



The United Methodist Church

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Governor Bruce Rauner
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Governor Bruce Rauner
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

An Open Letter to Governor Rauner

Dear Governor Rauner:

As the bishop of the United Methodist Church in Northern Illinois, I am asking you to reconsider your decision to refuse Syrian refugees from settling in Illinois. United Methodists across the world, including Germany, have been involved in resettling Syrians in our countries and states. It is part of our biblical tradition (Deuteronomy 10:17-19 and Luke 10:25-36) and long history as people of faith (our global United Methodist Committee on Relief).

Recently I saw a cartoon that showed a small refugee family of a mother, father and young child caught between a sharp knife at their backs with the word ISIS on it, while a hand blocked them from going any further and it was designated as the United States. Literally most Syrians are caught between the violence in their homeland and the refusal or difficulty of settling in a place of peace. These are families like yours and mine, longing to be safe and to have a future of peace.

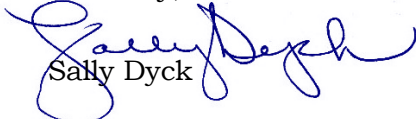
Proper and diligent screening is necessary for all refugees entering the United States and has taken up to two years to complete in order to insure safety; this is not happening overnight. However, the situation of the Syrians is much like that of the Jews during World War II when the Nazis were trying to kill them but nations wouldn't provide refuge. We deeply regret that response. Likewise we regret the response that put Japanese citizens into camps during World War II due to unbridled fear (even while their sons often served in the military to defend our country). We must not let the terrorists push us into a corner of fear by reacting in similar ways today with the Syrians in need of refuge.

You, and other governors who have declared that you won't settle Syrian refugees, know that the President of the United States has the power to accept refugees who are facing persecution of any kind; including that which has created the Syrian refugee crisis. You can make it difficult for the settlement of refugees but you don't have the power to actually refuse them.

As a bishop of the United Methodist Church, I implore you to reconsider and let the diligent screening process and the receiving communities/agencies in Illinois provide hospitality and refuge to our Syrian brothers and sisters. Our United Methodist ministries in Chicago, including those providing immigration legal services, know the persons and families who are involved in our ministries of worship, fellowship and outreach. These are persons that we want to be citizens in our country, including the State of Illinois. Mayor Rahm Emanuel has signed on with 18 other mayors around the country, indicating that he is open for the city of Chicago to receive more refugees from Syria.

I am calling on all United Methodists across Northern Illinois to pray for Syrian refugees and for you, Governor Rauner, during this critical time of our history. May your decisions be those that reflect the values of the people of this state.

Sincerely,


Sally Dyck