



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE
of Seventh-day Adventists

February 6, 2025

Statement of Response to the Immigration Enforcement Policy and Practice

The campaign of immigration enforcement, as currently being carried out by the Immigration and Custom Enforcement authorities, has sparked widespread fear and panic among certain immigrant groups. These immigrant groups are also part of the South Atlantic Conference family of believers. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ, without regard for national origin, race, language, or socio-economic standing. They are valuable to God as are we.

The immigration policy of the day is unduly disruptive of families, their ability to congregate for worship, and the necessary education of innocent minor children. It has been a long-held belief and value in our country that houses of worship are a place of sanctuary for those needing relief and rescue. The current enforcement policies have undercut and brought uncertainty to the hearts of many, who now lack the sense of security and safety that houses of worship once enjoyed. The classroom now is also a place of traumatic panic, rendering the educational process disorienting for minor children and their parents and educators.

South Atlantic Conference of Seventh-day Adventists appeals for restraint and reconsideration on the part of the authorities in their handling of every human being who is made in the image of God Himself, and calls for humanity, civility, and beneficence in their dealings with immigrants who are not criminal elements. We hold that most immigrants, including those who may be undocumented, are not, as suggested, criminals. We urge that they be accorded every benefit of good-will, in harmony with our laws.

South Atlantic Conference employees are advised and directed to become familiar with and abide by the "Guidance on Immigration Enforcement Activity on Church and School Property" as published by the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Jan. 31, 2025). We are our brother's keeper (Genesis 4:9). We are called of God to support and protect "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40-45). We will pray and act for justice.

Sincerely,

Calvin B. Preston, President
David A. Smith, Executive Vice President
Merkita Mosley, CFO/Treasurer
Everton A. Ennis, General Vice President/PARL
Kim Gaiter, Vice President for Education
Allen Baldwin, Vice President for Pastoral Ministries