

Sojourners All

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Preface

On October 14, 2005, a young Cuban boy drowned off the coast of Key West, Florida. The “go fast” boat full of refugees in which he was being transported flipped as it sped away from the pursuing U.S. Coast Guard toward the U.S. shore. The “wet foot, dry foot” policy for Cubans says you can stay if you set foot on U.S. soil before being apprehended. This policy makes for exciting footage on the 6:00 p.m. Miami news as numerous altercations between “boat people” and the Coast Guard are played out every year for the TV viewing public. Usually in the scene is a large fan base on the shores of Biscayne Bay cheering for fleeing Cubans hoping to touch “home base” before being maced or tackled. Actually the arresting officers are usually sympathetic and very gentle.

Two thousand miles to the west a similar scene is played out over a narrower strip of water, the Rio Grande River, which serves as the border between Texas and Arizona on the U.S. side and Mexico on the South. There, with or without the help of a “coyote,” “pollero,” or “agente” as the human trafficker is named, very conservatively 500,000 cross annually in search of jobs in the U.S. This crossing has its own set of perils from rape and plunder at the hands of the guides, to suffocating while riding inside an airtight trailer, to dying of exposure or thirst attempting to trek across the Arizona desert or Texas bush country. Once inside the U.S. the traveler is not quite out of danger from his handlers. In 1995 one lady herself undocumented called me requesting \$1,000 extra per head to free her relatives being held hostage by their coyote. He was demanding double the agreed upon price. Tragically some women are marketed as sex slaves and sold to buyers in Chicago and New York. Others end up as labor slaves in rural areas where they cover themselves with dirt to stay warm at night and are afforded no contact outside their secluded work farm.

The overwhelming majority, however, survive the journey and become strong contributors to the U.S. economy and to the economy of their home country. I suppose the following are fairly typical examples. Elena told me her story last week. She started her journey in Lima, Peru in 1995 by paying her agent \$7,000.00 which guaranteed her safe passage to Miami. They flew to Nicaragua as a group of nine, and took a bus to the southern Mexican border where they were provided false Mexican I.D., which allowed them to travel to Mexico City. There they met up with undocumented travelers from China, India, the continent of Africa and numerous South American countries. They were divided again; this time she traveled in a group of 40 to the Mexico-Arizona border where “la patrulla fronteriza” boarded the bus. By their appearance and accents it was determined that the passengers were not Mexican tourists traveling to Phoenix for a few days and then back. No one, however, was required to produce any documentation. Through the agent they each paid \$300.00 extra (presumably as a “mordita”) and were granted entrance to the U.S.A. From there they took a flight to Dallas and then to Miami. Since that time Elena has worked tirelessly all over Miami-Dade County including Key Biscayne. She has lived modestly well, but more importantly, has already purchased with her earnings a nice home in Lima where she plans to retire after her son graduates from high school in 2011. Last year she was able to obtain a work visa through the Family Unification Act since her mother

had already become a resident. “Was it all worth it?” I asked. She sighed and said, “I don’t know if I’d do it again but, yes.” Elena lives across the city from Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church but some Peruvian friends of hers have become Christians and joined KBPC through the contact.

My good friend Antonio (whose story could be repeated a thousand times) chooses to cross the border without the assistance of traffickers. Choosing remote areas, he has brought his wife and daughter back and forth numerous times undetected. They are true survivors having repeatedly traversed the southwestern deserts on foot. When jobs became scarce in Houston he was able to obtain a permit to work legally in agriculture in the state of Alabama. His “employer” paid him nearly nothing, but provided housing, food and clothing.

The formulation of my convictions regarding the Christian’s response to the undocumented immigrant (herein expressed) were virtually thrust upon me. As a young pastor my naïve compassion towards all people groups in our church’s center city Houston neighborhood resulted in a brush with the authorities.

This is what happened. In 1979, Jorge (not his real name) from El Salvador had been attending our church in Houston, Texas, for several months. He asked me if I would give him and his wife a ride to Houston if he returned to El Salvador and brought her to the Mexican-United States border. “Sure!” I replied. On New Year’s Eve, several months after that brief conversation, he called me from Del Rio, Texas, and said that they “all” had arrived.

My friend Juan and I went with a mild sensation that this might be illegal but gave it little thought. We were arrested by the Border Patrol after stopping for gas on our return trip. I spent the next 24 hours in detention awaiting my trial – charge: “transporting illegal aliens” which is a felony.

Jorge and his family were deported but later managed to make it through the porous border again, as at least one million do annually. The next day I pleaded guilty to “aiding and abetting” an illegal alien, which is only a misdemeanor, paid a considerable fine, and was given 10 years’ probation. Jorge and his family showed up at church several months later and continued worshipping with us (Moran, David, “Towards an Ethical View of the Undocumented Alien,” 1990, p. 1).

These incidents give the Christian and the Christian church much to think about. In my case, was I a criminal? What is our Christian obligation to refugees fleeing political oppression? How do we show compassion and humanitarian concern when our actions may be viewed as illegal? Is there a way to help the undocumented person within the law? What are the laws of the U.S.? What does the Bible say? Is it legitimate for conscience sake to show compassion and not be in subjection to governing authorities? How can Christians live in harmony with those whose convictions of individual conscience differ?

Introduction

The underlying thesis of this paper is that the Church of Jesus Christ has a mandate to offer a holistic gospel to the alien in our midst whether they are documented or not. This mandate consists in preaching the good news of Christ's kingdom and loving him as our neighbor which includes doing him justice (teaching, mercy, justice). Furthermore, astute missiologists have been saying for 35 years that these immigrants offer an unprecedented opportunity in the history of missions to evangelize millions who are literally coming within an earshot of the gospel. They are moving right next door to our homes and churches and welcome virtually every friendly overture as they struggle to adjust to their new context. Let us not disappoint them.

When I first wrote on this subject in 1990, I said, "this may seem like a non-issue to those living in the parts of the U. S. where they have not been inundated by large numbers of undocumented immigrants. However, as these new neighbors make their way north and east, it is just a matter of time before it becomes a primary concern to everyone" (Moran, p. 2). Today the largest numbers of new undocumented immigrants live in North Carolina. Not far behind are Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. The Latin mission field has moved literally engulfing the PCA and other Bible belt sister churches.

Attitudes towards these immigrants and methodologies to reach them demand Biblical compassion and obedience to civil authorities. When one crosses the line (either unintentionally or for conscience sake) into disobedience to authorities he must be prepared for the consequences. However, as we shall see, this line is well marked and a long way from the precipice.

Theological Method

In his paper "The Stranger in Your Midst: Attitudes and Actions toward Undocumented Aliens in the United States" J. Allen Thompson, Ph.D. writes as follows:

Various approaches are utilized today in doing theology. Theology is a positive science with an orderly and systematic method. Theological *method* refers to the defined and controlled way of proceeding. Theological *model* refers to an approach driven by a central concern.

The theological method chosen for this study follows four steps: (1) The contextual entry point, (2) critical reflection on the issue, (3) theologizing and (4) action / application. This method is displayed and expanded into a model in Figure 1.

The A.R.T. of Doing Theology Cross-Culturally *Triadic Model*

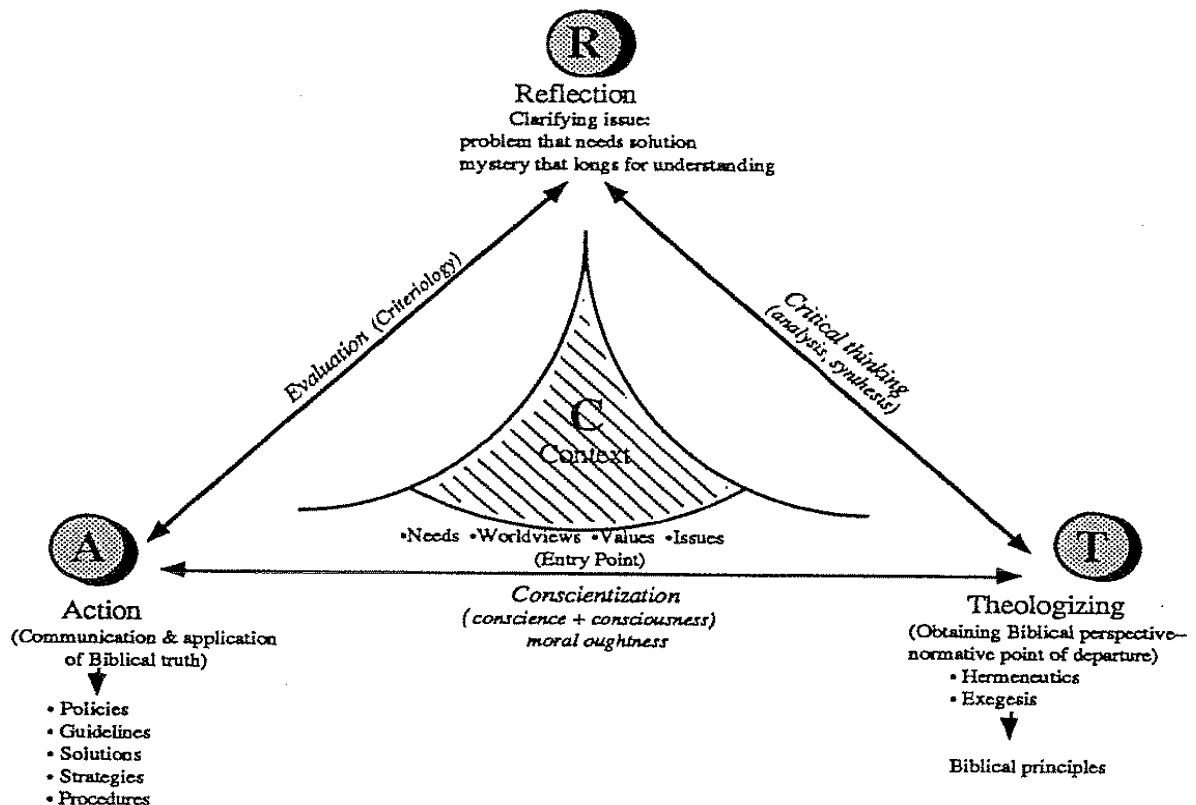


Figure 1. A model of doing theology cross-culturally

The theological model pictured [in Figure 1] is driven by the central concern of *missiology*. Missiology as here utilized is defined as “critical reflection in the praxis of mission” (Costas 1976, 10). It is *reflection* in that it attempts to interpret phenomena that emerges from real contexts through analysis and synthesis using the reflector’s categories and culture. It is *critical* reflection in that it probes, corrects and proposes action grounded on the normative Scriptures. It is *praxis* in that the theological outcome is applied in a concrete missionary context. It is *mission* in that the action represents part of the Church’s missionary obedience to and participation in God’s mission (Thompson, pp. 3-4).

For the sake of order and a proper theological approach this paper will generally follow a similar outline.

Definitions

Several additional terms call for clarification as we proceed into the study of “strangers” who live among us.

Documented aliens refers to those person who are residing in the United States under some status authorized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Undocumented aliens refers to those persons who have immigrated without INS authorization or who have overstayed the terms of their entrance. These persons are not illegal in the sense that they have committed a crime. They are unwelcome by the government.

Contextualization is “the translation of the unchanging content of the Gospel of the Kingdom into verbal form meaningful to the peoples in their separate cultures and within their particular existential situation” (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989, 149). This process involves the taking of the body of truth in the Scriptures, translating, interpreting, adapting and applying it to the people of a respondent culture (hopefully in concert with them) in such a way as to preserve as much of the original meaning and relevance as possible.

THE CONTEXT

Historical Migration, Western Civilization, Latin America, United States

Historical Migrations

People migrations are nothing new. World History is the history of people migrations that have populated the earth. From the Middle East people groups have spread out always in search of places more adequate to their needs. Sometimes there were great movements of colonization for political and economic reasons that produced empires such as the Phoenician, Greek and Roman; and more recently the Spanish, French, Portuguese and British. Occasionally there were forced emigrations e.g. African slaves to supply a manual labor need.

In the twentieth century migration followed three trends: (1) Movement from the country to the city. This has created mega metropolitan conglomerates throughout the world with much cultural diversity. (2) From poor nations to rich nations. Insufficient manual labor in developing countries after World War II together with the collapse of socialism and political instability has affected a flow of the uneducated from struggling countries to fill low end jobs in the wealthier ones. There also occurred a significant "brain drain" where the scientists have fled infertile conditions for improved opportunities. (3) From regions of conflict to political asylum. War, political tension, and natural disasters have stimulated mass migrations to nations of political stability and sufficient resources.

Western Civilization

Probably the number one factor that created mass migration to Western Europe and the United States since the second half of the 20th century has been the aging and population decline of the people who have historically populated these regions.

In his book, The Death of the West, 2002, Patrick J. Buchanan quotes Peter F. Drucker, "...there is no precedent for it in all of history ... the collapsing birthrate in the developed world." Buchanan gives startling statistics which portend a continuing population crash of people of European ancestry everywhere including the United States.

The prognosis is grim. Between 2000 and 2050, world population will grow by more than three billion to over nine billion people, but this 50 percent increase in global population will come entirely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as one hundred million people of European stock vanish from the earth.

In 1960, people of European ancestry were one-fourth of the world's population; in 2000, they were one-sixth; in 2050, they will be one-tenth. These are the statistics of a vanishing race. A growing awareness of what they portend has induced a sense of foreboding, even panic, in Europe (Buchanan, p. 12).

While world population doubled between 1960 and 2000 from 3 billion to 6 billion, European peoples had stopped reproducing. In 2000, the total population of Europe, from Iceland to Russia, was 728 million. At present birthrates, however, without new immigration her population will crash to 600 million by 2050. If the present fertility rates hold, Europe's population will decline to 207 million by the end of the twenty-first century (Buchanan 2002, pp. 11-13). A fertility rate of 2.1 is needed just to replace the existing population yet the average of the European woman has fallen to 1.4 children, with Italy 1.2 and Spain 1.07 being the lowest. Great Britain is at 1.66 the lowest in recorded history.

Buchanan portends “. . . if Europe wants to keep its present ratio of 4.8 workers (fifteen-sixty four) for every senior, Europe must bring in 1.4 billion emigrants from Africa and the Middle East.

United States

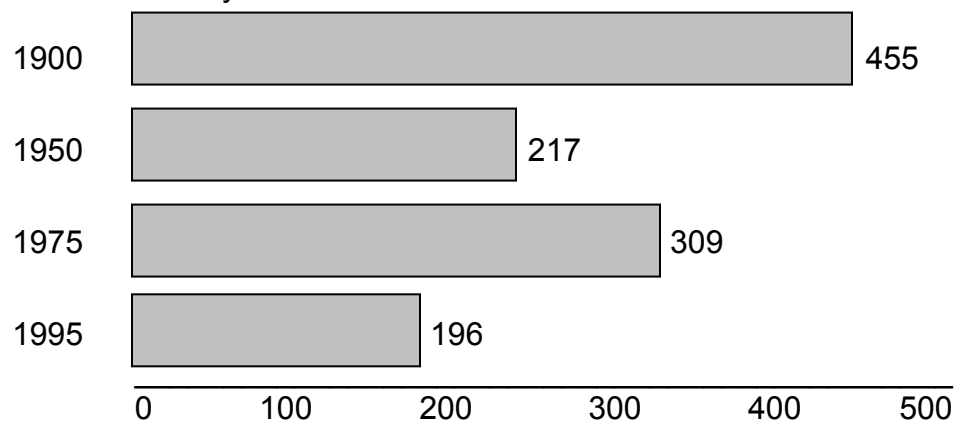
And how far behind is the American citizenry from its European cousins? According to demographer Calvin L. Beale (writing for Food Review – Volume 23, Issue 1, pp. 16-22), the American population like most of Europe is choosing not to replace itself, a rather unprecedented social choice that contributes to the progressive rise in the average age of the population.

One of the major trends in American society during the twentieth century has been the reduction in childbearing and the household size. In 1900 women in their early forties had born on an average of 455 children for every 100 women (a ration of 4.44). Even with mortality rates high (1 in 10 in the first year) nearly twice as many children were being born as were needed to replace each generation. The result was substantial population growth with the energy and creativity of population that was getting younger.

From the 1900s twentieth century birthrates were generally downward especially during the great Depression and did not rise again until the post World War II baby boom. During 1970 many philosophical, ethical, and cultural factors impacted the family and childbearing so that the birth rate reached an all time low by the 1990s, well below the rate needed for a population to replace itself.

Number of Children Born Per 100 Women Fell Sharply Throughout the 20th Century, Interrupted by the Baby Boom

Women 20-44 years old in:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, and partly estimated.

(Beale, Calvin L., "A Century of Population Growth and Change," *Food Review*, Volume 23, Issue 1, p. 20.)

Furthermore, the median life expectancy reached 80 years for the first time in 1997 further elevating the proportion of elderly in the population. The effect is further strain on a shrinking group of young producers.

What has led to such a strong disinterest in families and children in the U.S. and Europe and utter apathy concerning the progeny of a civilization? One could list many social ills: an increasing mechanization of human value, global capitalism, view of woman as units of production, and plain self-centeredness. Buchanan cites Eleanor Mills:

"The fact is that girls like me – i.e., healthy, hearty, middle-class women in their 20s – are just not breeding."⁸ Why not? Because, she writes, "my generation's twin preoccupations are, unfortunately, looks and money."⁹ She quotes one of her many childless contemporaries:

"If I had a kid," said Jane, an advertising executive, thoughtfully, "I wouldn't be able to do half the things I take for granted. Every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. when we are still in bed, my husband and I look at each other and just say, 'Thank God we weren't up at 5 a.m. caring for a brat.' We have such a great time just the two of us; who knows if it would work if we introduced another person into the equation?"¹⁰ (Buchanan, p. 34)

Unethical birth control practices and abortion are symptoms of cultural drift but easily account for the elimination of 50 million from the ranks of youthful contribution since 1973. With all this one is reminded of an observation of the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer who commented unflatteringly that my generation was committed to the pursuit of "personal peace and prosperity" – a prosperity that is short-sighted and short-lived.

In summary, the baby boomers' and subsequent generations' refusal to reproduce itself has left a gaping void in this nation's well-being. The family has slipped as a foundation. Low birth rates have left insufficient numbers of workers and producers. The incongruence between low and shrinking numbers of young producers and high and increasing numbers of the dependent elderly has left a gap both in Europe and the U.S. that someone has to fill.

Immigration (undocumented)

The immigrant in general and the undocumented immigrant in particular has stepped into the void in the United States created by aging and low birth rates. "What drives the growth in immigrant population in general is employment opportunities," says demographer Jeffrey S. Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center.

According to Washington Post staff writer March 22, 2005, p. 201, "despite tighter border enforcement and a post September 11, 2001 economic slump, the number of illegal immigrants in the United States has continued to grow steadily with many moving into states that traditionally have small foreign-born populations." The areas include Arizona, North Carolina, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

The Pew Hispanic Center, a private research group in Washington, estimates the number of undocumented immigrants at 10.3 million as of March, 2005, an increase of 23 percent from 8.4 million in 2000. More than 50 percent of that growth is attributable to Mexican nationals living with proper documentation in the United States, the report said.

Major findings of the Pew Center research include:

- Following several years of steady growth, the number of undocumented residents reached an estimated 10.3 million in March 2004 with undocumented Mexicans numbering 5.9 million or 57 percent of the total.
- As of March 2005, the undocumented population has reached nearly 11 million including more than 6 million Mexicans, assuming the same rate of growth as in recent years.
- About 80 to 85 percent of the migration from Mexico in recent years has been undocumented.

- Since the mid-1990s, the most rapid growth in the number of undocumented migrants has been in states that previously had relatively small foreign-born populations. As a result, Arizona and North Carolina are now among the states with largest numbers of undocumented migrants.
- Although most undocumented migrants are young adults, there is also a sizeable childhood population. About one-sixth of the population – some 1.7 million people – is under 18 years of age. (Passel, Jeffrey S., “Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population,” Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, March 21, 2005, p. 1.)

Almost two-thirds (68 percent) of the undocumented population lives in just eight states: California (24 percent), Texas (14 percent), Florida (9 percent), New York (7 percent), Arizona (5 percent), Illinois (4 percent), New Jersey (4 percent), and North Carolina (3 percent). (ibid, p. 2)

Other findings of interest to those doing ministry among these groups are as follows:

- Undocumented counts grow at approximately 450,000 a year.
- The majority of undocumented immigrants are moving to small municipalities and suburbs where they have not previously gone.
- About 6 million undocumented are workers representing about 5 percent of the U.S. workers (source: Urban Institute).
- Virtually all undocumented men are in the labor force. Undocumented labor-force participation exceeds that of all men whether they are legitimate immigrants or U.S. citizens because undocumented are younger and less likely to be in school or disabled.
 - Undocumented women are less likely to be in the labor force (62 percent) than undocumented men or than women who are U.S. citizens. One reason is that proportionately more undocumented women are of childbearing age, and undocumented women are more likely than U.S. citizens to have children and remain in the home.
 - Low-wage workers: Undocumented workers earn considerably less than working U.S. citizens. About two-thirds of undocumented workers earn less than twice the minimum wage, compared with only one-third of all workers. Undocumented workers make up less than 10 percent of the 43 million low-wage workers in the United States.
 - Shares of men and women: Contrary to public perception, women make up a substantial share -- 41 percent – of the adult undocumented

population. There are about 4.5 million undocumented men (18 and over) and 3.2 million undocumented women.

- Children of undocumented immigrants in the United States: About 1.6 million children under 18 in the United States are themselves undocumented immigrants. Another 3 million children with undocumented parents are U.S. citizens because they were born here. Current proposals that would require workers to return to their sending countries after six years would thus affect both undocumented and U.S. citizen children.

(Passel, Jeffrey S., Capps, Randolph, Fix, Michael E., "Undocumented Immigrants: Facts and Figures," Urban Institute, January 12, 2004, p. 2.)

See appendices for specific data of the Pew Research Center.

Summary: A heavy flow of undocumented immigrants continues to come to the U.S. Previously they came primarily as single men. Now they come as families or establish families once they get here. The undocumented once concentrated in California, Texas, Florida and New York but now are spreading out through the Midwest and Southeast.

The Development of Immigration Law

For about one hundred years after this nation's birth, unrestricted immigration was the practice. America was a wide-open frontier that needed to be challenged and subdued. During this time it was unclear whether the federal government was even intended by the Constitution to have power to regulate immigration (David Weissbrodt, Immigration Law and Procedure, p. 4). Congress was given power to regulate commerce but did not specifically authorize government-controlled immigration.

In 1798 Congress authorized the President to exclude dangerous aliens. This opened the door to a long history of "quality" control laws. Through 1905 a series of laws was passed to keep out undesirable paupers and polygamists and to restrict the entrance of Slavs and southern Europeans who were viewed as undesirables.

There was an anti-alien mood in the country associated with World War I. Consequently, a 1917 bill prohibited entrance of all Asians within specified latitudes and longitudes. In 1921 the quota laws were passed limiting new immigrants to three percent of the existing population of a particular nationality residing in the United States.

The Great Depression of the 1930s eliminated the economic motive of the new immigrant. Only one-half million people immigrated to the U. S. during the decade. World War II changed that, and a series of new acts was passed to accommodate war brides, fiancés, and displaced persons (Ibid., pp. 5-15).

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, as amended, is the basis of all immigration law today. It retained the quota but exempted the Asia Pacific Triangle from this quota. It also introduced the “preference” system, which was amended in 1965 and stands as follows:

First Preference:	Unmarried children of citizens
Second Preference:	Spouses and unmarried children
Third Preference:	Persons with exceptional abilities that are needed
Fourth & Fifth Preference:	Other relatives of citizens
Sixth Preference:	Needed workers
Seventh Preference:	Refugees

(Edward P. Hutchinson, Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, pp. 300-350.)

The two bills of the decade of the 1980s that continue to impact significantly the lives of immigrants are the Refugee Act of 1980 and the Simpson-Rodino Act of 1986.

Refugee Act of 1980

The Refugee Act of 1980 redefines and expands previous legislation having to do with those who are claiming political asylum status. Attorney Pam Barnett summarized the major facts of the Act as follows:

According to the Act, a refugee is a person who is unwilling to return to his country of nationality because of “persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” This definition, based on that of the 1967 United States Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, eliminated the geographical or political distinctions of the former 1952 Refugee Act which designated refugees as those fleeing from Communist or Communist-dominated countries or from the Middle East. The 1980 Act provided for numerical limitations of fifty thousand refugees to be admitted for the years 1980, 1981 and 1982, except in the case of an extreme emergency when the President could, in response to humanitarian concerns, allow additional refugees to enter. This is the method which allowed the mass migration of Cuban refugees in May of 1980. The Act also established a discretionary asylum procedure enabling the Attorney General to grant asylum to those aliens who were “physically present in the United States or at a land border or port of entry” and who met the criteria of “refugees.” However, the Attorney

General is prohibited from deporting an alien to a country where it is determined "such alien's life or freedom would be threatened . . . on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion" (Pam Barnett, "Political Asylum for Salvadoran Refugees: A Continuing Debate," Houston Journal of International Law 8 (Autumn 1985): 135).

The ramifications of this Act and its relationship to those concerned about immigrants from Central America is discussed in the section DEEDS OF LOVE on page 12.

Simpson-Rodino Act of 1986

The Simpson-Rodino Act was passed in 1986 in an effort to regain control of our borders and make some legal sense of the estimated 12 million undocumented aliens who were believed by the government to be living in the United States at that time, the majority being Mexicans. Probably this estimate by the government was high, but there was really no way to be sure.

According to Interpreter Releases, this 1986 Act provided a method for legalizing the status of many of the aliens who had been here unlawfully before January 1, 1982. The Act gave them, within a limited period of time, a one-shot opportunity to achieve permanent resident status ("The Simpson-Rodino Act Analyzed: Part II – Legalization," Interpreter Releases, November 10, 1986, p. 1021).

The undocumented alien was allowed a certain time frame in which to prove to the INS that he had resided continuously in the United States since January 1, 1982. This could be shown through check stubs from employers, letters of proof from apartment owners, and corroborating testimony from priests and pastors.

If the undocumented person could provide this evidence, he was granted temporary resident status. He then could work towards his permanent resident status by demonstrating minimal understanding of English and a minimal knowledge of United States history and government. In an interview, Houston attorney Charles C. Foster stated that more than two million qualified for temporary resident status and were working toward permanent residency (Charles C. Foster is one of the nation's leading immigration attorneys, of Tindall and Foster, Houston, Texas. He has been called upon to testify before the United States Senate regarding immigration law.).

Current Situation: Simpson-Rodino was virtually an amnesty which touched maybe 25 percent of the undocumented living in the U.S. in 1986. What can be done now? Most people, whether they are sympathetic or not to the experience of the undocumented, agree that some way of giving an accounting for the presence of these folk among us is necessary. President George W. Bush was considering new legislation prior to 9/11/2001. Governor Jeb Bush of Florida favors a less intimidating experience for immigrants at international airports and encouraged his brother the President to introduce policies of balance. National security is critical but so is international business he emphasizes. Gov.

Bush also appealed for a greater window of opportunity for offering visas to students from Latin America and the Caribbean (El Nuevo Herald, September 30, 2005, 6 A).

One new immigration policy to be proposed has come from Republican Senator John Cornyn of Texas. On June 18, 2003 he announced “a guest worker approach with common sense balance.” He announced on Monday, October 10, 2005, that this perfected bill will be presented later this month. The essentials of this legislation are as follows:

U.S. Senator John Cornyn outlined his plan for a new guest worker program this week, calling it a “common sense solution to our broken immigration system, which addresses the need for better border security and acknowledges the important contributions that immigrants make to our economy.”

“It will bring hard-working immigrants out of the shadows and onto our tax rolls, while removing incentives for human smuggling and other exploitation.”

The guest worker plan is neither an amnesty program, nor a path to citizenship. Undocumented immigrants already in the U.S. can apply, in conjunction with their employers, for guest worker status within the first year of the program’s enactment.

Cornyn added that the legislation will provide substantial enforcement mechanisms to deal with those who flout existing immigration law, remain in the country without applying for guest worker status, traffic in human smuggling or fail to comply with labor law.

Cornyn’s proposal would allow immigrants to work and provide for their families under the protection of, and in accordance with, the new law. The program will help prevent tragic smugglings such as those that occurred recently in Texas and other parts of the country. For too long, immigrants have been exposed to dangerous smugglers who place little or no value on their lives, and unscrupulous employers who exploit workers who have no practical ability to report abuses. (Office of U.S. Senator, Texas, John Cornyn, contact: Don Stewart.)

Summary

The entry point for “doing theology” is a contextual problem that cries for solution or a mystery that calls for understanding in a real situation. The fate of the millions of undocumented aliens in the United States is that type of contextual problem. Some of these persons are political refugees; most are economically-driven people seeking, at any cost, to find sustenance for their families in poverty-stricken situations back home. Most of these undocumented aliens are without a knowledge of Christ. Some are Christians. Others are Christian workers. What is the Christian response in attitude and action to this problem that looms larger year by year? (Thompson, p. 8.)

REFLECTION: COMPASSION AND OBEDIENCE **The Law of Love or the Law of Subjection**

What is the Christian to make of 10 million undocumented primarily Hispanics who live all around us? If one listens to the political conservatives (Pat Buchanan and Fox News) what we have is an invasion of criminal barbarians, drug addicts, marauding gangs, and welfare abusers who are here to trash our culture, repossess their territories, and maximize all their entitlements. Minutemen armies have begun to take the law into their own hands in the name of national security going to borders to challenge and threaten immigrants as they cross.

On the other hand politicians like the Bushes who have lived and shaped their values living in immigrant communities and prominent newscasters like Jorge Ramos of Univision strive for a reasoned sympathy and advocate changes in immigration policies that require the cooperation and responsibility of both governments – U.S. and Mexico.

Most Christians in the PCA with whom I have talked are of the opinion that these lawbreakers, i.e. illegal aliens, must be stopped. Furthermore, it's an issue of controlling our borders and national security.

My Christian friends who work for Homeland Security in D.C. and Miami are beyond frustration. "We have no cohesive policy," they say. "Job satisfaction and morale are extremely low." It does not encourage them to hear my reports of how the undocumented in Miami bribed U.S. government employees on the Arizona/Mexico border to get here. These faithful public servants long for a policy that is practical, equitable and above all enforceable.

The border patrol officers themselves and other county and city law enforcement agencies are not without sympathetic concern. Most are Hispanics themselves and usually take a humanitarian approach to their neighbors seeking a better life in the U.S. When my Salvadoran friends and I were arrested in 1979 we were treated throughout the unpleasant experience with dignity and respect. What struck me as I read Jorge Ramos' account in Dying to Cross of 19 illegal immigrants who were asphyxiated in a sealed tractor trailer while being smuggled from Harlingen, Texas to Houston, was the outpouring of concern of law enforcement all over South Texas for the immigrants. Their wrath was reserved for the smugglers, not for their brothers, the immigrants trying to help their families.

Attitudes and Perceptions

Many who take up a position for deporting illegal immigrants do so because of a widespread belief that the undocumented either over utilize or abuse public assistance programs. These programs include Medicaid, SSI, AFDC, Public Assistance, and food stamps. The opponents of undocumented immigrants say the immigrants take away jobs from American workers and cost the government much more than they give back in work or taxes. Groups such as FAIR, Federation for American Reform, are emphatic about their beliefs that the undocumented are costing taxpayers for services like education, medical care and incarceration.

Before responding to these perceptions it is important to note that the RAND Corporation, in research covering nine different studies about the net cost of immigrants, concluded that the net costs of immigrants are nearly impossible to establish. (George Vernez and Kevin P. McCarthy, "The Cost of Immigration to Taxpayers: Analytical and Policy Issues," accessed 20 August 1999, available from <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR705.html>, Internet.)

In other words one must not scapegoat the undocumented by looking for data that seems to support a predetermined assumption.

It is essential in an evaluation of the "facts" that one realizes how desperate the undocumented are (who already feel like *personas non grata*) to be registered and accounted for to be a part of the society in which they live. They earnestly seek to acquire driver's licenses, social security numbers, and tax numbers. Whether these documents are legitimate or not, they enable the undocumented to work "within the rules" and pay income tax and social security tax which they are eager to do. Of course in the process of using illegitimate documentation, the worker is strongly contributing to programs from which he will not benefit. These sacrifices they are willing to make as short term necessities worrying about retirement later.

Interestingly because of this situation according to the New York Times "Illegal Immigrants Are Bolstering Social Security With Billions." Consider the Times report of April 5, 2005 by Eduardo Porter:

Since illegally crossing the Mexican border into the United States six years ago, Angel Martinez has done backbreaking work, harvesting asparagus, pruning grapevines, and picking the ripe fruit. More recently, he has also washed trucks, often working as much as 70 hours a week, earning \$8.50 to \$12.75 an hour.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Martinez, 28, has not given much thought to Social Security's long-term financial problems. But Mr. Martinez – who comes from the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico and hiked for two days through the desert to enter the United States near Tecate, some 20 miles east of Tijuana – contributes

more than most Americans to the solvency of the nation's public retirement system.

Last year, Mr. Martinez paid about \$2,000 toward Social Security and \$450 for Medicare through payroll taxes withheld from his wages. Yet unlike most Americans, who will receive some form of a public pension in retirement and will be eligible for Medicare as soon as they turn 65, Mr. Martinez is not entitled to benefits.

He belongs to a big club. As the debate over Social security heats up, the estimated seven million or so illegal immigrant workers in the United States are now providing the system with a subsidy at as much as \$7 billion a year.

While it has been evident for years that illegal immigrants pay a variety of taxes, the extent of their contributions to Social Security is striking: the money added up to about 10 percent of last year's surplus – the difference between what the system currently receives in payroll taxes and what it doles out in pension benefits. . . .

Most immigration helps Social Security's finances, because new immigrants tend to be of working age and contribute more than they take from the system. . . .

Illegal immigrants help even more because they will never collect benefits. According to Mr. Goss, without the flow of payroll taxes from wages in the suspense file, the system's long term funding hole over 75 years would be 10 percent deeper.

In summary, all undocumented immigrants pay taxes. They pay sales tax. They own property and pay property tax. If they rent, the apartment owner pays property tax. They in many cases possess fraudulent documents and pay income tax and social security tax. One study showed that Mexican immigrants were the least likely of immigrants from all over the world to seek public assistance. This is significant because they are the largest group.

Another perception is that undocumented immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. citizens at hourly pay below minimum wage. One study shows that on average they earn above minimum wage. I'm not suggesting that there are no abuses here but that 96% employment rate of the undocumented doing hard work for modest pay and not necessarily minimum wage. As far as taking jobs from Americans consider the case of Trees Incorporated in Houston, Texas. This company keeps trees trimmed off of power lines, which is difficult and dangerous work. On one of their raids during the decade of the 80s the INS rounded up 100 illegal workers and deported them. The company then made appeals for workers in the Houston area. Only two applications were filed. I suppose Tree Incorporated had to wait for the next caravan from the south to replenish their work force (Moran, pp. 24,25).

Another perception is that these undocumented immigrants have a “culture of poverty” worldview – that makes them passive and non-progressive. Buchanan in Death of the West implies that our economy is down and that we will soon become a third world country because of the sleepy mind lying dormant beneath that sombrero. Sure a minority seek a ghetto mindset and non-progressive status. (See Moran’s D.Min. thesis on 9 cultural groups most of them progressive that emerge from the first generation immigrant base. See also in appendix Daniel Sanchez’s study of educational attainment of Hispanic Americans, “Reality #5.”)

Consider the following examples: Gracie Saenz, a second generation immigrant from a family of nine children resisted her father’s traditional role for her and became a lawyer, Houston city council member at large, and mayor protem of Houston. In this role she represented Houston’s international interests in Europe and Latin America much the same way that Roberto Toricella does for Mayor Carlos Alvarez of Miami Dade.

Tania Monge came at the age of five as a “refugee” (U.S. does not grant refugee status to Salvadorans) from El Salvador with parents Antonio and Celia and Tio Daniel. Another uncle had been killed in the crossfire between guerrillas and the government. By God’s grace most of her family and extended family became Christians through the Oaklawn Church. Five years later our church co-operated with the Simpson-Rodino bill to grant legal status to her father. This immigration act allowed pastors and priests to write letters of recommendation as part of the verification process. In addition Gracie Saenz offered pro-bono legal services through our church. What a thrill. As a team we saw dozens of undocumented achieve residency.

Unfortunately Antonio did not make application for his family. Tania, her mother and sister began a nine-year process for residency under the Family Unification Act. Tania was fifteen at the beginning of the process. At seventeen Tania graduated with honors from the prestigious Rebakus magnet high school for medical professions and was offered a full scholarship as a pre-med student at the University of Houston. Unfortunately as an illegal alien she was unable to accept the scholarship. (So I counseled her to return to El Salvador and take her chances, just kidding.)

A very determined young lady, Tania applied and was accepted at another local university from which she graduated in 2000 majoring in microbiology and chemistry. Still unable because of her non resident status, she was not admitted to medical school but was finally granted work authorization. Tania took a job as a microbiology technician at the University of Texas Health and Science Center and worked 1 and ½ years waiting for her green card which came in 2002, she immediately started medical school at the same institution.

In May of 2007 Tania will graduate with a specialization in internal and emergency medicine. All of you are invited to her graduation.

Another experience of pure joy with the Monge family (6 children) was teaming up in 1998 with Habitat for Humanity to build their four-bedroom house. President Jimmy Carter

physically labored in their home communicating in his best Spanish and gave them all new Bibles. Antonio who to my knowledge has not become a Christian wept with joy at God's blessing as we dedicated his home in a moving ceremony.

Cultural Concerns. Another common misconception about illegal immigrants is that they will disregard our Christian values and bring us all to the dregs of moral decadence. The irony of this view is that it is precisely the view that new immigrants have of us and our cultural morality. Consider the finding resulting from a study done by Daniel Sanchez, Ph.D. of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas:

REALITY # 7

Hispanics are typically very conservative regarding social values

1. A 2003 survey of U.S. Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center of the Kaiser Family Foundation found that immigrants from Latin America were overwhelmingly committed to strong family ties, religious beliefs, education, and hard workers and were actually worried that the coming to the United States would have a negative impact on the moral values of their children."
2. A strong attachment to family is evident among Hispanics who predominantly speak English and are generations removed from the immigrant experience
3. A majority of Hispanics maintain that children growing in the US will stay close to their families
4. As Evangelicals reach Hispanics for Christ, they will find in them committed allies regarding the challenge of retaining conservative social values in America.
5. Recent studies by the PEW Foundation's Hispanic Center reveal that Hispanics in general have more conservative social values than Anglos in general. This is evident in the view of Hispanics regarding the acceptability of divorce, homosexuality, and abortion.

Table 12. Acceptance Of Social Practices To Hispanic

	Hispanics	Anglos
Divorce	56%	74%
Homosexuality	25%	38%
Abortion	20%	43%

Summary

Immigration laws have become increasingly realistic, less racially motivated and mores compassionate in the last 50 years. Undocumented immigrants make strong contributions socially, financially, culturally, and morally to the United States. The

succeeding generations continue to progress and grow in these contributions particularly by becoming better educated and financially solvent. While of course there are problems and abuses the undocumented workers have already become essential to the fabric of our society and economy.

RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

In the preceding chapter we looked at attitudes and perceptions from those who insist that subjection to governing authorities requires intolerance towards the presence of the undocumented immigrant and those who believe they can show compassion and sympathy without violating the law of subjection.

In this section we will attempt to look at those convictions in light of relevant biblical passages from the Old and New Testaments. From the outset it is important to assert that the situation of illegal immigration today does not exactly parallel that of Israel to its neighbors in the Old Testament nor that of Christians living or traveling throughout the Roman Empire in the New Testament. There does not appear to have been national territorial boundaries which forbade outsiders to enter.

Nevertheless, since the whole counsel of God gives principles and lessons as the only rule of faith and practice, we are confident that the Holy Spirit will help us to think ethically about the undocumented issue as we search the Scriptures.

Old Testament Terms Relating to the Treatment of Aliens

The following three Hebrew words, with slight difference in meaning, are utilized in the Old Testament answer to this question, “Who is the ‘stranger’ or the ‘outsider’ in biblical thought?” The following definitions were prepared by Thompson, p. 12:

1. The *gēr*. This Hebrew word, meaning “stranger”, “sojourner”, or “resident alien,” occurs ninety-two times in the Old Testament and is the most common of the three terms. The *gēr* is the non-Israelite sojourner who has willingly or unwillingly placed himself under Israelite protection but without full legal rights. “This word is applied with slightly varying meaning to anyone who resides in a country or a town of which he is not a full native land-owning citizen (Dt. 18:6, Jgs 17:7, Jgs 19:16) (Wiener 1955, 2865).
2. The *toshabh*. Almost synonymous with *gēr*, *toshabh* is used with less permanent sojourning (Lev. 22:10, Ex. 12:45, Lev. 22:10). “He is expressly mentioned in the law of homicide (Nu. 35:15), but otherwise we have no information as to his legal position” (Wiener 1955, 2865). Perhaps this person could be considered a guest or visitor.
3. The *nokhri*. “The word is far wider than those considered above. It covers everything of alien or foreign character regardless of the place of residence” (Wiener 1955, 2865).

Consider the following biblical texts from the Mosaic Law and from the New Testament.

Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt (Exodus 22:21).

When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 19:33,34).

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:17-19).

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:9,10).

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2).

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, . . . (1 Peter 1:1).

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul (1 Peter 2:11).

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility . . . ¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household . . . (Ephesians 2:14,19).

When interpreting God's law it is appropriate to ask what is normative and therefore, applicable to other nations and to Christians. The familiar distinctions of the Westminster Confession of Faith between moral, civil and ceremonial law are helpful here. Ceremonial laws are abrogated under the New Testament. Moral law continues as the perfect rule of righteousness. And civil or judicial laws are applicable in the sense of their "general equity." These are extremely helpful categories but they do seem to overlap in the Pentateuch. But this should not be strange as laws for justice should also be moral.

As we think about what is normative in these laws we should ask why were they given. The motive given in Exodus 22:21 for showing love and compassion to aliens is that the Israelites were disadvantaged aliens in Egypt for 430 years and now enjoy a special

status of grace. Paul gives the same rationale to Gentiles who were former strangers to this status of grace and excluded from citizenship but who are now included in Christ and the people of God. Peter reminds us that our new position of grace has actually reinforced our position as aliens and sojourners who are temporary residents in this world. The normative and universal application of all these texts is that realizing our position as former aliens to grace and now under grace as aliens in this world we have a strong impetus to show compassion to any person who might be disadvantaged or marginalized.

Furthermore, it is clear that these commands are normative moral laws applicable to all times and places. This is seen in the specific imperative to love as expressed in the exact pattern of Jesus' summary of the second table of the moral Decalogue which is "love your neighbor [alien] as yourself."

From this normative mandate to love because of grace shown to us and its specific application to the marginalized and disadvantaged throughout the Bible, clear biblical principles emerge:

1. Grace. What we have here is a reminder that what we are is due to the grace of God. "He who remembers of *himself* that God brought him up out of Egypt, and showed him *what justice means* to the heart of a sojourner, that man and that man alone remains or becomes a true Jew. . . . We treat someone in need of help in the same way that God loves us (Rom. 5:6-8, 10). (Thompson, p. 16)
2. Justice. *The weak and the helpless need special protection and care.* Persons who by their position, status, and language are disadvantaged are potential victims of ethnocentric pride. God hates oppression and injustice of all types, but especially that oppression directed toward the weak and defenseless. Because of this principle many rules were established in the nation of Israel to protect the alien. For example, special care was to be taken to do the alien no judicial wrong (Deut. 24:17; 27:19). In criminal law the same rules enacted to protect natives were applied to aliens (Lev. 18:26). (Thompson, p. 16)
3. Mercy. *Aliens, as well as other disadvantaged persons, merit acts of kindness and physical provision as a reflection of the character of God who shows no partiality.* One purpose of the tithe in the Old Testament was to aid the alien. "When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied" (Deut. 26:12). Provision was also made for the alien to participate in gleanings and forgotten sheaves (Lev. 19:10; 23:22) (Thompson, p. 16).
4. The Poor deserve special consideration.

Psalm 12:5 - "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

1 John 3:17,18 - If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

James 2:15-17 - Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

5. Evangelism. *God longs to reach the alien with His love and grace*. In Israel if the alien was willing, he was extended full religious privilege (Ex. 12:43-45). He was to rest on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:10), observe the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29), keep the Passover if he underwent circumcision (Lev. 12:48), and offer sacrifices (Lev. 17:8). Full-circled love was offered. So in our age of the Gospel and grace every opportunity should be taken to befriend, love and bring aliens into the Kingdom of God. (Thompson, pp. 16-17.)

Even if one works to deport the undocumented he will follow it up with many trips to the detention center to supply physical needs and preach the gospel.

In summary these specific principles or teachings, therefore, should influence the church's treatment of today's undocumented immigrant, beginning with Jesus' example. First, when initiating his ministry, Jesus declared that he would preach the good news to the poor and release the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). The top priority of the church, therefore, is to proclaim the gospel to the undocumented immigrant. Second, Jesus sharply rebuked and condemned to hell those who did not invite the stranger in. One also should remember the admonition of the author of Hebrews to be hospitable to strangers because by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it (Matt. 25:43; Heb. 13:2). Third, just as Jesus died on the cross to save sinners while they were still helpless (Rom. 5:6-8), the church takes the initiative to aid helpless people. (Steven Austin's paper on "Love the Alien as Yourself").

The Law of Subjection

Wait a minute someone protests you are talking about helping lawbreakers. That's "aiding and abetting." What about Romans 13? Doesn't the Bible's teaching about obeying governing authorities make all your arguments null and void? Does it? Dr. John Frame is very helpful here. He reminds us of another hermeneutical principle – the principle of PRIORITIES.

We have been looking at various factors that determine whether particular biblical laws are currently normative. But even among laws that are normative at a particular time and place, there are priorities to be observed, and those priorities also should influence our decisions.

. . . Within the system [of God's law], some elements are more important, more pressing than others.

That is true in any system of law. In the United States, for example, there are many different kinds of law: the Constitution, federal statutes, orders from the executive branch, state constitutions and statutes, local laws, decisions of courts. Even the orders given by a policeman on his beat are law in a sense. But within this system, some kinds of law take precedence over others. When someone believes that a statute is unconstitutional, for example, he may appeal to the court system. The court's decision, for better or worse, takes precedence over the statute in question. When Paul, in Rom. 13:1, tells us to be subject to the "governing authorities" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:13), he means, therefore, to be subject to the entire system of law.

1. *Normative Priorities*

There are some principles of God's law that Scripture explicitly states to be more important than others. In Matt. 23:23, Jesus says that justice, mercy, and faithfulness are "weightier matters of the law," compared with the Pharisees' concern with the tithing of mint and dill and cumin. . . .

Similar is God's statement in Hos. 6:6, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" (cf. Micah 6:6-8, Matt. 9:13, 12:7). In fact, God did desire burnt offerings, for he commanded them often in the Old Testament. The statement in Hosea is comparison, and to some extent hyperbole. It means that God's desire for steadfast love is so much greater than his desire for sacrifice that in the context of such a comparison it seems that he does not desire sacrifice at all. Clearly these passages indicate not only normative principles, but normative emphases. The principles God considers most weighty are the ones that should preoccupy us above all.

. . . The law itself declares these differences, and so I call these normative priorities.

2. *Situational Priorities*

In various situations of life, it becomes more important to follow one principle of the law than another. Modern secular legal systems, for example, make special provision for emergencies. Normally, for example, we are expected to drive on the

right side of the road and not to cross solid lines. But when Jim is driving on a crowded highway, and a sinkhole unexpectedly appears ahead, leaving him no room to drive on that side, it is legitimate for Jim to wait until a safe moment, then to drive on the left, across the solid line, around the sinkhole. The highest principle of the law is safety, and that takes precedence over the normal traffic rules. If Jim is arrested for breaking a traffic law, concern for safety can serve as a legal defense. In fact, in such a case, Jim has not violated the law. He has maintained its highest intention, which is to keep people safe.

Scripture also recognizes that emergencies can affect our relation to God's law. Jesus notes how David and his men "entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" (Mark 2:26) The reason, simply, was that they were hungry (verse 25).

Similarly, the Bible's instruction to submit to human authorities (Rom. 13:1, 1 Pet. 2:13, Heb. 13:17, cf. Ex. 20:12). This is an important rule, but it is, of course, subordinate to our higher duty to obey God. So when the highest Jewish authority, the high priest, together with the Sanhedrin, commanded the apostles not to teach in the name of Jesus, they answered, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and they violated the order "every day, in the temple and from house to house" (verse 42).

. . . But there are indeed cases of such overriding considerations, where our actual, present duty is an exception to a prima facie duty.

To practice a legitimate exception, as the apostles did in Acts 5:29, is not to break the law of God. Taken as a whole system, the law requires such an exception. (Frame, John, Doctrine of the Christian Life, unpublished, pp. 210-212.)

Frame goes on to argue that there is no tragic moral choice here rather a priority selection that God himself requires. In his book, Medical Ethics, p. 10, Frame states that Scripture assumes that in emergencies normal regulations may be transcended in the interest of human health and safety (e.g. Matt. 12:4). Lower authorities may (and must!) be disobeyed when they conflict with higher ones (Exod. 1:15-22; etc.). We saw this in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Parents were viewed as resourceful who found fresh water and diapers in flood damaged stores to provide for their famished children. They were not prosecuted as thieves.

In another example authorities considered giving Tyrone Williams the death penalty because he did not aid illegal aliens even after, to his shock, he discovered they were near death from riding in his airtight truck trailer (in Dying to Cross, Jorge Ramos).

These may be extreme examples but what we forget in our rigidity and absolutism is that the Bible is very flexible. It is not a casebook of every conceivable ethical situation nor

does it encourage us to write one. Rather the Holy Spirit helps to apply the moral law and the general equity of the civil law to a myriad of daily situations. Furthermore, the judges of that day as they do in ours, consider extenuating circumstances and motive in their judgments. In my brush with the law in 1979 the arresting officers and the judge considered my motives and the circumstances. The result – I was able to plea bargain and was punished lightly rather than serve a prison term as a trafficker of human cargo.

Furthermore, immigration lawyers (namely Juan Gomez of Miami) tell me that none of the services mentioned in this paper nor many and many more that are offered by Christian people everywhere to the undocumented are in violation of any law. The undocumented immigrant himself is in little danger of being deported unless he is misbehaving or involved in criminal activity or otherwise treating the system in a cavalier fashion. Government agencies are too overwhelmed to be involved in trivialities.

As for my conscience, I believe I am in subjection to the law of subjection, the law of love and the Great Commission by communicating to the alien the grace of the gospel of Christ, welcoming the alien, making his life easier, and by encouraging and helping him to improve his legal status (by counsel of Attorney Gomez). I believe I would be in violation of the law of subjection and the law to love the alien as myself, if I did not welcome and show mercy, grace and justice to the alien.

ACTION: LOVING IN DEED AND TRUTH

As we have seen the consistent Biblical norm in the Old Testaments and the New is that we love the alien as ourselves. In summary, a full gospel compassion includes preaching to him the gospel of redemption, seeking justice for him, and expressing mercy to him because of his disadvantaged political status and social situation.

It should be remembered that the undocumented immigrant usually does not speak English, feels like a misfit everywhere and probably does not want to be here. For him his presence in the U.S. is a survival mission of necessity. Often he is the victim of the legal system and of unscrupulous employers. The church must stand in the gap and offer him not only a gospel proclamation but also a gospel justice and a gospel mercy.

The following list is not exhaustive but rather a representative outline of what Christian churches are doing to show God's love and hospitality to the undocumented immigrant:

1. Basic Necessities – food, clothing, shelter, transportation. Churches can easily address these concerns. Some services even provide temporary housing such as Casa Juan Diego of the Catholic Church. With so many natural catastrophies, we mustn't forget hurricane relief to the undocumented. It is estimated that 30,000 undocumented were displaced by Hurricane Katrina. It was disheartening to read in the Wall Street Journal (Oct. 3, 2005, B 1) that the undocumented were being forced out of Red Cross Shelters in Long Beach, Mississippi, under the threat of deportation. Praise God for the local Baptist church who offered some them shelter.

Giving the undocumented a ride across town or to church is not a crime (Attorney Gomez).

2. Justice
 - a. Legal encouragement. Advise the undocumented to seek reputable legal counsel and pursue every possibility for legal status. Recommend a lawyer. Take him if necessary. Help him find pro bono services such as Catholic Charities.
 - b. Be a legal advocate. Minor brushes with the law do not put the undocumented in jeopardy. The Supreme Court of the U.S. has ruled that the alien has full access to legal process. Otherwise, atrocities would occur more frequently. Go with him to court (encourage, pray). Be a character witness if appropriate (by counsel of immigration lawyer Charles Foster of Houston).

- c. Advocacy with landlords and employers. Your assistance may be needed to communicate concerns to absentee landlords and insist on fairness. Employers may put an undocumented person out of mind if he is injured. Go and insist on fairness. In another example, Mr. Holmes of Holmes Boat Works, Houston, Texas, was hiring the undocumented promising to pay them in two weeks. He simply hired another group after dismissing the first and paid no one. Dr. Michael Woodham who was a summer assistant (Oaklawn Church) at that time went to Mr. Holmes to morally plead the case of the undocumented. If I knew then what I do now, Mr. Holmes could and should have been prosecuted.

3. Medical Services. The Catholic Church next door to Key Biscayne Presbyterian serves 100 undocumented every week with volunteer doctors providing a number of services from first aid to pap smears and mammograms. A program of this nature was attempted by 2 PCA churches. One was refused by the session; the volunteers were ready. The other died through lack of interest.

4. Education. Literacy, tutoring, ESL and citizenship classes are very effective services provided by many churches.

5. Evangelism and Church Planting. Some churches have begun ministries to Hispanics by gathering the undocumented (e.g., Oaklawn in Spanish).

REALITY # 6

Hispanics are showing more receptivity to the evangelical message than ever before in the history of this country

Never in the History of this nation have Hispanics been more receptive to the evangelical message than they are now. A study done by Priest/Sociologist Andrew Greeley indicates that 23% of the Hispanic population now identifies with non-Catholic denominations, mainly Evangelicals. This has been confirmed by more recent studies such as the Pew Hispanic Center's National Survey of Latinos which shows that among Hispanics 70% identify themselves as "Catholics;" 20% as "Evangelical or Born Again;" 9% as "Other Christian;" 2% as "Some other non-Christian religion;" and 8% as having "No Religion" (Sanchez, p. 10).

What an opportunity we have to see effective and wholistic kingdom growth because God has providentially brought receptive people groups right to our doorstep (Acts 17:25,26). May His name be praised.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND CONVICTIONS

First, we have seen that people migrations define world history. They are nothing new. The Israelites became aliens in Egypt because of famine. Daniel became an alien in Babylon and Esther in Assyria because of political oppression and involuntary migration. The Jews became aliens in their own land because of Roman oppression. Christians left Jerusalem and became aliens throughout the Roman Empire because of persecution.

Is God in control of this migration? He in fact used it for major kingdom development and significant conversion in Egypt (the great multitude of Egyptians who left with the Exodus). Moab (Ruth), Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), and the Assyrian Persian revival through Queen Esther. Paul reminds us with no uncertainty that people movements are orchestrated by the Sovereign King for the purpose of opening hearts and minds to the gospel.

Acts 17:26-27 - From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

The church must be obedient to this maximized opportunity that God has created to evangelize millions of new neighbors he has brought to us.

Second, our disposition toward the undocumented immigrant should be one of welcome and profound gratitude. I thank them for coming at every opportunity. Because of our aging population and low birth rates we have a diminished and inadequate labor force. The undocumented have come to our aid and we have become dependent upon them. Think about it. They raise our crops, raise our children, cook our food, wash our dishes, clean our public and private centers of commerce and politics coast to coast every night. They raise our chickens, pick our crops, pay our Social Security tab and essentially take care of us in every way. How blessed we are. They come and do this for the motive of caring for their own families. They export dollars carrying the economies of Cuba and Mexico. They come primarily for employment opportunity. It is my informal observation that they are very sensitive to economic ebbs and flows in the United States, both in general and regionally. They are not fools blindly drifting. They don't want to waste a trip or arrive at a location of low economic activity.

Third. Hispanics in general and Mexicans in particular have social values that we could learn from. The extended family concept although not without its flaws, provides care systems foreign to most Americans. Our part-time housekeeper upon observing our disjointed and inefficient efforts in our church to care for dependent elderly widows commented, "If she (a widow in a nursing home that church members visit sometimes) were in Peru, somebody would take care of her." She meant that no one is left to institutional

care. The extended family will always take in the dependent, young or old, and meet their needs completely.

Fourth. I hope I have alleviated any concern about disobedience to authorities. I agree with John Frame's principle that Roman 13 means being obedient to all established authorities and their laws throughout the Bible, including the law to love the alien as myself. As I show compassion to the undocumented I am obeying Romans 13. Also, we established that within God's laws there are priorities. Jesus taught that the law of love, justice and mercy is the highest priority.

Finally. Immigration laws have tended to liberalize and become more compassionate over the last 50 years. The relationship between the U.S. government and the governments of the sending nations is extremely complicated yet deserves our attention. We (church leaders and private citizen Christians should use our influence with lawmakers and political leaders to encourage equitable policies and responsibilities. These concerns should be addressed particularly to the U.S. and Mexican governments.

Nationalism should never be our first priority. Our allegiance is to Christ, who knows no stranger in the ethnic sense, and to the Holy Nation to which all believers belong. Our challenge for Christ's sake and conscience sake is to become effective cross-cultural lovers of new neighbors in word and in deed.

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Appendices

REALITY #5

Second and third generation Hispanics have made significant strides in educational attainment, yet the first generation lags behind.⁹

While it is true that second and third generation Hispanics have made significant strides in improving their educational status, the same is not true for first generation Hispanics. Table 8 shows that 54% of the immigrant generation has less than a high school education.

Table 8. Education Among Hispanics (Ages 24-65)¹⁰

Generation	Less than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate
1 st	54%	24%	13%	09%
2 nd	23%	33%	29%	15%
3 rd	25%	35%	27%	13%

As we look at educational attainment, we face a dual Challenge:

1. We need to encouraging 2nd and 3rd generation Hispanics to avail themselves of existing educational programs in universities and seminaries.
2. *We need to make provision for entry-level training for 1st generation Hispanics who are called to ministry. This is the group that is most responsive to the evangelical message. Consequently, more churches are being started among them, yet our denomination does not have a strategy to start training ministers at the entry level and provide a way for them to continue their studies at college and seminary levels.*

(Sanchez, Pedro, Ph.D., Sena, Rev. Bobby, "21st Century Hispanic Realities, Transforming the Social and Religious Panorama of North America," p. 10)

(Additional charts are found in the March 21, 2005 Report of the Pew Hispanic Center, "Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population" by Jeffrey S. Passel, pages 7-10, available at www.pewhispanic.org under topics related to "Immigration." See copy of this report as an additional attachment.)