrants, conclude with lighting candles and thanking God through prayer.

## Celebrations

In addition to the celebrations associated with the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, First Communion, and marriage, Mexicans bring other traditional religious practices with them when they come north. Many of these practices emphasize community responsibility and involvement in religious life. Variations in these celebrations occur from one part of Mexico to another but some of the more common and widespread practices occur during Christmas and when children reach particular ages.

### *Las Posadas*

At Christmas the Mexican custom of *las posadas* (lodging) is celebrated in many neighborhoods. The posada tells the Biblical story of Mary and Joseph's nine-day journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Children dress up as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and angels. By candlelight they walk from one home to another looking for shelter. They are turned away time and again, but finally find an "innkeeper" to take them in. Although the posada ought to be celebrated every night from December 16-24, it may be shortened to fit people's busy work schedules. For some Iowans the posada brings back wonderful memories from childhood. Elena is the



daughter of Mexican migrants who settled in Iowa more than 25 years ago. Recent Mexican newcomers to her small hometown have introduced the posada activity. Elena comments, “I have not done this for 26 years. The change in temperature is a big difference, but the spiritual feelings brought back remain the same. This brings back such memories.”

### ***Presentación***

After baptism, a three-year-old child may be presented to the congregation by his/her parents and godparents. The child, who is dressed in his or her best outfit, sits alongside the priest during mass, and at the end of the service the parents and godparents present the child to the priest, who gives the child a blessing. The parents will host a fiesta after the mass.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Quinceaños***

*Quinceaños* is a community celebration for a young girl on her fifteenth birthday. A girl will have a special mass said in her honor, and then a large, community fiesta will follow the worship service. Usually, individuals who are selected as her godparents for the event give special items to the young girl. These items have significant symbolic meaning. Many girls bring with them a baptismal shoe, which represents the beginning of a girl’s life with God. A ring, usually a birthstone, represents the girl’s bind to the community and is given by a member of the community. Her new dress is symbolic of her new way of life. She carries open flowers because this is the most beautiful time in her life. Her crown represents the fact that she has given up her childish ways. The girl also receives a medallion symbolic of her promise to dedicate her life to God and Mary. The *quinceañera* is escorted to the altar by her parents through an arch ideally comprised of fourteen male (*chambelones*) and fourteen female (*damas*) friends. Each couple represents one year of her life. The fiesta afterwards, with plenty of food and music, presents the girl to the community as she completes her first waltz.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Prayers recited by a quinceañera.**

*Te ofrezco, Señor, mi juventud; guía mis pasos, mis acciones, mis pensamientos. Concedeme la gracia de comprender tu mandamiento Nuevo, el mandamiento de amarnos unos a otros. Que tu gracia en mi no resulte vana, te lo pido por Jesucristo, tu Hijo, nuestro Salvador y Redentor. Amen.*

Lord, I offer you my youth; guide my steps, actions, and thoughts. Grant me the grace to understand anew your commandment to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. That your grace will keep me from becoming vain, I ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

*Oh, Maria, Madre mia, presenta mi ofrenda y mi vida al Senor. Se siempre mi modelo de mujer valiente, mi fortaleza y mi guia. Tu tienes el poder de cambiar los corazones; toma pues, mi Corazon y hazme digna hija tuya. Amen.*

Oh, Mary, my Mary. Present my offering and my life to God. Always be my model of a courageous woman, my strength, and my guide. You have the power to change hearts. Take, then, my heart and make me your dignified daughter. Amen

### ***Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe***

December 12 is the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is one of the most significant religious celebrations for all Mexican immigrants in the United States. In fact, the recognition of this feast day may be more important in the United States than it is in Mexico. The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol for all Mexicans, regardless of place of origin, and is an important reminder of their cultural identity. Devotions to the Virgin begin in the early morning hours with *mañanitas*, early morning prayers, and songs, which are used to greet the Virgin. Later in the day, a mass, an enactment of the visitation of the Virgin to Juan Diego, and a dance may conclude the fiesta.

Statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe are usually the first Mexican symbol placed in a church where immigrants come to worship. Fresh flowers, candles and perhaps a large book for recording prayer



petitions are arranged near the statue. For Mexicans, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Mary with whom they identify. She is the apparition of the Virgin Mary who came to Mexico and chose to seek out a poor, peasant man. As one young adult Latina immigrant indicated, “For me the Virgin [of Guadalupe] is saying you are Latina, Hispanic, Mexicana. She is part of me, or I feel a part of her.” In addition to the celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the entire month of May is referred to as the Month of Mary. Typically statues of the Virgin in the church are adorned with flowers and daily rosaries are recited in her honor. A short procession of a statue of the Virgin around the block is a common expression of honor and devotion. Processions may occur at other times, too.

“Our Lady of Guadalupe is the mother of our Lord and she chose to come to Mexico...hundreds of years ago to a humble native man of those times. She means a lot to us Mexicans because she is the mother of God and we have only adoration for her. It is so important that she chose Mexico to have her cathedral built. It is so important that she chose this place to be with us.”

—“Gloria,” *Latina immigrant*

### ***The Feast of All Saints***

Each year, at the beginning of November, which corresponds to the Feast of All Saints (November 2), many Mexicans will honor and pray for the deceased members of their families. On the Day of the Dead in Mexico, the living visit the grave sites of the deceased and decorate the graves with flowers and candles. Rosaries might be recited in the cemetery, home or church. Among people from Central Mexico, candied skeletons and skulls are used to decorate home altars. The prayers and devotions to the deceased are reminders of the connection the living had and continue to have to the deceased members of their families.

### ***Godparenthood***

*Compadrazgo* is the Spanish term for godparenthood, and it literally means co-parenthood. The relationship between the parents of a child and the child’s godparents is as important as the relationship between the child and his or her godparents. Once a godparenthood relationship has been established, adults will use the terms *compadre* (co-father) or *comadre* (co-mother) with each other. Either relatives or non-relatives may be selected as compadres,

who then assume important responsibilities in the spiritual development of a child. Godparenthood ties also involve life-long reciprocal obligations between the sponsor and the child and between the adult *compadres*. Often the selection process involves a formal petition from the parents to the potential godparents. It is a great honor and a responsibility to be chosen as godparents. Among Latinos, godparent ties reinforce familial, friendship and community networks.

The most important occasion for the selection of godparents is baptism. Often relatives, parents or siblings, of a couple are asked to serve as the child's godparents. Other sacramental occasions that involve the selection of godparents include confirmation, First Communion, and marriage. In addition, godparents are chosen to help in the celebration of a girl's *quinceaños*. The selection of godparents for a wedding and *quinceaños* celebration will involve more than one couple or individual. Godparents for weddings and *quinceaños* are asked, or may volunteer, to purchase specific items that are used in the ceremony or in the reception that follows.

Godparent ties are not limited to religious occasions. As "sponsors," a couple or an individual may become a godparent to help celebrate secular events in a child's life such as school graduation or a birthday. In Mexico, large, expensive purchases such as a motorcycle can be supported by financial assistance solicited from *compadres*. Any adult couple probably has dozens or more *compadre* relationships with community and family members living in both the United States and Mexico.

### **Church Leadership**

In addition to weekly mass, the celebration of the sacraments, and the participation in annual liturgical activities, many immigrants participate in a wide range of religious activities in Mexico and in other parts of the United States. A major difference between Mexican immigrants of today and European immigrants who came to the United States a hundred years ago is that formally trained clergy rarely accompany the new immigrants. Indeed, in many parts of rural Mexico, a shortage of clergy is an acute problem. The shortage of formally trained religious and the anti-clerical position of the national government since the end of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919) has meant that in many cases local lay leadership has been important in the organization and maintenance of many religious activities and traditions.

Many times lay leaders have participated in faith development retreats such as *cursillos*. In homes and in the local community women frequently emerge as religious leaders. As immigrant newcomers in Iowa, these women, as well as male lay leaders, bring leadership gifts with them. Because of language barriers, and other difficulties associated with immigrant status, the leadership abilities are not always recognized and appreciated.

- Some women are *rezadoras*, or prayer specialists, who were taught by another woman, such as an aunt or mother, how to lead the praying for a rosary or a novena. They know the songs and the prayers, or have copies of the prayer booklets. Rosaries and novenas may be recited on a number of different occasions and are conducted in both homes and churches.
- Prayer group leaders, who either facilitate a Bible study or a charismatic prayer group, are also often women. Participants include men and women, but among immigrant communities throughout Iowa, females dominate the leadership positions in many prayer groups. These prayer groups are frequently grassroots expressions of religiosity. Weekly meetings provide opportunities for immigrants to reflect on how their personal experiences articulate with the Word of God. Participants listen to each other's stories, and provide support to each other through prayer.

"We are God's instruments. When you want to work for God, God says, 'yes, I need you' and He begins to work in us. He helps us to improve many things, and to teach us to pray for things that we did not know how to pray for. But the Holy Spirit is wisdom and He teaches us, He leads us to pray so we can teach others to pray, too."

— "Rita," *Latina prayer group leader*

In some rural areas of Mexico and Guatemala, lay leaders have been trained as Delegates of the Word. What this means is that a man or woman has been trained to direct a short religious service that focuses on readings from Bible and the singing of hymns. The service closely follows the Liturgy of the Word, or the first part of a Catholic mass. Old and New Testament readings, psalms, a short homily, and songs are part of the worship. In areas with priest shortages, lay leaders fulfill valuable religious and social roles in the community.



## The Africans

Most Americans think of Africa as one big country inhabited by a homogeneous population of “Africans.” In fact, Africa is the world’s second largest continent and has 49 countries. These countries range in size from the largest, Sudan, which is four times the size of Texas, to the smallest, The Gambia, which is one-fourth the size of Iowa. Far from being a homogeneous population, Africans speak more than a 1,000 different languages and identify with an even larger number of distinct ethnic groups.



The largest number of African refugees in Iowa came from Sudan. Other smaller populations have arrived from Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Congo, Chad, Togo, Ivory Coast, and Liberia. The refugee status of most of Iowa’s African newcomers is important. As we pointed out in the beginning of the handbook, refugees differ from immigrants because they are no longer able to live in their home countries. This is certainly the case in Africa, which has the world’s largest refugee problem. Indeed, Africa only has about one-fifth of the world’s population, but it has more than one-half of the world’s refugees.

There are a number of reasons Africa has so many refugees and many of them come to the United States and Iowa. As an example, let’s look at the situation in the Sudan. This huge country—like the majority of African nations—was not created by the Africans who lived there, but rather by Europeans. The area was a single British colony from 1889-1955, but its million square miles incorporated many different languages, ethnic groups and religions. In Sudan today there are over 100 languages spoken.

Throughout much of colonial history in Africa, Europeans used “divide and rule” methods of government. That is, they encouraged conflict among indigenous groups in order to discourage their cooperation against European rule. The primary point of conflict encouraged by Europeans in the Sudan was between Muslim groups in the northern half of the country and non-Muslims (including Christians) in the south. Unfortunately, the conflict between these two populations did not end when the British pulled out and Sudan achieved its independence in 1955. On the contrary, it got worse. The result was a civil war that continues to rage today. Sudanese refugees in Iowa and the United States are fleeing this decades-old conflict. The United States receives refugees from both the north and south regions of Sudan, but most Sudanese refugees in Iowa are Nuer people from southern Sudan and most of them are Christians.

Like all refugees, African refugees were torn from their homes and can no longer live there. Returning home may be a long-term goal, but it is not always realistic. They come to Iowa to start over again and try and create new lives for themselves and their children.

Coming to a new and strange place like Iowa presents a number of challenges for African refugees. We often hear their complaints about the cold winters, but there are more serious matters to contend with. First, there is the challenge of being black in predominately white communities and workplaces. Second, as with most immigrants and refugees, there are language barriers. Although many Sudanese refugees speak English, most do not, and learning English takes a great deal of time and effort. Third, there are often significant cultural barriers for African refugees, an important one being religion.

There is no single African religion. Religion and systems of thought in Africa are as diverse as African languages and ethnicities. Coptic Christians in Egypt believe that Christianity was brought to Egypt by St. Mark the gospel-writer and Coptic monasteries were established as early as the 4th Century AD. Christianity reached Ethiopia in the 4th Century AD and Christian monasteries were established there in the 5th Century. Christian churches in Egypt and Ethiopia thrived several hundred years ago. Christianity was brought to parts of sub-Saharan Africa by missionaries as early as 250 years ago and was even more widely spread under European colonialism.



Islam was brought to Northern Africa in the 7th Century and today millions of Africans who live the Northern third of the continent are Muslims. However, it is too simple to say that all Africans are either Christians or Muslims. Indeed, traditional religions remain popular in many areas. Despite the fact that Christianity and Islam are found across the continent, there are two general trends in contemporary African religion that bear mention.

### *Spirits*

The first is that while Africans profess Christianity or Islam, it is not unusual for many to participate in rituals and practices that are also associated with traditional religions. Weddings, for instance, might be held in churches and performed by ordained Christian clergy, but include traditional elements that seem decidedly non-Christian to westerners. Ancestor spirits, for example, are often assumed to be present at important functions, so they might be formally recognized during the ceremony with songs in their honor. Such practices are not intended as worship, but as a way of recognizing the departed souls who are assumed to keep an interest in earthly affairs.

Most Africans trace their family affiliations through descent from one ancestor, and recognizing these ancestors reinforces important kinship and ethnic ties, but it also signals some distinctly African ideas about the supernatural. Even though many Africans are Christian or Muslim, both of these religions are flexible enough to accommodate the African understanding that a person's spirit does not disappear at death. What seems like a blending of religious beliefs to many Western Christians makes perfect sense to many Africans, who simply believe that all souls, both good and evil, remain available for communication with the living, not merely those few who have been venerated as saints.

A Christian refugee from Ethiopia named "Robert" shared his observations about coming to the U.S. One of his most profound impressions was the American emphasis on individualism. This contrasted sharply with his experience in Ethiopia. What disturbed him the most about individualism is that it de-emphasizes people's obligations to their families and communities. The result is a society that often seems incoherent to Robert. There is precious little to hold families, communities and even churches together. "They are held together with a very thin thread," he said. In his view, there is a constant struggle in our society between me-first individualism and God.

## *Denominations*

The second theme in African religion concerns the development of distinctly African churches that are based on Western Christianity. There are many religious denominations in Africa that began as Anglican, Methodist, Catholic or other western churches but have taken on unique African characteristics. Christ remains the central figure in these churches, but worship styles and political perspectives are often quite distinct from the expectations of Western churchgoers.

These denominations tend to be charismatic and rely heavily on personal revelations and the enthusiasm and faith of their members. Services are often longer, more enthusiastic and noisier than those in most Western churches. The music is often pulsating and relies heavily on drums. Also, the worship “service” itself is rarely confined to an hour on Sunday morning. Some groups actually begin worship on Saturday night, worship for an hour or two, begin again on Sunday morning and continue through most of the day.



In both of these general trends in African religion, there is a common theme: For most Africans, religion is deeply personal. Whether they practice Christianity, Islam or a traditional religion, Africans are flexible about allowing worshippers to situate God in their lives in terms that make sense to themselves. As a result, African converts to Westernized Christian denominations (or even Islam) tend not to treat a religion as an impersonal, take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Instead, many Africans have found ways to apply the principles of Christianity within their own lives and in their own society according to the local, cultural context.

“Gloria” is a Rwandan refugee who arrived in the United States in 1995. One of the first things she noticed about Christianity in this country is that Americans spend much less time praying in groups than in Rwanda. Here, group prayer might last a few minutes, but in her homeland, prayer meetings often lasted four hours or more, or even overnight.

Christians in Rwanda also often fasted during important holidays, but this practice is quite rare in the U.S. Also, Rwandan styles of worship often included a good deal of dancing and singing. In Africa, it was also common for people to pray for basic necessities like food and shelter, while that rarely happens here. Despite these differences, Gloria noted the similarities between Christian life in African and Iowa. “The gifts of the spirit,” she said, “are the same in any church or denomination....Asking God to cure my mother in Rwanda or your mother here is the same thing.”

Many African refugees in Iowa bring these unique perspectives with them. Even among the most devout Christians and Muslims, Africans do not leave their cultural selves at the church or mosque door. They bring their personal understanding of God, the supernatural and religion with them. Of course, many African Christians practice their faith in ways that are quite comfortable to most Iowans, but we must remain open to the idea that Christians from other cultures may bring with them distinct ideas about the role of religion in life and in the church community.

### Southeast Asian Refugees

Iowa has a proud history of welcoming Southeast Asian refugees. In 1975, Iowa was the only state to welcome thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia, and since the 1970s, thousands have come here. Most Americans remember the so-called “boat people” of Vietnam, 600,000 of whom risked their lives on the open sea to escape the communist regime in Vietnam. Many used un-sea-worthy craft, including oil drums strung together with rope. An estimated 45% of the boat people died at sea. In 1975, Iowa was the only state to open its arms to thousands of Tai Dam (or Black Tai) and other Lao, Khmer (Cambodian) and Hmong refugees who fled the aftermath of the Vietnam War to settle in the United States.



Hundreds of Iowa families, churches, and communities sponsored families. They located across the state in communities large and small, and Iowa became the first and only state to have a government agency to work on refugee issues. This agency went through several organizational and name changes, but it eventually became the Bureau of Refugee services (BRS). For more than 25 years, the Bureau of Refugee Services has settled thousands of refugees in Iowa from around the world.



Southeast Asians practice a variety of indigenous and Western religions. In Vietnam, for example, traditional religion involved a mixture of animism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Christianity was first brought to Vietnam by Catholic monks in the 16th Century and gained even wider followings after France made Vietnam a colony in 1887. French Catholic missionaries developed the Roman-style alphabet for the Vietnamese language used today.

Today about 10% of Vietnamese are Catholics. In many U.S. communities with substantial Vietnamese populations, large Catholic Vietnamese churches have been built. Protestant missionaries reached Southeast Asia later than the Catholics. The Christian and Missionary Alliance did not even start in Vietnam until 1911, and the majority of Vietnamese Protestants in the United States trace their church history to the *Tin Lanh* or “gospel” church established then.<sup>35</sup>

The most important Vietnamese Holiday is *Tet*, the Lunar New Year. This holiday is usually celebrated in late January or early February. Despite the non-Christian origins of *Tet*, many Vietnamese Catholics have combined elements of traditional *Tet* ceremonies with Christian ritual. For example, many Vietnamese Catholics use *Tet* to as a time to seek penance, ask forgiveness for sins, and thank God for blessings received. In addition to traditional *Tet* ceremonies, many Vietnamese Catholics attend mass before visiting the homes of friends and family to express their wishes for a happy and profitable New Year.

Just as European, Latino and African Christians have done, Asian Christians have interpreted Christian principles in the context of their own culture, and have incorporated important ethnic customs in Christian ceremonies.

### ***Respect for Ancestors***

For many Asians, honoring ancestors is an important part of religious life. In its simplest form, people who practice ancestor honoring acknowledge the benefits and opportunities they received from their parents and grandparents, and they thank them in private ceremonies. Involving the ancestors in funerals, weddings and other significant rites of passage is also common. In this sense, ancestor honoring acknowledges the belief that ancestors retain an interest in the family's affairs.

People believe that the ancestors actually have the ability to impact events in their lives and bring blessings or curses, which can seem like ancestor “worship” to many Western Christians. In the case of honoring or worshiping ancestors, it is common for Southeast Asian refugees to maintain small family shrines in their homes. These usually include photos of ancestors and a place to burn incense. Prayers are often offered at these shrines.

### ***Spiritual Harmony***

The Lao often believe in the *Khouan*, or inward reality of humans and that maintaining a balance of good relationships with oneself, one's neighbors and all things is essential. It is necessary to live in harmony with the *Khouan*. There is the seen and unseen, and to most Lao, the latter is more important. There are good and bad spirits in the unseen world. When living in a strange culture, it is easy to lose one's point of reference, and this is particularly the case for the Lao. When their beliefs are destroyed or threatened by the demands of a new society, or when people are sick or depressed, they often blame this on the loss of one the 32 spirits of *Khouan*. Restoring them is essential.

The Lao *Baci* ceremony is practiced widely in Iowa. This ceremony includes a plate of offering (food, for example) and tying a single cotton string about the wrists of every person for whom the ceremony is being held. This string represents a blessing and a way to restore the balance of *Khouan*. At some *Baci* ceremonies, a single string can bring a hundred or more people together.

## ***Buddhism***

Buddhism is also quite common in Southeast Asian cultures. Buddhists worship in temples with monks and nuns, although they can worship privately as well. This religion has been brought to the United States and Iowa, and there is a Buddhist Temple in Des Moines. Buddhism as a religion is based on the life and teaching of the Buddha, who lived in India between about 560 and 480 BC, but its teachings also reflect some of the basic philosophies of Asian culture. In Buddhism, there are Four Noble Truths about life.



- Humans and all other living beings are caught in a cycle of suffering in which their actions (karma) entrap them. Thus, Buddhists believe in reincarnation.
- Suffering is caused by desire.
- The third Noble Truth is that the cycle of suffering can be broken. Buddhists call this end of suffering “Nirvana.”
- The way to Nirvana is the Eight-fold path, which combines ethical and discipline practices, concentration and meditation with faith, and the ultimate transformation to enlightenment. Many of these practices parallel the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments.

## **Spiritual and Physical Needs**

Regardless of the cultural and religious background of Iowa’s newcomers, they arrive with many of the same challenges of all refugees: leaving their homes and loved ones behind, recovering from war, and arriving in a new and strange land with unfamiliar culture and language.

Life is very challenging for immigrants in Iowa. They typically work long hours at difficult jobs. Many times family members live apart from each other, and the immigrants are concerned about the safety and well-being of parents, grandparents, children and siblings who



live back in their home countries or in other locations across the United States. Adequate and affordable housing, language, and immigration status are only a few of the difficulties that immigrants must negotiate on a daily basis. First and foremost, their basic needs of shelter, food and jobs must be met. Once settled, refugees can be helped in additional ways, with translation, transportation, English classes and tutoring.

Being able to worship together in a familiar language, surrounded by familiar cultural symbols is vitally important to the well-being of Iowa's newcomers. Church-based religious and social activities that include immigrants, or that provide them with opportunities to worship God according to their customs, can be one of the truest indications of hospitality and welcoming for immigrants in this country.

Finally, Christians in Iowa can view the different religious customs and practices, including music, religious plays, and celebrations, that the immigrants bring with them as opportunities to expand and enrich our own understanding of religious life.

### The Importance of Church for Immigrants and Refugees

One of the most significant institutions for new immigrants and refugees who relocate in Iowa is the church. Few newcomers are accompanied by professional clergy, and most have no knowledge about how to establish and maintain religious institutions. Instead, they look to already established congregations and churches for religious services and activities. First and foremost they need to find a place where they feel welcome and accepted and where they can worship God as they know Him. The creation of immigrant congregations is an important process in reinforcing cultural identity and in helping immigrants create a sense of belonging to a community.

Most worship services in Iowan churches seem strange and unwelcoming to immigrants or refugees. Services are in English and structured according to the traditions of several generations of Iowans. Even familiarity with a particular denomination does not mean that an immigrant will feel at home in an Iowa church service. English-only worship services can result in the decreased participation in religious activities by immigrants and lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and unhappiness. Newcomers weigh gains in economic opportunity and political freedom against losses of familiar environments and cultural practices and family separations. As Antonio, a Mexican immigrant says, “Yes, it’s been worth it, because, in reality, we’re economically better off here and we can help our family...when you go to school it’s a sacrifice and a lot of work, but when you finish you’re happy. To be here is also a sacrifice. It’s to help the family and ultimately, that will bring you happiness.”<sup>36</sup>

“Rodolfo” is a Latino immigrant living in a small rural community with about 100 other Latino immigrants. The local churches have services only in English. To maintain his connectedness to church, religion, family and community, Rodolfo has a videocassette of the church and two chapels from his hometown in Mexico. Rodolfo explained that he had asked his family in Mexico to make the video because he missed his church. There is no talking in the video. There are shots of altars and saints, of courtyards, and



outside walls of church buildings. Each shot has a personal and spiritual meaning. Rodolfo can explain which family members had planned and constructed the buildings. Each of the saints has a story to be told, and each building has stories of family and community events Rodolfo remembers from his past. Rodolfo reflects on the loss he feels, "I've lost a lot. Now I feel—I don't know—but before when I went to church I felt more at peace. Now, because I don't go to church anymore I feel bad."<sup>37</sup>

One of the most difficult challenges for newcomers in creating a sense of community for themselves in a foreign environment is responding to how established residents define community membership.<sup>38</sup> How Mexican, Nuer, and Laotian immigrants feel about their communities in the United States will depend on how those communities feel about them. The tendency is to perceive newcomers as different, rather than similar, and differences create separations. Yet, as Christians, many of the recent newcomers to Iowa share a common religious background with other Iowans. They might differ in their denominational affiliations and in how they practice their faith, but they understand themselves as Christians. Religion, then, is a potentially important mechanism for the integration of newcomers into the wider community. When immigrants begin to feel an identity emerging through shared experiences in an active congregation, they can begin to work as a group to communicate to outsiders who they are. If we look at newcomers as people first and newcomers second, we may well begin to recognize many other similarities, too.

On Palm Sunday in 1999, over 200 Latinos and a few Anglo supporters had a peaceful protest and prayer vigil in front of the Marshalltown courthouse. The prayer vigil took place because Latino immigrants felt they were not welcomed in their new communities. English-only legislation and media portrayal of undocumented immigrants as criminals fueled feelings of discrimination toward the immigrants. Palm Sunday was selected because it marked the beginning of Holy Week, and because it could bring attention to the suffering new immigrants were experiencing. Many Latino families walked to the courthouse from St. Mary's Catholic Church and carried palm branches and candles as symbols of religious determination and peace. Some carried signs: "Don't panic, we're only Hispanic." Their primary objective was to tell local Anglo residents that they were family and community people who have a positive contribution to make to Marshalltown.

We cannot assume that any religion remains static. The religious beliefs and practices that immigrants bring with them will be modified by their migration experiences and their encounters with residents of Iowan communities and with other immigrants. One of the most important things we can do is to open our hearts and listen to what immigrants tell us about their faith, their migration experiences, and their feelings about being in a strange land. The more we come to understand the spirituality of the immigrants, the more we will be blessed with an increased faith in our own beliefs and practices. Through the experience of sharing in another's spiritual journey we can come to understand and appreciate better how religion works in our own lives.

### **Integrating Newcomers into Christian Communities in Iowa**

All Christians in Iowa will not have the same opportunities to meet and welcome newcomer refugees and immigrants into their church communities. For some Iowans, newcomers will become part of their worshipping community. For others, newcomers are becoming part of a larger civil community. Others might never have an opportunity to meet newcomers face to face at all. Despite the range of possible encounters, we all can increase our understanding of the daily challenges newcomers face and recognize the small contributions we can make in creating a more welcoming community for all residents. Hospitality has many faces and includes a friendly smile, a letter written to a congressman about immigrants' rights issues, and sharing church space.

This section shares stories of how some Christian communities in Iowa have responded to immigrants and refugees. The specific circumstances in these stories might never be duplicated, but the stories provide ideas for similar social and religious ministries among migrant newcomers. By sharing faith experiences we can better build bridges among all Christian peoples in our communities and throughout our state.

### **Welcoming the Stranger: Social Ministry**

One of the easier ways to welcome newcomers to a community is to help them with social services. Many churches throughout Iowa have responded with social outreach ministries to refugees and immigrants. Church organizations help provide free clothing, bedding, furniture, dishes, and small appliances. ESL classes are offered in church classrooms across Iowa. Sometimes housing needs are arranged through church-based organizations. The

House of Compassion, an ecumenically supported shelter for the homeless in Marshalltown, began as a homeless shelter in the basement of Trinity Lutheran Church. Several guests of the shelter have been immigrant newcomers. Church religious personnel and church members might offer their services as translators for immigrants.

Refugees and immigrants have overcome many difficulties just to arrive in Iowa. Through determination, courage and creativity they have managed to move themselves and often their families over long distances. They have few personal possessions when they arrive. They might have painful memories of the journey that eventually brought them into our communities. Christian churches ought to be aware of the newcomers moving into their communities and learn why the refugees or immigrants are settling in the community. Language, transportation, housing, job training, and social isolation are among the barriers newcomers face in becoming members of their communities.

### *A Shelter for the Homeless*

In 1992 the members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Marshalltown recognized the need for a homeless shelter in their community. Funds were limited, and so the shelter first opened in the church basement (1993). Fifteen churches in the community provided financial and volunteer support. According to Gregg Davidson, pastor at Trinity, “once we opened the shelter, that’s when our paths started crossing with Hispanic people. They almost always got a job. But a lot of times they had no resources besides what they carried with them in their bags. Often times they were not able to afford to rent an apartment, or find a house. So they would come to the shelter. Usually what we did was let them stay in the shelter and save their money so they could rent their own place. And we would help them try and find places that were reasonable, that were clean, where they wouldn’t be taken advantage of.”<sup>39</sup>

As time went by, a sense of community developed between the parishioners and shelter people. High school youth dances held upstairs attracted Hispanic participants. A Latino family volunteered as church custodians. On several occasions, Mexicans fixed a traditional meal for the members of Trinity’s confirmation class. On Sundays church members and shelter individuals mingled, and some became well acquainted with each other. Mexicans attended local high school basketball games with Rev. Davidson. When shelter families moved into their own apartments, church members went to visit them.

After three years, the homeless shelter moved to a new location and became the House of Compassion. Trinity then opened up a free medical clinic on Wednesday evenings. In trying to be part of the community and not isolated from it, Trinity parish continues to seek ways to meet and serve others, and consequently church members' own faith experiences are strengthened.

### *A New Home*

In April 1999 Paulino Sanchez, his wife Catalina and their daughters Mariel and Berenis moved into a new home in Waterloo thanks to the hundreds of volunteers at Nazareth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls who constructed the home through the Greater Black Hawk Habitat for Humanity program. At the dedication ceremony, Paulino expressed his gratitude for “this great gift from God, this house built and the friendship.”<sup>40</sup>

### *ESL Tutoring*

Learning a new language, in a foreign environment is a daunting challenge. This is further compounded by responsibilities newcomers have to work and family. There is little free time. In Hampton, Belmond and Iowa Falls, one-on-one tutoring sessions offered opportunities for Iowans to reach out to newcomers. A reciprocal relationship developed: newcomers learned English and tutors learned about the culture and language of the Latino immigrants now making their homes in the local area.

The tutors are community volunteers—retired school teachers, secretaries, religious education students—who devise their own techniques and projects to teach English. Tutor sessions are flexible; times and days change to fit into the busy schedules of the newcomers. Once a month or so, tutors and their students meet together to share ideas and friendship. Mary Ann Spitzer, a Belmond parishioner, volunteered to tutor after she and her husband had participated in a service trip to Mexico to help build homes in a community there. Reflecting on her outreach now to Mexicans in Belmond, she says, “I can't help but think of my grandfather who came from Germany at age 17. What would my life be like if someone had not helped my grandfather?”<sup>41</sup>

In Ottumwa, Sister Irene Muñoz spoke to several church groups about her ministry with Latino immigrants. Afterwards, two churches began ESL tutoring. The local Episcopal

church decided to begin teaching English. They had been reflecting that God was asking them to begin a new ministry with immigrants, and so they just ventured out and began. Willard Methodist Church identified Wildwood School as the nearest school to their church with an increasingly immigrant enrollment. Parishioners worked together with the school and sent out notices in Spanish that they would be available for tutoring children after school. The school bus would drop children off at the church, and church volunteers would take children home. At the end of the school year, the church hosted an ice cream social for the children and their families.

### **Welcoming the Stranger: Religious Ministry**

Language is certainly one of the most important aspects of an individual's culture. The use of a native language in worship services and other religious activities enables immigrants to feel as though they belong to a community. Language is affective and rich in symbolism, and it affects our spirituality, sense of identity, and our values. To pray in one's native language is the means one needs to connect to God. In a similar way, the music traditions of immigrants are effective mechanisms for reaching out to the supernatural and creating an emotionally connected community. Language and music are not just comforting, each also envisions God in a particular way.

In addition to language and music, immigrants may bring with them particular religious customs and ways of interpreting scripture. Telling the Christmas story through a performance that uses an entire church building (Nuer) or homes within the community (Latino posada) are only different ways to express the same powerful Biblical narratives. Cultural variations occur in many Christian celebrations. To be able to express one's religiosity and share spirituality with others, validates people's cultural and religious identity.

When immigrants and refugees first move into a new community in Iowa rarely are there worship services and other religious activities in any language but English. Even when religious leaders and their congregations want to be welcoming and inclusive, they lack the ability to speak the language of the newcomers. One resource most churches have is church space. We can offer this space to immigrants for their use and encourage them to establish their own worship services.

A cultural ministry is important to immigrants for a number of reasons in addition to serving their religious needs. Public service announcements or brief social/education information can be given during mass. Church services are important social events at which newcomers can meet others from their homeland. This is especially important for young single males who spend most of their weekdays working. In addition to worship and fellowship, the church can offer social service referrals, and occasionally help with translation needs. Ministry personnel are crucial community advocates for the immigrant newcomers in their congregations.

Iowa Christians need to remember that the desire to worship in one's own language, surrounded by familiar symbols, is not a rejection of English and our worship services, but stems from a need to find comfort with God. We need to accept immigrants even when they do not meet our expectations or integrate into our church family. There are many ways to practice Christianity, even within the same denomination. In time, multicultural churches may develop, but this takes planning, patience and teamwork.

### ***Reaching out to Newcomers: An Ecumenical Story***

Elim Lutheran Church was established as a Norwegian Lutheran Church in Marshalltown before the turn of the century. In 1982, Rev. John Allen became Elim's new pastor, and he quickly became an active participant in community life. He initiated the creation of an emergency food box, became the chaplain at the hospital and at Riverview Release Center, and started the Cedar Valley Hospice. In late December 1990, Rev. Allen and the Elim congregation reached out to Mexican newcomers who had recently moved into town. Several Mexicans worked in the kitchen of a Chinese restaurant owned by the Wong family, who attended Elim. The Mexicans asked pastor Allen if he could have a Spanish mass for Christmas. "Sure, no problem," was Allen's response even though he had not studied Spanish for more than 25 years.

Weekly Spanish services at Elim reached a number of Latino newcomers who were not attending any church services because none was available in Spanish. Allen arranged to have ESL classes offered at the church. He also worked with the director of the YMCA to acquire free membership for young Mexican men, which was a way to provide young adult immigrants with a step into the local society. A Mexican choir was formed, and

guitar players were recruited to provide music. Allen and the Mexicans worked together to create a congregation. They listened to each other and through their mutual respect and cooperation, a viable community developed. Padre Juan, as Allen was affectionately called, tried to accommodate some of the important religious traditions of the Mexicans. For example, he acquired a small statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and in a corner of the church made a small altar for her where anyone could come to pray, light candles, and leave flowers. On the Feast Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe the congregation, Anglos and Mexicans together, hosted a well-attended fiesta.

“It was taking the religious symbols of where they came from and putting them into a new place that strengthened the moral fiber because the God they knew in Mexico was the same God who was in the North, in Marshalltown.”

—Rev. John Allen.

Many Elim church members were supportive and appreciative of the presence of Mexicans in their church. One female parishioner stated, “I think it just helps to open everyone up to be around other cultures. We are so sheltered here in the Midwest. There aren’t as many people from other races here. They [Mexicans] are teaching us a great deal about giving and sharing and loving.”<sup>42</sup>

In the summer of 1992, St. Mary’s Catholic Church hired Father Paul Ouderkirk as a Hispanic minister. Father Paul had attended the Spanish services at Elim before Rev. Allen left town, and together they decided to ensure the continuation of the Spanish-speaking congregation. On a Sunday afternoon in late July, Rev. Allen held his final Spanish service at Elim. Father Ouderkirk assisted him, and at the conclusion of mass the two priests, dressed in full vestments, processed with the Mexican congregation down the sidewalks of Marshalltown. The people carried the statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe, hymnbooks were open and everyone was singing. The procession entered the basement of St. Mary’s, and Padre Juan passed the ministry to Father Paul.

The cooperation of the Lutheran priest, John Allen, and the Catholic priest, Paul Ouderkirk, ensured that changes in the Hispanic ministry did not jeopardize community cohesion, even when the congregation transferred from Elim Lutheran to St. Mary’s Catholic parish. Religious and social services were not disrupted;



and if anything, the identity of the Mexican congregation as a community was enhanced. As one Latina stated to Father Paul after the procession from Elim to St. Mary's, "I have never known the church to be as loving and caring as I feel it is now."<sup>43</sup>

### *A Multicultural Church in Sioux City: Cathedral of the Epiphany*<sup>44</sup>

At the turn of the century Irish immigrants established the Cathedral of Epiphany near downtown Sioux City. A generation later, German immigrants adopted the church as their own. Today new generations of immigrants have helped to revitalize the urban parish, which only a few years ago had been slated to become a public oratory, a place where Mass is celebrated daily, but without members or a pastoral ministry.<sup>45</sup> Three distinct cultural groups—Anglo, Hispanic, and Vietnamese—call Epiphany their parish, and each group incorporates its own language and cultural symbols into its worship service. Most of the immigrant members live within the parish boundaries and are young adult couples just starting their families. The future of the parish looks much more positive than it did a decade ago.

Three different priests head each ministry. Importantly, Father Girres, who ministers to the English-speaking members, tries to "tap their faith and their gifts to make sure we haven't left them behind."<sup>46</sup> Each cultural group also has its own parish council, but representatives from each council comprise a parish steering committee, which meets to discuss how each group can learn from the other and work together to build a parish community. Efforts to integrate the three groups are evident in several areas. Tri-lingual services are held at Christmas and Easter. Parishioners work together cleaning the church and joined together to paint the interior of the Catholic school. A parish-wide picnic brings everyone together to share food, games and conversation.

"I think Sioux City is kind of the antithesis of Bethlehem, where (Mary and Joseph) found no place to stay. It was crowded and the inns were full. Whereas, in Sioux City, I think we have welcomed these people, at least I hope we do. But I think the Spanish-speaking and Vietnamese, they also bring us things. They have some great and wonderful values that add to the make-up of the community."

—Bishop Lawrence Soens<sup>47</sup>



Trinity Lutheran Church in Des Moines is another tri-cultural ministry where Nuer, Lao and Anglo congregations work to provide worship opportunities for immigrants and long-standing residents and to help integrate newcomers into a wider worshipping community.

### *Annual Latino Festival in Waterloo*

Throughout northeastern Iowa Latino newcomers live in many locations, from small rural towns to larger cities. According to Sister Jeanette McCarthy, Latino immigrants often “remain hidden-out of fear of being deported, out of fear of not speaking English well, out of embarrassment for being poor, for not owning a car, or because they are not sure [whom] they can trust.”<sup>48</sup> Beginning in September 1996 the Dubuque Archdiocese has helped to organize an annual Latino celebration in Waterloo. This festival brings together Latino immigrants and Anglo residents who wish to support newcomers in Iowan communities. Latino groups in Dubuque, Hampton, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown, Postville, and other locations all help organize the fiesta and contribute items. Local companies also make contributions.

The celebration begins with a special mass at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church presided over by the Archbishop of Dubuque. Delegations that represent more than a dozen Latino communities in northeast Iowa contribute a symbol that reflects the theme for that year’s festival. One fall the theme was ‘How many times should I forgive? Seventy times seven’ and each delegation carried a decorated cross symbolizing their willingness to accept the forgiveness of Jesus and follow him.

After the mass, the fiesta continues in Lincoln Park with food and music and takes on the atmosphere of festivals held throughout Latin America. The festival promotes friendship and communication among Latino newcomers living in Iowa and a greater understanding of Latino culture for non-immigrants who attend.

### **Welcoming the Stranger: Advocacy**

Refugee and immigrant newcomers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by people who are in positions of authority. Unscrupulous landlords and employers might not always operate in the best interest of a newcomer who is uninformed and uncertain of his or her rights. One of the most important actions we can take as a Christian community is to ensure that the human rights of all members

of our communities are protected. We can develop a community consciousness that will prevent others from taking advantage of newcomers.

### ***Clergy Speak Out***

Clergy and laity can be powerful voices in the media to help overcome discrimination and prejudice against refugee and immigrant newcomers. Rev. David Swinton of the Storm Lake United Methodist Church has written several editorials and guest columns about immigration in his community. He has tried to correct unjustified statements, advertising and myths that perpetuate prejudice.<sup>49</sup> In early 1996, the members of the Muscatine Ministerial Association supported a letter to the editor written by Rev. Richard Simpson, Trinity Episcopal Church in Muscatine, who provided a Christian response to the anti-immigration ads that were published in the Muscatine Journal.

### ***Nuns' Billboard Campaign***

In the Spring 2002, SUN [Sisters United News], an organization of Catholic sisters that represents 13 congregations of Catholic sisters in Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois, placed billboards in eight Iowa cities. One-half of the billboards depict a contemporary immigrant family photograph. The other half states, "Welcome the immigrant you once were," and the words overlap a tintype photograph of an early 1900s European immigrant family.



### ***Justice For Our Neighbors***

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) established Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON) in 1999 to assist United Methodist congregations interested in responding to the growing need for immigration services. Clinics provide free legal advice to all immigrants who come. In addition, JFON promotes mission education to increase church and community spiritual commitment and understanding of the uprooted and vulnerable. JFON opened its doors at Whitfield United Methodist Church, Sioux City, August 1999. A year later clinics were organized at Tinity United Methodist Church in Des Moines and Grace United Methodist Church in Omaha. JFON depends upon an ecumenical group of volunteers who are supervised by a regional attorney. Volunteers help

with interpretation and translation; they greet clients and gather the necessary information to determine the client's situation; hospitality workers help with refreshments and provide child care.

### *El Salvadoran Immigrants in Des Moines*

In February 1997 two El Salvadoran men accepted sanctuary from Trinity Methodist Church in Des Moines because they feared to return to their homeland due to the repressive government there. The INS had rejected the men's application for residency, and church leaders were willing to help the men with their appeals. The decision by the Trinity United Methodist congregation to grant asylum as part of its mission came as a reflection of the pastoral letter written by the Cabinet of the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in November, 1996.<sup>50</sup> In its pastoral letter, the Appointive Cabinet urged congregations to

- 1 Become familiar with and support the National Hispanic Plan.
- 2 Invite district superintendent (or another speaker) to address the congregation on immigration issues.
- 3 Advocate for justice and due process with employers and legal authorities in the community.
- 4 Offer the church as a center of hospitality and/or sanctuary for threatened persons and families.
- 5 Support those individuals and agencies working for due process with compassion.

### **A Global Outlook**

It is never easy to move out of one's comfort zone and daily routine. Sadly, many of us complete our responsibilities to our families, work, and community without opening our eyes to the broader consequences of globalization that bring newcomers—refugees and immigrants—into our hometowns. But the reality is that Iowans are as much a part of globalization as are Mexicans, Laotians, Sudanese and many, many others living around the world.

As world processes bring us into physical proximity, our Christian beliefs and practices enable us to come together spiritually and emotionally. For all of us who live and work in Iowa, what begins as an encounter among people who are strangers to each other, can find fruition in the emergence of a community in which each person's life is enriched by knowing and sharing with all God's children.

## Group or Individual Bible Studies and Discussion Topics

### *Topic 1: Recalling Our Immigration Experience*

For many of us, recalling our own immigrant past will help us empathize with the lives and situations of more recent newcomers. With the exception of Native Americans, the United States is a nation of immigrants and Iowa is certainly a state of immigrants. Life in Iowa as we know it today would not exist without our rich history of immigration. Here are some questions and issues to discuss as we think about the plight of today's immigrant and refugee newcomers in Iowa.

- 1. Did some of your ancestors come to the United States from another country? What do you know about their first few years of life in this country? What languages did they speak? What religions did they practice? What language did they use for worship? What helped them become members of their new society?*
- 2. One hundred years ago, there were great waves of immigrants from Europe. Were any of your ancestors among them? What encouraged or forced them to come here? How did they feel they were accepted? What is your reaction to your ancestors' immigrant groups? Do you have different reactions to the other immigrant groups that came around the turn of the last century?*
- 3. Most immigrants and refugees today come from Asia, African and Latin America. Do you react differently to any of these groups than you did to European immigrants? What impact have these groups had on our society, state and communities?*
- 4. Discuss the differences between the old European immigrants and the new immigrants from Asia, Latin America and Africa. What do you believe are the most important differences? What do you believe are the similarities? How will the new immigrants impact U.S. society?*

- 5. What is the difference between immigrants and refugees? Are there differences in terms of how they are treated in the U.S. and Iowa? Do you have different feelings for these two groups?*
- 6. What are the greatest challenges associated with the arrival of newcomers in your community? What are opportunities associated with their arrival?*

### ***Topic 2: Who is an American?***

People who live in the United States usually call themselves “Americans.” This is a kind of shorthand for being U.S. citizens. But many people in the Western Hemisphere also consider themselves Americans because they live in North or South America. People in the U.S. also tend to use the terms “world” to describe their country. We call our professional baseball championship the World Series, although only U.S. and Canadian teams play. We expect other people (including immigrants) to learn English, but most U.S. citizens cannot speak a second language. U.S. Christians often believe our country is also the center of the Christian world. This downplays the importance of Christianity in other countries and in the lives of other people.

- 1. Have you ever been in a situation where you were a minority because of your language, nationality or ethnicity? Can you describe this situation and how it felt?*
- 2. Many people believe that their nationality, culture or language is superior to others. Upon what do they base their assumptions? Can you name some ways that people tend to see God only in terms of their own nation, culture or language?*

### ***Topic 3: Loving Your Neighbor***

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he outlines the Christian’s many responsibilities. Among these, he notes the responsibility to “owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law...love your neighbor as yourself” (Romans 13:8-9).

- 1. What was the importance Paul’s direction in the early days of the Christian church in Rome? How is his direction still important today in terms of welcoming immigrants and refugees?*

2. *Relate an encounter you have had with someone who is different from you. What made that person(s) different from you? Culture? Language? Nationality? Ethnicity? What did you say or do? How did that encounter make you feel? If you could have that encounter again today, what would you do differently?*
3. *When you think about the future of your community and church, what role may newcomers play? What will remain the same in, say ten years? What will be different? How much of this change will be difficult for you personally? How do you think your church and community will respond to these changes?*
4. *As you think about the challenges and opportunities associated with immigrants and refugees in your church and community, how will the Biblical call to “love your neighbor” come into play? Will it make people more tolerant? Will it make people try harder to understand the lives and circumstances of immigrant newcomers?*

#### ***Topic 4: Welcoming the Stranger***

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells his disciples that the Kingdom of God awaits those take care of the needy and strangers. “For when I was hungry you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink, when I was a stranger, you invited me into your homes, when I had no clothes, you gave me clothes, when I was sick, you looked after me, when I was in prison, you came to see me.” When confronted by God about if they had fulfilled their charge to the needy and strangers, some will ask God, “Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or in need of clothes, or sick, or in prison, and did not wait on you?” Then he will answer, ‘I tell you, in so far as you failed to do it for one of these people who are humblest, you failed to do it for me.’”

Every Christian interprets this passage in his or her own way. Some might see this as a mandate, a guiding principle to direct one’s day-to-day life. Others see this passage as a recommendation. It’s a good idea to help the poor and strangers, when we have time or an opportunity arises. For most Christians, translating any Biblical passage into daily life might seem overwhelming. Many take the approach that they will do what they can when they can. Our lives are already so busy with family obligations, work, school activities, and so forth that there is little time to seek out the needy, much less do anything for them.

- 1. Some Iowans make distinctions between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. That is, there are some poor people who deserve our help because they are trying to make their lives better. What about immigrants and refugees? Do we also divide newcomers in terms of those who deserve and don’t deserve our help? What criteria do we use to make these distinctions: language, ethnicity, national origin, or immigration status? Are strangers without proper immigration documentation any more or less deserving than those with documentation?*
- 2. Do people in your church and community make decisions about whether immigrants and refugees fit the mandate presented in Matthew 25:35-36 to welcome the stranger? What kinds of things do people in your community say about immigrants and refugees? Do people consider immigrants and refugees the kind of “strangers” we read about in Matthew?*
- 3. Many churches in Iowa have outreach programs to immigrants and refugees. These include food pantries, clothing banks, providing English lessons, etc. Has your church considered such an approach? Are there other needs among the immigrants and refugees in your communities that could be met by your church? Even without organized outreach efforts like food pantries, how can your church or individual church members respond in concrete ways to the mandate outlined in Matthew 25:31-46?*
- 4. How will you welcome newcomers to your church community? What accommodations will you make so that they worship in a style that is comfortable for them? What changes will this require of your congregation, both in attitudes and practice?*

## **Glossary**

**Alien:** “Alien” is the legal term that describes a person who is not a U.S. citizen.

**Asylum Seeker:** A person who entered the U.S. either legally or illegally who applies to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for permanent residency due to persecution or serious danger in his/her country of origin.

**Asylee:** A person who is granted asylum is an asylee.



**Citizen:** A person born or naturalized in the U.S. is a U.S. citizen. Almost all persons born in the U.S. acquire citizenship automatically and cannot lose it involuntarily. Foreign nationals may become naturalized citizens by lawfully residing in the U.S. for a number of years and satisfying other legal requirements. U.S. citizens—by birth or naturalization—may work and travel freely throughout the country, may travel to and from the U.S. without restrictions, and have all rights and privileges in the U.S. Constitution.

**Culture:** The set of values, assumptions and expectations passed from generation to generation that governs the most basic and essential concepts of human life. Culture includes norms that govern how people behave in a community with respect to dressing, eating, living and working, as well as how they think about such things as “family,” “health,” or “religion.”

**Economic Migrant:** A person who voluntarily leaves his/her country of origin for economic reasons.

**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is related to culture, but it is a more precise term that has to do with our sense of identity as individuals and members of groups. Ethnicity is flexible, often changing for different situations and through life. Ethnicity does not rely on “race,” the physical characteristics of people. The danger in relying on “race” to categorize people is that it contributes to stereotypes. There is always a great deal of ethnic diversity among people who otherwise share physical characteristics.

**“Green Card”:** This is the informal name for the card issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as proof of registry as a legal permanent resident of the U.S. It is officially INS Form I-551 and its official name is “Alien Registration Receipt Card.” The card’s common name reflects the fact that at one time its color was green.

**Immigrant:** An immigrant is a person who voluntarily leaves his/her country of origin to reside in the U.S. “Immigrant” is also legal term for a foreign national who is lawfully permitted to permanently reside in the U.S., usually with a “Green Card.”

**Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS):** An agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, the INS is responsible for enforcing laws regulating admission of foreign-born

persons (“aliens”) to the U.S. and administering immigration benefits, including the naturalization of qualified applicants for U.S. citizenship.

**Non-Immigrant:** A foreign national person given permission to enter the U.S. for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time, such as a tourist, visitor, or student.

**Race:** Describes physical differences among people in terms of skin color, hair or facial features. Most social scientists do not even believe that significant physical differences exist among humans, and biological characteristics are unrelated to ethnicity.

**Refugee:** A person who has involuntarily fled his/her country of origin and who cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of his/her ethnicity, faith, nationality, political opinion, or association with a particular group. Refugee status is an immigration status determined by the U.S. government prior to the refugee’s entry into the U.S.

**Undocumented or Unauthorized Alien:** Sometimes referred to as an “illegal alien.” An unauthorized alien is a person who is in the U.S. without being legally recognized as a refugee, immigrant, legal non-immigrant, or asylum-seeker. This includes persons who have entered the U.S. illegally and “out of status” aliens who were allowed into the United States for a fixed period of time (as students, tourists, etc.) but who have remained in the U.S. after their visas or work authorizations expire.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Christian Resource Guides and Suggested Readings

Hunter, Bob and Carol (1990). *Loving Justice; 12 Studies for Individuals or Groups*. InterVarsity Press.  
Moorman, Donald (1993). *Harvest Waiting*. Guide to Christian Outreach to Immigrants and Refugees. Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Rardin, Sue (2000). The Faces of Faith: How Does Religion Help or Hinder New Immigrants in Finding their Place in American Society? *Trust*: summer 2000, pg 2-11.

Rodriquez, Rev. Isaias A. (2000). *The Hispanic Ministry: Things to Consider in Starting an Hispanic Mission*. Episcopal Church USA: Hispanic Ministry Office.  
[www.ecusa.anglican.org/congr/Hispanic/Hispanic.htm](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/congr/Hispanic/Hispanic.htm)

Salomon, Esaul and Melissa (1995). *Harvest Waiting: Reaching Out to the Mexicans*. Concordia House Publishing. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Schnurr, Msgr. Dennis M. (2000) *Welcoming the Stranger among Us: Unity in Diversity*. A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. Washington, DC. [Also available in Spanish]

Vo, Minh Chau Ngoc and Kari Ann (1995). *Harvest Waiting: Reaching out to the Vietnamese*. Concordia House Publishing. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Wilbanks, Dana W. (1996) *Re-Creating America: The Ethics of U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy in a Christian Perspective*. Abingdon Press.

*Hispanic Ministry: Opportunity for Mission*. Hispanic Ministries Office, Episcopal Church Center, New York. [www.episcopalchurch.org/congr/Hispanic/Hispanic/htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congr/Hispanic/Hispanic/htm)

*Refugees: Have Abandoned Everything, Do Not Abandon Them*. Episcopal Migration Ministries.  
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm/hadbook/handex.html#contents>

*Transformation of Churches and Society through Encounters with New Neighbors*. (1999) Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the General Assembly Council, Presbyterian Church (USA).

*Unity in the Midst of Diversity*. (2000). Office of the General Assembly and General Assembly Council, Presbyterian Church (USA).  
<http://horeb.pcusa.org/oga/diversity>

*Who Is My Neighbor? A Statement of Concern and Commitment to Immigrants and Refugees*. (1994). Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service.  
<http://www.lirs.org/InfoRes/PDFs/neighbor.pdf>

## Appendix B. Christian Immigration and Refugee Resources

### Community of Christ, World Headquarters

Kathy Cackler-Veazey, Diversity Specialist  
(800) 825-2806 or

email: [ccacklerveazey@cofchrist.org](mailto:ccacklerveazey@cofchrist.org)

(The Diversity Action Team includes 12-14

staff members across the country. The team has created an introductory course on diversity experience and a follow-up course that is more complex, including videos and types on types of diversity and dealing with diversity.)

**ELCA, Western Synod**

Urban Outreach Program and some diversity projects.  
[www.elca.org/comm./about.html](http://www.elca.org/comm./about.html) or  
[www.elca.org/dcs/diversit.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs/diversit.html)

**Ethiopian Evangelical Christian Association**

2616 College Street  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
Phone/fax: (319) 2662282

**Episcopal Church National Office of Hispanic Ministries**

Rev. Daniel Caballero, Missioner  
(800) 334-7626, ext. 5349  
Direct dial: (212) 922-5349  
Email: [dcaballero@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:dcaballero@episcopalchurch.org)  
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congr/Hispanic/Hispanic.htm>

**Episcopal Migration Ministries Serving Refugees and Immigrants**

Episcopal Church Center  
815 Second Ave  
New York, NY 10017  
(800) 334-7626  
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm/>

**Episcopal Diocese of Des Moines**

Justice, Peace and Integrity Chair, John Boyd  
Email: [jpboyd@forbin.com](mailto:jpboyd@forbin.com)

**Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

700 Light Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
[lirs@lirs.org](mailto:lirs@lirs.org)  
phone: (410) 230-2700  
fax: (410)230-2890  
[www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)  
(Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the  
Latvian Lutheran Church in America and the  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

**National Council of Churches of Christ**

110 Maryland Ave  
Washington, DC  
J. Maruskin  
Phone: (202) 544-2375, ext 22

**Presbyterian Church (USA), Unity in the Midst of Diversity**

Office of the General Assembly  
100 Witherspoon St.  
Louisville, KY 40202-1396  
(502) 569-5000 (local and international calls)  
(502) 569-5018 (fax)  
<http://www.horeb.pcusa.org/oga/diversity>

**United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)**

General Board of Global Ministries  
Lilia Fernandez  
Room 330  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115-0122  
(212) 870-3805  
Email: [liliaf@gbbm-umc.org](mailto:liliaf@gbbm-umc.org)

**United Methodist Church**

General Board of Church and Society  
Peace with Justice  
Janet Horman  
100 Maryland Ave  
Washington, DC  
Fax: (202) 488-5639

**U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Hispanic Affairs**

3211 4th Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017-1194  
(202) 541-3000  
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/hispanicaffairs/indexeng.htm>

**U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Migration and Refugee Services**

3211 4th Street N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017-1194  
(202) 541-3000  
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs/index.htm>

## Appendix C: Iowa Immigrant and Refugee Ministries

### Hispanic Ministries

Jim Perdue  
National Hispanic Plan Implementation  
Iowa Conference, United Methodist Church  
500 East Court Avenue, Suite C  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: (515) 283-1991

### *Cedar Rapids*

M. Paulina Vallejo  
Catholic Hispanic Ministry  
857 Third Ave, S.E.  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403  
Phone: (319) 362-8689

### *Columbus Junction*

Rev. David Seeley  
Columbus Junction Methodist Church  
517 2nd Street  
Columbus Junction, IA 52738  
Phone: (319) 728-7052

### *Davenport*

Ms. Alicia Harker  
Coordinator of Inter-Cultural Ministry  
Diocese of Davenport  
St. Vincent Center  
2706 N. Gaines St.  
Davenport, IA 52804  
Phone: (563) 324-1912, ext. 244

Rev. Rudolph T. Juarez  
Vicar for Hispanic Ministry, Diocese of  
Davenport  
St. Mary's Rectory  
516 Filmore St.  
Davenport, IA 52802  
Phone: (563) 322-3383  
Spanish Mass: Sunday 11:00 am

Deacon Strader George  
Hispanic Ministry  
St. Mary's Catholic Church  
2220 Newberry St.  
Davenport, IA 52804

Deacon Julian Gutierrez  
Hispanic Ministry, Diocese of Davenport  
2628 Glaspel St.  
Davenport, IA 52804  
Phone: (319) 322-5651

### *Des Moines*

Rev. Kevin Cameron  
Director of Hispanic Ministry  
Catholic Diocese of Des Moines  
Visitation Catholic Church  
1217 E. 9th St.  
Des Moines, IA 50316  
Phone: (515) 266-6695

### Spanish Masses:

Visitation Catholic Church: Saturday  
7:00 pm; Sunday 12:30 pm

Guadalupe Catholic Chapel: Sunday 9:00 am  
601 SE 8th St., Des Moines

Basilica of St. John: Sunday 4:00 pm  
1915 University Ave, Des Moines

St. Bernard's Catholic Church:  
Sunday 11:30 am  
222 E. Pearl, Osceola, IA 50213

St. Patrick's Catholic Church:  
Sunday 11:00 am  
1312 3rd St., Perry, IA 50220

St. Mary's, 1st and 3rd Sunday:  
12:00 noon  
1510 Highland St., Red Oak, IA 51566

Rev. Gil Dawes  
Hispanic Ministry  
Trinity United Methodist Church  
1548 8th St.  
Des Moines, IA  
Phone: (515) 280-8426  
Spanish service: Sunday 9:00 am  
Spanish Bible Study: Sunday 2:00 pm

Rev. Ricardo Peterson  
La Voz de Esperanza  
301 52nd St.  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
Phone: (515) 270-9499

#### *Dubuque*

Sister Jeanette McCarthy  
Hispanic Ministry  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
1425 Iowa St.  
Dubuque, IA 52001-4890  
Phone: (563) 584-0640

#### *Hampton*

Hector Hernandez  
Catholic Hispanic Ministry Webster City Deanery  
405 N. Federal St.  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
Hampton, IA  
Phone: (641) 456-2797  
Spanish masses: monthly in Hampton, Clarion,  
Ackley, and Belmond. For schedule contact  
Hector Hernandez.

#### *Iowa City*

Rev. Robert L. Brownfield  
Hispanic Ministry  
O'Keefe Hall  
104 E. Jefferson St.  
Iowa City, IA 52245  
Phone: (319)351-4181

#### *Marshalltown*

Sister Christine Feagan  
Mary Aguilera  
Office of Hispanic Ministry  
St. Mary's Catholic Church  
9 West Linn Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
Phone: (515) 753-7815  
Fax: (515) 753-7815  
Spanish mass: Sunday

Rev. Dagoberto Zelaya  
Hispanic Ministry  
First Baptist Church

Marshalltown, IA  
Phone: (515) 753-3528  
Spanish service: Friday 7:00 pm

#### *Muscatine*

St. Paul's Hispanic Ministry-Faith Parish  
United Methodist Church  
900 Park Avenue  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
Phone: (563) 263-1468

Rev. Bernard E. Weir  
Hispanic Ministry  
Our Lady of Guadalupe  
417 Green St, Box 243  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
Phone: (563) 263-7788  
Spanish mass: St. Joseph's, Columbus Junction,  
IA: Sunday 12:00 noon  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission: Sunday 10:00 am

#### *Ottumwa*

Sister Irene Munoz, CHM  
Multi-Cultural Minister for Ottumwa  
Rev. Robert M. Striegel, Hispanic Ministry  
St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church  
216 N. Court St.  
Ottumwa, IA 52501  
Phone: (641) 682-4559  
Spanish mass: Sunday 1:30 pm (first 4 Sundays  
of the month)

#### *Postville*

Rev. Paul Ouderkirk  
St. Bridget's Catholic Church  
135 N. Williams  
Postville, IA 52162  
Phone: (319) 864-3138  
Fax: (319) 864-3138  
Spanish mass: Saturday

#### *Sioux City*

Rev. Dan Kuper  
Amistad Cristiana  
Sioux Center, IA 51250  
Phone: (712) 722-1555

Rev. Randy Guerdet  
Hispanic Pastoral Leader  
Sister Barbara Knipp  
Office of Hispanic Ministry  
The Cathedral of the Epiphany  
1018 Grandview Blvd  
Sioux City, IA 51103  
Phone: (712) 255-1841  
Spanish masses: Wednesday 11:00 am, Friday  
6:30 pm, Saturday 7:00 pm, Sunday 11:00 am

Other Hispanic Ministries in Sioux City  
Catholic Diocese

St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church  
1008 2nd Ave S  
Denison, IA 51442  
Phone: (712) 263-2152  
Spanish mass: Sunday 1:00 pm

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
1125 Ave L  
Hawarden, IA 51023  
Phone: (712) 551-1501  
Spanish mass: Sunday 12:00 noon

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
3rd and Seneca  
Storm Lake, IA 50588  
Phone: (712) 732-3110  
Spanish mass: Sunday 12:00 noon

Corpus Christi Catholic Church  
Rev. Edward Girres  
430 N. 8th St.  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
Phone: (515) 573-3616

Rev. Tom Soerens  
Hispanic Ministry  
Dordt College, Theology Department  
511 1st Ave  
Sioux City, IA  
Phone: (712) 722-6271

*Storm Lake*

Lutheran Hispanic Outreach  
805 East 4th Street

Storm Lake, IA 50588  
Phone: (712) 732-6620

*Washington*

Rev. Dennis C. Martin  
Sr. Jane McCarathy  
St. James Catholic Church  
602 West 2nd St.  
Washington, IA 52353  
Phone: (319) 653-4504  
Spanish mass: Sunday 12:30 pm

*Waterloo*

Sister Kathleen Grace  
Rev. Leon Connolly  
Luisa Alvarado  
Office of Hispanic Ministry  
St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Waterloo, IA 50703  
Phone: (319) 234-6744  
Fax: (319) 235-5567  
Spanish mass: Sunday

*West Liberty*

Rev. Edward A. O'Melia  
Hispanic Ministry  
St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
107 W. 6th St.  
West Liberty, IA 52776  
Phone: (319) 627-2229  
Spanish mass: Sunday 12:00 noon

**Vietnamese Ministries**

Rev. Joseph (Nguyen) Khan  
Rev. Andrew Luong Nguyen  
Sacred Heart Cathedral  
422 E. 10th  
Davenport, IA 52803  
Phone: (563) 323-5994  
Vietnamese masses: Sunday 7:30 am, 9:00 am,  
11:00 am, 2:00 pm

Rev. Hieu Nguyen  
Office of Vietnamese Ministry  
Cathedral of the Epiphany  
1018 Grandview Blvd.  
Sioux City, IA 51103



Phone: (712) 255-1099  
Vietnamese masses: Wednesday 6:00 pm,  
Sunday 1:00 pm

Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
Phone: (515) 490-7743

### **Laotian Ministries**

Laotian Ministry  
Mr. One Chanh Keoouthai  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Des Moines, IA  
3223 University Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
Phone: (515) 279-3609  
Service in Lao: Sunday 10:00 am

Simon Bilim Yiech, Sudanese Deacon  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
3223 University Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
Phone: (515) 279-3609  
Service in Nuer: Sunday 11:30 am

Southeast Asian Community Christian Church  
815 East 5th Street  
Storm Lake, IA 50588  
Phone: (712) 732-7361

Sudanese Lutheran Ministry  
Our Savior Lutheran Church  
4003 2nd Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50313  
Phone: (515) 244-9347

### **African Ministries**

Rev. J. Goanar Chol  
Sudanese Ministry

Sudanese Ministry  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
1600 South Center Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
Phone: (641) 753-9565

## **Appendix D: Iowa Immigration and Refugee Resources and Advocacy**

### ***Educational Resources***

Des Moines Public Schools  
Park Avenue School Welcome Center  
3141 SW 9th  
Des Moines, IA 50315  
(515) 246-8170

Carmen Sosa  
English as a Second Language/  
Limited English Proficiency Consultant  
Iowa Department of Education  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: (515) 281-3805  
[Carmen.sosa@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:Carmen.sosa@ed.state.ia.us)

Donna Eggleston  
Migrant Education Programs  
Iowa Department of Education  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: (515) 281-3999  
[Donna.eggleston@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:Donna.eggleston@ed.state.ia.us)

[www.state.ia.us/educate/programs/title1/migrant\\_ed.html](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/programs/title1/migrant_ed.html)

### ***Employment Resources***

Barbara Bobb  
New Iowan Centers Program Director  
Iowa Workforce Development  
Phone: (515) 281-5387  
e-mail: [bobbera@quest.net.com](mailto:bobbera@quest.net.com)  
[www.iowaworkforce.org](http://www.iowaworkforce.org)

New Iowans Center-Sioux City  
Iowa Workforce Development Center  
2508 4th Street  
Sioux City, IA 51101  
Phone: (712) 277-8540

### ***Cultural and Social Resources***

New Iowans Center-Muscatine  
Multicultural Center  
Muscatine Center for Strategic Action

312 Iowa Avenue  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
Phone: (319) 263-9018  
FAX: (319) 263-8906

CASA Center for Assistance, Service, and Advocacy  
Nancy Visser and Ardith Lein  
Sioux Center Chamber of Commerce  
303 N. Main Ave  
Sioux Center, IA 51250  
Phone: (712) 722-3324; (712) 722-0195  
E-mail: Ardith Lein [scchambr@mtcnet.net](mailto:scchambr@mtcnet.net)

### ***Legal Resources***

La Amistad  
206 West 5th Street, Suite 4-A  
Storm Lake, IA 50588  
Phone: (712) 732-2809

Emily Frommelt  
Immigration Case Worker  
210 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: (515) 284-4574  
FAX: (515) 284-4937  
[EMILY\\_FROMMELT@HARKIN.SENATE.GOV](mailto:EMILY_FROMMELT@HARKIN.SENATE.GOV)

Karen T. Kinkel  
Caseworker, Congressman Leonard Boswell  
709 Furnas, Suite 1  
Osceola, IA 50213  
[Karen.kinkel@mail.house.gov](mailto:Karen.kinkel@mail.house.gov)

Mary Klemmesrud  
Immigration Business Assistance Specialist  
Iowa Department of Economic Development  
200 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: (515) 242-4808  
FAX: (515) 242-4776  
[Mary.klemmesrud@ided.state.ia.us](mailto:Mary.klemmesrud@ided.state.ia.us)  
[www.smart.state.ia.us](http://www.smart.state.ia.us)

Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: (515) 242-6171

FAX: (515) 242-6119  
[www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/)

Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services  
1200 University Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314-2330  
Phone: 1-800-326-2780  
[www.dhs.state.ia.us/Homepages/dhs/refugee/](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Homepages/dhs/refugee/)

Iowa Civil Rights Commission  
211 East Maple Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: 1-800-457-4416  
FAX: (515) 242-5840  
[www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html)

Proteus  
Central Administrative Office  
175 NW 57th Place  
Des Moines, IA 50306-0385  
Phone: 1-800-372-6031  
FAX: (515) 244-4166  
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/proteus/>

Immigration Study Circles  
Wallace House Foundation  
756 16th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Phone: (515) 243-7063  
FAX: (515) 243-8927  
[www.wallace.org](http://www.wallace.org)

Immigrant Rights Project  
American Friends Service Committee  
4211 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
Phone: (515) 274-4851  
FAX: (515) 274-2003  
E-Mail: [afscdesm@afsc.org](mailto:afscdesm@afsc.org)

Ed Leahy, Organizer  
Iowa-Nebraska Immigrant Rights Network  
3605 Q St.  
Omaha, NE 68107  
Phone: (402) 689-4249

Iowa Immigration Legal Project  
2912 Beaver Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
Phone: (515) 271-5730  
FAX: (515) 271-5757

United Action for Youth  
Gladis Chaisson-Cardenas  
410 Iowa Ave.  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
(319) 338-7518

National Conference for Community and Justice  
(NCCJ)  
Jesse Villalobos, Program Director  
1227 25th St.  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
(515) 274-5571  
Nccjiowa@aol.COM

Refugee Cooperative Ministry (Lutheran/Catholic  
Social Service)  
3116 University Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
(515) 277-4476  
FAX (515) 271-7454  
<http://www.lssia.org/>

Justice for Our Neighbors Clinic (Des Moines)  
Alison Brown  
Grace United Methodist Church  
PO Box 41006  
Des Moines, IA 50311  
Phone: (515) 277-4719

Iowa Coalition against Domestic Violence  
Sonia Parras  
2603 Bell Ave, Suite 100  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
Phone: (515) 244-8028  
Fax: (515) 244-7417

## Appendix E: Iowa Diversity Committees

### *Ames*

Community Dialogues Effort  
(formally Ames Diversity Appreciation Team)

### *Latino Resources*

Hispanic Information Center  
1413 Broadway  
Denison, IA  
(712) 263-8022  
FAX: (712) 263-8022  
alma@pionet.net  
Las Casa Latina  
715 Douglas Street  
Sioux City, IA 51101-1021  
Phone: (712) 252-4259

Southwest Iowa Latino Resources Center  
604 4th Street  
Red Oak, IA 51566  
Phone: (712) 623-3591

Iowa Division of Latino Affairs  
Liz Salinas-Newby  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: (515) 242-4070  
FAX: (515) 242-6119  
[www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/la/](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/la/)

Sam Carbajal  
Hispanic Outreach Worker  
Youth and Shelter Services of Marshall County  
130 W. Main St.  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
Phone: (515) 752-2300

Señor Jose Luis Cuevas  
Consul of Mexico  
Consulate of Mexico  
3552 Dodge Street  
Omaha, NE 68131  
Phone: (402) 595-1841

Sheila Lundt  
Assistant City Manager  
Ames Human Relations Commission

515 Clark Ave.  
Ames, IA 50010  
Phone: (515) 239-5101

***Charles City***

Charles City International Fellowship  
Jim Sanner  
512 - 15th Avenue  
Charles City, IA 50616  
Phone: (515) 228-6085

***Council Bluffs***

Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee (Council Bluffs)  
Jon Malloy  
Council Bluffs, IA  
Phone: (712) 328-9093

***Davenport***

Quad Cities' Diversity and Racial Equality  
Roundtables, Bi-State Anti-Hate Response Team,  
and Diversity Committee  
Davenport Civil Rights Commission  
423 East 32nd St., Suite 2  
Davenport, IA 52803  
Phone: (319) 326-0717

***Denison***

Denison Cultural Diversity Committee  
Coletta Weed  
2490 Lincoln Way  
Denison, IA 51442  
Phone: (712) 263-4697

***Des Moines***

Lt. Governor's Diversity Commission 2000  
Elizabeth Salinas-Newby  
Dept. of Human Rights  
Lucas Building 2nd Floor  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: (515) 281-4070

***Estherville***

Estherville Diversity Appreciation Team  
Pastor Glenn Bohmer  
409 N. 6th Street  
P.O. Box 43  
Esterville, IA 51334-0043  
Phone: (712) 362-3237

***Fort Dodge***

Fort Dodge/Webster County Diversity Appreciation  
Team  
Ed O'Leary  
Human Rights Commission  
Municipal Building  
819 2nd Ave. So.  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
Phone: (515) 576-2201

***Iowa City***

Diverse - Cities  
(Iowa City/Coralville)  
Appreciation Team  
Heather Shank  
Iowa City Human Rights Commission  
410 E. Washington/Civic Ctr.  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
Phone: 319-356-5022

***Marshalltown***

Marshalltown Diversity Committee  
Sandy Burke  
ISU Dept. of Sociology  
418 E. Hall  
Ames, IA 50011  
Phone: (515) 294-9307

***Mason City***

North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team  
Lahoma N. Counts  
22 N. Georgia - Suite 216  
Mason City, IA 50401  
Phone: (515) 424-0678

***Mount Pleasant***

Healthy Henry County Communities Diversity  
Action Team  
Co-Leaders, Tammy Shull and Sal Alaniz  
Experian  
P.O. Box 500  
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641  
Phone: (319) 385-5120  
E-mail: [rammy.shull@experian.com](mailto:rammy.shull@experian.com)  
[salaniz@interl.net](mailto:salaniz@interl.net)

***Ottumwa***

Ottumwa Diversity Network  
 Dale Uehling  
 City Hall  
 103 E. 3rd Street  
 Ottumwa, IA 52501  
 Phone: (641) 683-0600

***Perry***

Perry Diversity Appreciation Team  
 Pastor Ron Bronemann  
 Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church  
 912 - 15th Street  
 Perry, IA 50220  
 Phone: (515) 465-5298

***Postville***

Postville Diversity Team  
 C/O Chamber of Commerce  
 Box 875  
 Postville, IA 52162  
 Phone: (319) 864-7441

***Sioux City***

Siouxland Diversity Coalition  
 Jeremy Foster  
 900 Jennings Street  
 Sioux City, IA 51105  
 Phone: (712) 258-5137

***Storm Lake***

Storm Lake Diversity Task Force  
 Dale Carver  
 315 Vilas Road  
 Storm Lake, IA 50588  
 Phone: (712) 732-6767

***Tama***

Tama County Team For Intercultural Community  
 Clarence Lippert  
 South Tama Schools  
 1702 Harding Street  
 Tama, IA 52339  
 Phone: (515) 484-4811

***Waterloo***

Hispanic Or Latino Coalition Association (HOLA)  
 Pam Hays  
 YWCA- Waterloo  
 425 Lafayette Street  
 Waterloo, IA 50703  
 Phone: (319) 234-7589

Cedar Valley Diversity Appreciation Team  
 Walter Reed  
 Waterloo Commission on Human Rights  
 620 Mulberry  
 Carnegie Annex Suite 101  
 Waterloo, IA 50703  
 Phone: (319) 291-4441

**Appendix F: Other Immigration and Refugee Resources**

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service  
 Des Moines Services Center  
 210 Walnut Street, Room 369  
 Des Moines, IA 50302

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service  
 Sioux City Enforcement Branch  
 1400 Pierce Street  
 Sioux City, IA 51105

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service  
 Cedar Rapids Enforcement Branch  
 P.O. Box 156  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

The Mexico-U.S. Advocates Network  
 Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights  
 208 South LaSalle, Suite 1818  
 Chicago, IL 60604  
 (312) 660-1343  
 Fax (312) 660-1500  
[www.mexicousadvocates.org](http://www.mexicousadvocates.org)

Midwest Equity Assistance Center  
 Dr. Charles I. Rankin, Director  
 Kansas State University  
 1100 Midcampus Drive  
 401 Bluemont Hall

Manhattan, KS 66506-5327  
(785) 532-6408  
Toll free: 800-232-0133 (ext. 6408)  
FAX (785) 532-5548  
ronna@ksu.edu  
<http://meac.educ.ksu.edu>

Study Circles Resource Center  
687 Pomfret Street  
Box 203  
Pomfret, CT 06528  
(860) 928-2616  
Fax (860) 928-3713  
[www.studyircles.org](http://www.studyircles.org)

## Appendix G: Recommended Reading on Immigrant and Refugee Newcomers

Joseph A. Amato (1996). *To Call It Home: The New Immigrants of Southwestern Minnesota*. Crossings Press.

Robert Aponte and Marcelo Siles (1994). *Latinos in the Heartland: The Browning of the Midwest*. Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University.  
<http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/research/irr/rr05abs.html>

Andrea B. Bermudez (1994). *Doing Our Homework: How Schools Can Engage Hispanic Communities*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Lourdes Gouveia and Donald D. Stull (1997). *Latino Immigrants, Meatpacking and Rural Communities: A Case Study of Lexington, Nebraska*. Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University.  
<http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/research/irr/rr26abs.html>

Greater Des Moines Community Foundation (2000). *Snapshot in Time: A Clear View of the Importance, Value and Impacts of the Latino Population in Central Iowa*. Des Moines: State Public Policy Group. [also translated into Spanish ([www.sppg.com](http://www.sppg.com))]

*Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Immigration and Race, Jobs, Schools and Language Differences*, 2nd Edition. Pomfret, CT: Study Circles Resource Center. (2000).

Iowa Department of Human Rights (1999). *Status of Asian and Pacific Islanders Study*. Des Moines: Iowa Department of Human Rights.

Julian Samora Research Institute (1997). *Rural Latino Resources: A National Guide*. Michigan State University.

Caryl Stern-La Rosa and Ellen Hofmeimer Bettmann (2000). *The Anti-Defamation League's Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice: A Guide for Adults and Children*. New York: Scholastic.

Sue Rardin (2000). The Faces of Faith: How Does Religion Help – or Hinder - New Immigrants in Finding their Place in American Society? *Trust* (Summer 2000): 2-11.

Mark A. Grey (2000). *Welcoming New Iowans: A Guide for Citizens and Communities*. University of Northern Iowa New Iowans Program.  
[www.bcs.uni.edu/idm/newiowans/](http://www.bcs.uni.edu/idm/newiowans/)

Donald D. Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith, editors (1995). *Any Way You Cut It: Meat-Processing and Small-town America*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Migrant Farmworkers in South-Central Minnesota: Farmworker-Led Research and Action for Change. By Victor Contreras, Jaime Duran, and Kathryn Gilje. CURA Reporter, February 2001. University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Where have all the packing plants gone? The new meat geography in rural America. By Mark Drabenstott, Mark Henry, and Kristin Mitchell. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Economic Review. Vol. 84, No. 3. (1999).

Tom Quinn (2001) *The Impact of Immigration on Small- to Mid-Sized Iowa Communities: A Citizens Guide for Change*. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1879.pdf>

## Appendix H: University of Northern Iowa Immigrant, Refugee and Newcomer Resources

UNI New Iowans Program  
Dr. Mark Grey  
Dr. Anne Woodrick  
James Hoelscher  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology and  
Criminology  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: (319) 273-3029  
FAX: (319) 273-7104

Teacher Education Addressing Minority-Language  
Students  
The TEAMS Project  
Dr. Deborah Tidwell  
Dr. Andrea DePruin-Parecki  
College of Education  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: (319) 273-7422  
FAX: (319) 273-7420  
[www.uni.edu/teams](http://www.uni.edu/teams)

Institute for Decision Making  
Business and Community Services  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: 800-782-9520  
FAX: (319) 273-683  
[www.bcs.uni.edu/idm](http://www.bcs.uni.edu/idm)

UNI Global Health Corps  
Dr. Michele Yehieli  
220 WRC  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: (319) 273-6411  
[www.globalhealthcorps.org](http://www.globalhealthcorps.org)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages  
(TESOL)  
Dr. Cheryl Roberts  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: (319) 273-5986



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> UNI Institute for Decision Making. 1999. *Laborshed Analysis: Fort Dodge. Webster County*. Mark A. Grey and Andrew Conrad (2001). *Ft. Dodge New Iowans Pilot Community Workforce Assessment*. Uni New Iowans Program and Institute for Decision Making; Christopher Conte (2002). *Strangers on the Prairie*. *Governing* (January), pg. 30.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census (2000). It should be noted that most Census counts of Latino residents are probably low because of the reluctance of many Latino immigrants to complete government surveys. This is particularly the case for immigrants in the U.S. without legal immigration or work documents.
- <sup>3</sup> For example, Marshalltown's Latino/Hispanic population grew from 248 in 1990 to 3,265 in 2000. The same population in Postville grew from 1 in 1990 to 469 in 2000. Latinos now make up 21.1% of Storm Lake's total population.
- <sup>4</sup> Christopher Conte (2002). *Strangers on the Prairie*. *Governing* (January) pg. 29.
- <sup>5</sup> N.Howe Parker (1856). *Iowa As It Is In 1856. A Gazetteer for Citizens and a Hand-Book for Immigrants*.
- <sup>6</sup> (1858) *Northern Iowa: Containing Hints and Information of Value to Emigrants. By a Pioneer*. Dubque: Non pareil Publishing House.
- <sup>7</sup> The complete citation and title of Fulton's book is this: Alexander R. Fulton (1870). *IOWA: the Home for Immigrants. Being a Treatise on the Resources of Iowa, and Giving Useful Information with Regard to the State, for the Benefit of Immigrants and Others*. Des Moines: Iowa Board of Immigration. The book was reprinted by the State Historical Society of Iowa in January 1970.
- <sup>8</sup> National Population Council Report, 2001
- <sup>9</sup> See also, "The New Jungle" *U.S. News and World Report*, September 23, 1996.
- <sup>10</sup> Sagala, John Kemoli. 2000. Lecture on Globalization and Africa.
- <sup>11</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Website: <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page=PUBL&id=3b8e2aa14>
- <sup>12</sup> Southern Sudanese Page of Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, IA. Website address: <http://www.ioweb.com/trinity/sudan.html>
- <sup>13</sup> Glick Schiller, N.; L. Basch and C. Blanc-Szanton. 1992. *Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration*; Mark A. Grey and Anne C. Woodrick (2002). *Unofficial Sister Cities: Meatpacking Labor Migration between Villachuato, Mexico and Marshalltown, Iowa*. *Human Organization*.
- <sup>14</sup> Donald L. Kinzer. *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association*. Seattle: The University of Washington Press. 19:202-204. Humphrey J. Desmond. *The A.P.A. Movement*. Reprint New York: Arno Press, 1969:35-44.
- <sup>15</sup> Stephen Thernstrom. *A History of the American People*, vol. 1, 2nd edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989:258-9.
- <sup>16</sup> These key definitions are borrowed from Mark A. Grey (2001). *Welcoming New Iowans: A Guide for Citizens and Communities*. UNI New Iowans Program.
- <sup>17</sup> Peter L. Peterson (1974). *Language and Loyalty*:

- Governor Harding and the Iowa's Danish-Americans During World War I. *Annals of Iowa* (42): 406-407. Governor Harding's Proclamation resulted from his deep distrust of German residents during World War I. See Leola Allen (1974). Anti-German Sentiment in Iowa During World War I. *Annals of Iowa* (42):418-429.
- <sup>18</sup> Nancy Derr (1979). The Babel Proclamation. *Palimpsest* (60):114.
- <sup>19</sup> Peter L. Peterson (1974). Language and Loyalty: Governor Harding and the Iowa's Danish-Americans During World War I. *Annals of Iowa* (42): 410; T.P. Christenson (1959). *A History of the Danes in Iowa*. Pg. 122-123.
- <sup>20</sup> Nancy Derr (1979). The Babel Proclamation. *Palimpsest* (60):114.
- <sup>21</sup> One good example is Marcella Podhajsky Pults (2000). *20th Century Czechs in Central Tama County Iowa, 1900-2000 AD*. Denver, CO: Copy Cat Press.
- <sup>22</sup> Pat Martin (1984). *Czechoslovak Wit and Wisdom with Great Kolache Recipes from St. Ludmila Parish*. Iowa City, IA: Penfield Press.
- <sup>23</sup> One consequence for undocumented Mexican immigrants after September 11, 2001, was that the cost for crossing the U.S.-Mexican border almost tripled in price, and risk to personal well-being increased.
- <sup>24</sup> These quotes from the Bible come from *The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation*. (1978). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>25</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the General Assembly Council (1999). *Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors*. Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly.
- <sup>26</sup> Theological case for inclusion and welcoming: immigration from a biblical perspective. Sermon by James Altenbaumer for the Northeast Association of the Iowa Conference, United Church of Christ, delivered at First Congregational Church, Waterloo, IA, October 21, 2001.
- <sup>27</sup> Ecclesia in America, *Number 33*.
- <sup>28</sup> Stoll, David. 1990. *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?: The Politics of Evangelical Growth*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- <sup>29</sup> "Barriers to Employment" Central Iowa Latino Laborforce Survey, Iowa Workforce Development, March 2001
- <sup>30</sup> *The Chicago Tribune*, 13 November 2001
- <sup>31</sup> Espin, Orlando. 1992. Grace and Humanness: A Hispanic Perspective. In *We are a People! Initiatives in Hispanic American Theology*, Roberto S. Goizueta, ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. Pp 133-164.
- <sup>32</sup> DeNeve, C. 1997 Hispanic Presence in the workplace. *The Diversity Factor*. Winter, pp 14-21.
- <sup>33</sup> Usually the presentations are for three year olds. But according to Father Paul Ouderkirk, presentations may occur at other times, but the number, or child's age, remains divisible by three. Six year olds, nine year olds, six month olds, nine month olds may be presented for a blessing.
- <sup>34</sup> A special thank you to Sister Karen Thein who explained the symbolic meanings of the quinceañeros celebration.
- <sup>35</sup> Minh Chau Mgone Vo and Kari Ann Vo (1995) *Harvest Waiting: Reaching Out to the Vietnamese*. Concordia Publishing House.
- <sup>36</sup> Westholm, Michelle. 1998. *Mexican Immigrants in Iowa: Religion, Family and Community*. Independent study. Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, University of Northern Iowa.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>38</sup> Chavez, Leo. 1990. Coresidence and resistance: strategies for survival among undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans in the United States. *Urban Anthropology* spring/summer: pages 31-61.
- <sup>39</sup> Taped interview with Rev. Gregg Davidson. August 20, 1997. See also, "Shelter reaches the homeless in county." *Marshalltown Times-Republic* 29 June 1998.
- <sup>40</sup> "Waterloo Family moves into Habitat Home" *Waterloo Courier* 26 April 1999
- <sup>41</sup> "Language classes build bridge among cultures" *The Witness* 14 February 1999
- <sup>42</sup> "Reaching and Being Reached in the Heartland" *Mosaic: A Video Magazine of the ELCA*. 1991
- <sup>43</sup> Father Lloyd Paul Ouder Kirk, taped interview, 7 August 1997
- <sup>44</sup> Sources for this story include: "Three distinct cultures worship at Cathedral" *Sioux City Journal* 16 October 1994; "Renaissance: revitalized ministry helps Cathedral reach out." *Sioux City Journal* 13 October 1996; "Bishop: No easy solution to immigration." *Sioux City Journal* 24 December 1996; taped interview with Father Randy Guerdet, 30 June 1999.
- <sup>45</sup> "Renaissance: revitalized ministry helps Cathedral reach out." *Sioux City Journal* 13 October 1996.
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> "Bishop: No easy solution to immigrants." *Sioux City Journal* 24 December 1996.
- <sup>48</sup> "Response to Basic Needs" *The Witness* 4 July 1999.
- <sup>49</sup> "Life in Storm Lake is just fine, thank you." *from* "9 most common myths about immigration and Storm Lake"
- <sup>50</sup> Pastoral Letter Regarding Hispanic Immigration in Iowa. The Appointive Cabinet, Iowa Conference, United Methodist Church. 25 November 1996.

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