



ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE?

By Albert James Dager

ONE OF THE most passionately debated issues in the United States today is that of illegal immigration. On one side are those who insist that the United States must do all it can to protect itself from the invasion of aliens illegally crossing our borders. On the other side are those calling for compassion and easing of restrictions on immigration.

A well-publicized event regarding illegal immigration is the state of Arizona's enacting of a law that takes a hard stance, requiring police to check the immigration status of anyone they suspect may be in the country illegally. On July 28, 2010, portions of that law were blocked by Judge Susan Bolton of Federal District Court. She issued the injunction in response to a legal challenge brought by the Obama administration which deems the law discriminatory. The administration argued that immigration policy is the exclusive responsibility of the federal government. Arizona argued that the federal government is not doing enough to enforce its laws, and is leaving the states vulnerable to the perils associated with illegal immigration.

Arizona is one of the principle points of entry for illegal aliens, and Governor Jan Brewer backed the state's immigration law out of concern for the safety of the state's citizens.

There are few readers of this article who are not already well versed on the details of this issue. Some Christians are taking a hard stance, and would like to see the U.S. government take effective action to enforce the immigration laws already on the books. Others want Congress and the Obama administration to ease up on enforcement and legislate an easy path to citizenship for the some 12 million illegal aliens already here.

Christians taking the former position believe that the government must do all it can to protect its citizens; it should not tolerate lawlessness. Christians taking the latter position claim that Jesus was a friend of the poor and would be against the state taking a hard stance. They want Americans to be compassionate to the plight of poor Mexicans who they say are merely seeking a better way of life. Which side is right?

I believe they are both right. It is the command of the Lord that His people love all men, even our enemies, and that we consider the plight of the poor:

Listen, my beloved brethren, has God not chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom

that He has promised to those who love Him? But you have despised the poor. (James 2:8)

Yes, many Mexicans and others who cross illegally into the United States are merely looking for a better way of life. They are not consciously trying to undermine the United States; they are trying to survive as best they can. They often risk their lives attempting to cross the deserts of the southwest. Would any true believer in Jesus refuse to help illegal aliens they find suffering from dehydration as a result of their long trek through arid country? The truth is that many of the ranchers and farmers whose properties front the border do leave water in strategic places for just that purpose. At the same time, they oppose illegal immigration and would turn in any illegal alien they could.

So while we recognize the need to help individuals who are in distress, we also recognize that, unfortunately, the consequences of their actions must be borne by the citizens of this country.

A distinction must be made between the actions of individuals and the actions of government to protect its citizens. Governments are established by God for the good of the people. It is His desire that all governments act righteously, but the reality is that most seldom do. Yet because government (even evil government) is necessary to maintain order in this fallen world, God's Word also condemns lawlessness and has harsh words for those who resist government:

Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities. For there is no authority but from God. The authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Therefore, whoever opposes the authorities, opposes God's arrangement, and those who oppose shall receive judgment to themselves.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will you then not be afraid of the authority? Do that which is good, and you will have praise from him, for he is the servant of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid, because he does not bear the sword in vain, for he is the servant of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him who does evil.

Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (Romans 13:1-5)

A government that does not act in the best interests of its citizens is not a righteous government. And although we see the government as a monolithic structure for good or evil, the fact remains that government is made up of fallible individuals. Therefore any government is only as righteous as the individuals who administer its functions. Sadly, there are few in government today who may be considered righteous even in the humanistic sense, let alone the biblical sense. And this is why we have so many critical issues that threaten the security of the United States.

I speak as a citizen of the U.S. because this is the country in which God has placed me for my tenure on this earth, and so I must be subject to its laws. I am not an internationalist except in the Body of Christ. My allegiance is to the Lord Jesus Christ and to my (His) brethren in Christ before it is to any country, but as a citizen of the U.S. my citizenship commands that I be loyal to this country. No believer in Jesus can be a traitor to his country. That does not mean one may not disobey a government that demands one act contrary to the Word of God. Christians who aided Jews in Hitler's Germany were not committing treason; they were not attempting to destroy Germany, but to preserve it in the face of an evil government.

Just so, if our government were to require us to kill illegal aliens we'd have to resist that command.

But no one is asking that illegal aliens be killed. Arizona was merely trying to task its law enforcement agency with enforcing the laws that the federal government has largely ignored.

Another aspect of this issue has to do with criminals and terrorists entering through a porous border. It's no secret that drugs and weapons are being smuggled into the U.S. via underground (literally and figuratively) passages. Nor are all illegal aliens Mexicans; many come from Asian and Middle Eastern countries as well as Central and South America.

The following figures attest to the ungodliness that illegal immigration imposes upon this country:

- \$90 billion spent yearly on welfare and social services for illegal aliens;
- \$12 billion spent yearly on primary and secondary education for illegal aliens;
- 30% of all federal prison inmates are illegal aliens;
- Millions of pounds of drugs, including cocaine, meth, heroin, and marijuana are smuggled into the U.S. yearly;
- Thousands of illegal aliens have come from countries that support Islamic terrorism.

These are just a few of the tragic consequences of lax enforcement of current immigration laws, but they alone should spur the government to take a hard stand against illegal immigration.

Instead of addressing the illegal alien problem by enforcing the law, Obama has chosen to sue Arizona on behalf of non-American invaders. He has taken the side of foreigners against the citizens he has sworn to protect. But, then, he prides himself on being an internationalist above being an American. This is fine for individuals who have no sacred duty to the people, but Obama swore on the Bible to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. That means he must protect and defend the citizens of this

country, not sue them to impose lawlessness upon them. Thus, he again proves himself unworthy to be called by the name of Christ.

Additionally, the Obama administration on August 20, 2010, submitted a 29-page "Universal Periodic Review" (UPR) to the UN Human Rights Council outlining areas of alleged abuses of human rights occurring in the United States, including Arizona's S.B. 1070 legislation. This effectively submits U.S. Immigration policy to the UN for review and possible sanctions. The review is by a troika consisting of Japan, France and Cameroon.

Once government begins to pick and choose which laws it will enforce and which it will ignore, fear grips its citizens. A government that acts arbitrarily is dangerous; citizens fear becoming victims of their government. Arbitrary government is despotic government. It cannot be trusted to protect and serve all the people. Those who benefit the government will be protected; all others are subject to persecution. This is the historical perspective. When the unrighteous rule, the people mourn (Proverbs 29:2).

If Obama doesn't like current immigration law he should work to overturn it. But he knows that would be extremely unpopular among the citizens. He would rather act lawlessly in defending lawlessness. His is unrighteous government.

In view of the problems associated with illegal immigration, it is not uncompassionate to desire the government to do its job and work diligently to seal the border. Yes, it would mean that some Mexican poor would have to remain in their country and do the best they can. But the economic strain on the U.S. is already so great that their continued invasion threatens the stability of this country.

It was disingenuous of Mexico's president to chastise Arizona for trying to protect itself (with Barack Obama nodding approval). Were his own government doing its best to enhance the lives of Mexico's citizens, there would be no need for them to flee that country in droves. He needs to clean up his own backyard before hurling insults at Americans who are fed up with having to pay the price for his government's ineptitude.

Is this harsh? Yes. It is an indictment against ungodly government. We may be obliged to obey and respect government leaders, but that doesn't mean we cannot expose their evils.

Now, in the event I am accused of being racist and prejudiced against Mexicans, I feel compelled to say that my Lebanese father emigrated from Mexico. He spoke perfect Spanish, and played the violin in a mariachi band. My best friends in grammar school and high school were of Mexican descent, and two of them are still among my best friends.

I've had the blessing and privilege of ministering to our brethren in Mexico on a number of occasions, and before beginning Media Spotlight I worked six years with a ministry to Latin America.

My heart is with those Mexican people who are trying to find a better life here. But I cannot condone the lawlessness of which they and our government are guilty.

So what is our responsibility as believers in Jesus? By all means we are to be compassionate to the truly poor among us. But we must also decry the ungodly lawlessness not only of illegal aliens but of our own government leaders. ❖