

# Immigration

## Policy Briefing Note 3

April 2015

Version 1

### Introduction

This is one of a series of documents covering various policy topic areas that are aimed at helping people to compare an approach proposed by any political party to the underlying principles that we find in the Bible.

This series of documents, which will be expanded and kept updated, is politically neutral and represents a unique approach, starting as it does from the Bible and building upwards.

The policies and approaches to a topic area of several of the political parties may line up with all or some of the principles. It allows a person to have a baseline on which to measure and compare.

Each easy to read document will cover a separate topic, and so you can look at a particular area of interest to you or build up a picture over a number of topic areas. We hope you find this a useful resource not only at election time but also in the future.

### The Biblical principles that should underpin a nation's response to immigration

With regard immigration, we can identify some different types:

- Asylum seeker (i.e. fleeing danger or persecution)
- Economic migrant
- Illegal immigrant
- Student from another country

### Our approach to caring for others

Examples of Biblical verses touching on caring for others are numerous, and include:

1. Love your neighbour as you love yourself (Matthew 22:39). The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) teaches us that our neighbour is anyone who we come across and who needs help.
2. Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers you do to me. Matthew 25:40.

### Importance of Stewardship

Stewardship could be the Biblical approach that a nation can adopt in handling immigrants and asylum seekers. Genesis 1:28-30 presents how this stewardship should be outworked. It is worth noting that it is the first command given to the first man just after his creation.

The Old Testament also refers to nations, borders and boundaries in a supportive manner. A nation should therefore encourage citizens, visitors and foreigners to be good caretakers wherever they find themselves.

Any Government control over immigra-

tion should be aimed at providing an enabling environment for stewardship. Therefore tackling illegal and unnecessary immigration should be seen in this context.

If people are going to be good stewards within a nation then we should not let prejudice and economic cost stand in the way of supporting them to become productive and respected citizens. The importance of both rights and responsibilities plays out here. This balance of rights and responsibilities is for both the individual in question and at a national level in the response of a country to immigration.

### Asylum Seekers

Those seeking refuge from danger should be vetted quickly and those with genuine need to seek asylum should be welcomed and integrated into our society. If this process is slow, then it perpetuates the economic cost of that individual. If able to work, then the asylum seeker should look to contribute to society as quickly as possible. If an asylum seeker is unable to work or there is not a useful job appropriate for them to undertake (for whatever reason) then society should care for that individual, with the cost carried as part of the price of a just and caring society.

Resource should also be put into providing the stability and security to allow asylum seekers to return to their own country when they feel that is appropriate. This is likely to be in a form that provides a way for the asylum seeker to be more financially secure and also to know that they can travel back and forth between their home country and this country freely, certainly whilst there is doubt over the safety of the individual whilst back in their home country.

## Immigration continued

### Economic migrants

**Vetting Immigrants:** This would be undertaken to ensure economic migrants will take good care of the new nation they are entering and to identify what contribution they can make to the country. Before being allowed entry they should develop and present how they plan to contribute towards the wellbeing of the country and community when they get there. This can be judged against a criteria set out to ensure that this will align with universal values around family, professional responsibility and community. The criteria could change over time as the country requires a changing skill set.

The policy approach should involve a desire and ability for the economic migrant to conform and submit to the laws of the land, and that an individual who is not conforming could be then classed as an illegal immigrant. The contribution of the economic migrant should always be to enrich the country, which goes further than simply financial contribution, but is about wider contribution for the benefit of all of society. Contribution to society is likely, in some cases, to be subjective and therefore more challenging to measure. Great care will be needed to drawing up the criteria and keeping it under review.

The story of Joseph in the Bible is worth considering here, and particularly the point at which his family come and live with him in Egypt. Pharaoh encourages the application of their skills for the benefit of society and Pharaoh also provides land – resource to help them make a contribution. Joseph has already brought great benefit to Egypt at this point.



### Illegal immigrant

A person who would not meet the definition of an asylum seeker or make the criteria for an economic migrant, and who is not a genuine student, would, if they tried to enter the country, be classed as an illegal immigrant. For a credible immigration system to be built up and maintained, the issue of illegal immigration must be tackled to ensure adequate enforcement. This must be done with integrity.

### Reduction in net immigration

It is one of the keys to sustainable immigration that resources allocated to immigration do not become overwhelmed. Population growth could strain the available resources, in which case what ought to be reduced is unnecessary immigration which constitute cases that will not have a positive impact on the society or economy; including immigrants who have no humanitarian basis to enter the country. This approach links to the fundamentals of good stewardship mentioned earlier. The Government should handle this balance whilst also planning for the immigrants allowed into the country, otherwise the overcrowding and exclusion may lead to tension because of potential polarization.

Also, it can be appropriate to seek to keep out certain groups of immigrants. Such groups would include:

- Terrorists
- Criminals
- Those considered a high risk to the benefit of society
- Unnecessary immigrants. That is, those that would not add benefit to the nation as they cannot contribute economically and have no humanitarian case for immigration.
- Illegal immigrants - to give strength to law and order.



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