

Salt & Light

Fall 2008

The Newsletter of the Social Concerns Ministry Team

Educating and informing the church body in light of biblical principles

You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world...

Mt. 5:13-14

Editorial Note:

In this issue of *Salt & Light* we address the topic of Immigration.

We offer excerpts of articles that will assist you in applying God's Word to this controversial topic. We present some aspects of the controversy beyond the advantages and disadvantages of fencing our borders. Whatever your current stance on immigration, we hope this newsletter will broaden your perspective and encourage you to seek biblical sources.

Social Concerns Ministry Team

To secure our borders and to provide for an orderly process of immigrants is a just law, and the Church needs to respect the law, even while it administers aid, compassion, and love to those in our midst.

[www.breakpointorg/
listingarticle.asp?ID=2229](http://www.breakpointorg/listingarticle.asp?ID=2229)

People Migrate: Christianity and Immigration

From: <http://leviticustwentyfour22.blogspot.com/2008/03/christianity-and-immigration.htm>

A number of themes relevant to immigration run through the Bible. The first theme is that we ourselves, as Christians, are aliens on this earth. "...And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth" (Hebrews 11:13). Our status as aliens and strangers forms the basis for our attitudes and responses towards those people who live outside our society.

A second theme is that our material possessions do not really belong to us. The Promised Land belonged to the Israelites only in the sense that as host, God allowed the Israelites to dwell in the Promised Land as His guests (Lev. 25:23). Similarly, as aliens and strangers in the world, the material resources of the world do not belong to us. We have what we have because God, as host, has distributed material resources to us, His guests. As recipients of God's graciousness and generosity, we need to guard against selfishness and possessiveness which would cloud our attitude toward immigrants.

A third theme is protection for the alien. As non-citizens working in their country of residence, aliens exist outside the social and political network of the society they are residing

in; thus, they are rendered powerless. Aliens are very vulnerable to exploitation. As Christians, we should recall our roots as aliens and, thus, identify with their plight (Ex. 23:9).

A fourth theme is that, for Christians, no one is ever to be considered an outsider. "...The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself..." (Lev.19:33-34). The Great Commandment is to apply to the alien, because he or she is our neighbor.

A fifth theme is that, in serving the outsiders of society, we encounter Jesus. Because Christ identified with the stranger, we are to extend the same treatment to the alien and stranger that we would extend toward Jesus (Matt. 25:35). †

The second article features a speech given by Nancy Staible of Concerned Women for America.

Illegal Immigration: The Problems It Poses

From: Nancy Staible, Pennsylvania State Director, Concerned Women for America. August 2, 2006 from www.cwa.org

I learned recently that until 1986, the United States had never forgiven the act of illegal immigration in other than individual cases and had never rewarded large numbers of illegal immigrants with the opportunity for US citizenship. The Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) passed in 1986 was a blanket amnesty for 2.7 million illegal aliens. Congress has passed six additional amnesties for illegal immigrants since 1986 with nine current bills pending in the US House and Senate. In the decade following the passage of IRCA, illegal immigration increased dramatically with the 2000 census indicating that 700,000 to 800,000/yr that now total 8-11 million illegal immigrants currently live in the United States. So much for solving the problem of illegal immigration with IRCA!

You have heard...the cost of illegal immigration for social services, law enforcement, education and medical services and most importantly the cost to our national security which played out most horrifically on September 11, 2001. Today, I would like to offer some information regarding the problem of illegal immigration in several different areas of concern.

... As the Pennsylvania State Director of Concerned Women for America (CWA), I want to comment on the issue of human trafficking and more specifically sex trafficking. Nationally, CWA has been a leading voice in the campaign to unmask the horrors of this new slavery which preys upon vulnerable women and children. It is one of the most flagrant forms of human rights violations in the world today. It is estimated that internationally, between 800,000 and 900,000 persons are trafficked annually, and approximately 20,000 end up as slaves in the United States.

Trafficking in persons is defined as the recruitment, transportation,

transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, abuse of power, of vulnerability for the purpose of prostitution, forced labor slavery or removal of organs. The US Department of Justice and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children both recognize that pornography is an element that adds to the serious problem of sex trafficking. Women are lured from their poverty-stricken homes, most notably from developing countries in Africa, Asia and former Soviet block Eastern Europe, with the promise of good jobs, marriage or educational opportunities. They are transported illegally to the United States, distributed throughout the country and forced into slave labor or prostitution. ... This "hidden crime" is not only a human rights, health and security issue..., but certainly involves illegal immigration.

Secondly, as a physician assistant in family medicine for over 30 years and now traveling to the developing world on medical missions, I would like to comment on the new health risk to Americans that mass illegal immigration is bringing. We are seeing an increase in the occurrence of multi-drug resistant (MDR) tuberculosis (TB) in this country. TB normally seen and treated in the U.S. is cured within six months with a four drug regimen at a total cost of approximately \$2000 per patient. With MDR-TB, the time to cure is 24 months requiring the use of many drugs having toxic side effects at a total cost of over \$250,000 per patient. If this disease goes untreated or ineffectively treated (drug non-compliance in patients is common) the latent disease explodes later...The CDC reports that 42 percent of new cases of TB are attributed to "foreign born."

Leprosy was essentially eradicated from the U.S. population;

however, in the past three years 7,000 cases have been reported with the need for separate leprosy clinics in New York. Also, polio has reappeared in the U.S. among the illegal immigrant population....Malaria, another disease with high morbidity and mortality especially in young children and the immunosuppressed, has reoccurred in Texas. A mosquito biting a malaria infected body and then biting a second body will transmit the disease. Many strains of malaria are also multi-drug resistant....

MOST IMPORTANT FACT TO REMEMBER: Legal immigration requires a medical examination and verification of a body free of infectious disease while illegal immigrants bypass the medical examination!!! †

Once you discover that you have 11 million illegal aliens in your midst, you cannot in fairness grant amnesty. If these new alien workers are going to be assimilated into American life, they have got to understand that we live according to the rule of law.

By allowing them to continue to work as undocumented aliens, we are telling them that we really don't care about the law....

[www.breakpoint.org/
listingarticle.asp?ID=2073](http://www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=2073)

Biblical Caring for Immigrants

By: Joan Maruskin (from www.churchworldservice.org)

[There is a] biblical mandate to care for the stranger, as one never knows when the stranger might be God. In Genesis 18:1-8, God appears to Abraham as three strangers near the oaks at Mamre. He offers three men – the strangers – hospitality. He refers to them as “my Lord” and offers them the best of what he has. This is the first biblical description of ideal inclusive hospitality – of giving the very best to strangers – who in this case turned out to be God...

The biblical concept of hospitality is hospitality to the stranger. Entertaining friends and relatives is a different type of contemporary hospitality. As disciples of the Christ, it is important to ask ourselves how many strangers have felt our

hospitality. How are we welcoming the stranger?

Along with the details of entering the Promised Land, the Bible also contains advice on how the people are to act once they are in that land, and one of the first instructions is found in Deuteronomy 10:17-19, “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt...”

In fact, care of the alien is so important that Deuteronomy 27:19 states, “Cursed is he who distorts

the justice due an alien...”

[The Old Testament] closes with an admonition from God through the prophet Malachi, who, in Malachi 3:5, repeats the words of the Lord of Hosts, “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against...those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of Hosts.”

The most compelling argument Christ gave for caring for the stranger can be found in Matthew 25:35-41. In it he gives the inheritance of the kingdom to those who cared for him by stating, “...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” †

While [Scriptural hospitality] doesn't require that Christians advocate open borders, it does require us to be salt and light in the debate over immigration reform. At the very least, we should work to elevate the level of discourse and prevent the demonizing of the “other” in our midst.

And we ought to remind our fellow citizens who are so angry about immigration that is our desire for cheap labor that has contributed to the problem. It's bad enough that illegal immigration is a “no win” issue; it should not be a “no truth” issue, as well. And in the end, we must, as Christians, treat everyone in our midst with godly compassion.

www.breakpoint.org/listingarticle.asp?ID=767

The Bible and the Border: Illegal Immigration from a Christian Perspective

By: Robert Klein Engler (11/07/05) article URL: <http://americandaily.com/article/10073>

Many Christians are now caught up in the debate about illegal immigration. Some do not know what to do to stop illegal immigration while at the same time living a faith that asks its believers to practice charity and forgiveness.

Other Christians mistakenly believe that groups who are against illegal immigration, groups like the Minuteman Project, are immoral and dangerous. These Christians believe that illegal immigrants should be seen as people who need

our assistance and compassion, not our judgment and condemnation.

Does the Bible and Christian theology have anything to add to the illegal immigration debate? Are Christians supposed to act one way

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Immigration Issue

Delivery Change Planned

Beginning with the next *Salt & Light* newsletter, there will be a change in delivery. Copies will be sent to the congregation via email, AND the newsletter will be available in the church narthex. If you cannot pick up a copy in the narthex or via email, please contact the church office to request a special mailing to your residence.

The Bible and the Border

(Continued from page 3)

or another on this social issue? ...Christianity does have some answers to the moral questions raised by illegal immigration. These answers are to be found both in Christian scripture and theology. In my view it is possible to be both a good Christian and have secure borders. It is also possible to demand illegal immigrants be deported and to practice Christian charity.

In chapter 13 of the apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans, the English translation reads, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed...." (Romans 13:1-2). Clearly, this is advice to Christians to follow the laws of their nation and to respect the laws of other nations.

When people come to the U.S. illegally, they are committing a

crime. They are doing something that is against the governing authorities of the U.S. Illegal immigrants are not good Christians from Paul's perspective. Illegal immigrants may have reasons for breaking U.S. laws, but those reasons do not excuse their illegal actions. We should not let charity and compassion blind us from the criminal act illegal immigrants commit.

Those who work in a law-abiding way against illegal immigration and those who ask that the laws of the U.S. be enforced are being good Christians in doing so. Likewise, those who demand that

illegal immigrants be detained and deported respect the governing authorities of their nation. In line with Paul's argument, they are doing what good Christians ought to do.

This is not to say that illegal immigrants should be treated badly. Christians practice charity and respect for the individual, but they do not condone law breaking. Law-abiding citizens of the U.S. have every right to make sure their borders are secure and that illegal immigrants are removed from their country as quickly and humanely as possible.... †

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