

"...to bring good news to the poor... proclaim release to the captives... let the oppressed go free..."
(Luke 4:18-19)

CRISIS AT THE BORDER

2014-2015 MISSION FOCUS
AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

November 2014: Advocacy

How Can We Be Advocates and Supports?

The issue of "Unaccompanied Alien Children," or UACs (the official name for unaccompanied children arriving in the U.S.) needs our voice. It can be difficult to sort through the information, especially given the polemic nature of the arguments. This email will provide some easier-to-digest informational resources to help you know how you can be a voice on behalf of the voiceless. You will also find ways you can contribute to needs.

Some legislators want to roll back protections offered in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPA) of 2008.

For an excellent list of talking points related to this, [click here](#).

For information from Church World Service on advocacy around immigration issues, [click here](#).

For toolkits on civic engagement, congressional legislation, prayer vigils, and other helpful advocacy resources, [click here](#).

To track legislation and to find out how your congressional representatives stand on the issue (as well as finding links for quickly contacting your representatives with your opinion), visit [GovTrack.us](#). By setting up a free account, you can provide your zip code to have the site find your congressional district and representatives in the House and Senate. You can also set up "trackers" to follow particular legislations or to follow your representatives. If you're interested in putting in a phone call to your representative, use the "Call Congress" button available on description of the bill in question. It will then walk you through a "wizard" in which you provide your zip code, it finds your representative, provides a sample script, and will connect the call for you if you have your computer set up as such. If not, it will give you the phone number or website address of your representative for you to call yourself or use contact forms provided on your representative's website.

For information available from AB Home Mission Societies' Immigration and

Refugee Services, [click here](#).

Would you like to send messages of hope? [Click here to download a PDF](#) with information about Church World Service's Angel to Angel Project: Cards of Care and Prayer.

Church World Service is directly engaged in providing assistance for unaccompanied children: pro bono legal services, multi-faith spiritual care through chaplains at detention centers, providing basics (food, clothing, medical care, transport) for children and families without support after initial screening, advocating for rights and funding for refugees, and providing for needs for 1000 youth through a shelter in the Honduras. To support Church World Service's work, visit www.cwsglobal.com/uac.

Contact Refugee Resettlement agencies near you to see what donation needs they may have. (Many UACs are being relocated through refugee resettlement systems.) To see what agencies may be available in your area, type "refugee resettlement [name of city/state]" and see what turns up.

[Click here](#) to watch a video interview of Sonia Nazario on Anderson Cooper's 360 (6:55). It includes Sonia's own thoughts on some advocacy issues.

Watch this YouTube video highlighting one organization in New York serving unaccompanied children and engaged in family reunification:



Reuniting Immigrant Families on Long Island

Note:

Is your church or women's group bringing healing, wholeness, and hope to women and girls in its community? The Women and Girls Mission Fund helps AB women respond to mission needs that benefit women and girls. Limited grants may be available from the Women and Girls Mission Fund. Information on how to contribute to the fund, and guidelines/applications for grants from the fund can be downloaded from the AB Women's Ministries website, www.abwministries.org.

Reflections

Questions for reflection or discussion:

- **Read Proverbs 31:8-9.** Have you ever experienced a moment in which someone else spoke up on your behalf? Someone defended you, or made sure you were being taken care of in some way? How did that make you feel? Can you imagine what it must feel like to be a ten or twelve-year-old child making a perilous journey alone, arriving in a new country where you don't speak the language or know the rules?
- **What rights are involved?** The Scripture above speaks of "defending the rights of the poor and needy." Think of what rights are involved in the issue of unaccompanied children. What are their rights--legal rights, human rights? How can you be a part of defending the rights you have identified?
- **Is it possible to change what's happening in far-away places?** Many advocates would agree that the only real solution to the issue of unaccompanied children arriving at our borders would be to help create homelands for them that don't make them feel forced to leave. In other words, improving educational, economic, and safety factors in the Northern Triangle would make it possible for children to grow up in safe neighborhoods with economic opportunity. Their parents would no longer feel they needed to leave in order to financially support a family; children would no longer be sent away due to the risks of the journey being seen as less than the risks on their own streets. Are there ways we in the U.S. could help support economic empowerment of women and families in other countries? How?
- **How could your women's or girls' ministry engage in advocacy** around unaccompanied children?

Resources

Enrique's Journey

Journalist Sonia Nazario wrote a series of articles for the Los Angeles Times about the quest of a young Honduran boy, Enrique, to find his mother in the United States. The series won two Pulitzer Prizes, and was turned into a national bestseller in nonfiction. Used in middle schools, high schools, and universities nationwide, this account is an excellent way to put a human face on the statistics of unaccompanied children undertaking a harrowing journey north to the United States. It has been translated into several languages, including Spanish, and has been adapted for younger readers. Discussion questions are available on the Enrique's Journey website (see below) under "Reader Resources."

Visit the website: www.enriquesjourney.com.

Find the book on Amazon: [Enrique's Journey](#) (Using this link helps support AB Women's Ministries. Thank you.)

Next Issue: Biblical Migrants

What is our Scriptural foundation for this issue?

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