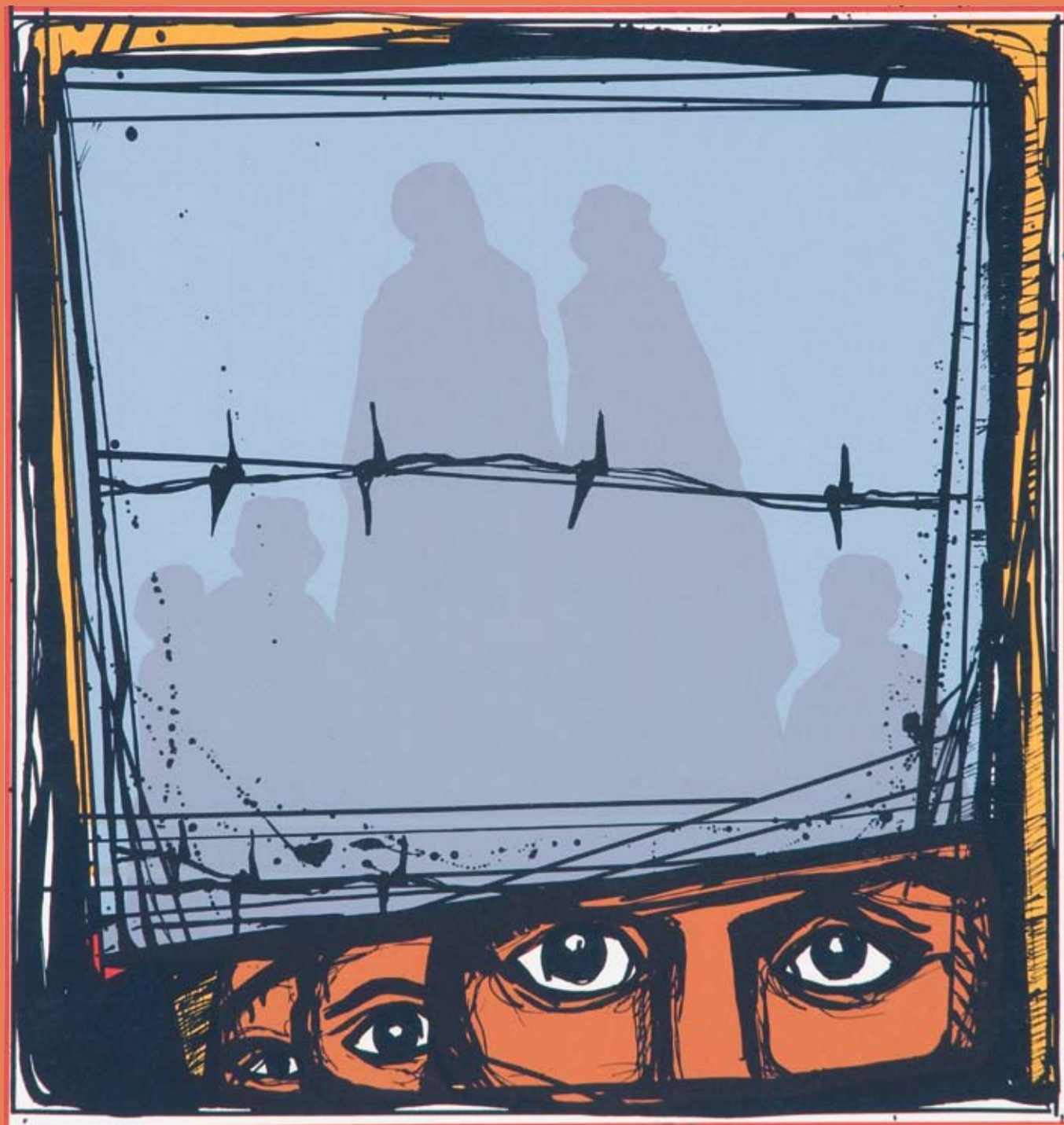


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Reflections

Y A L E D I V I N I T Y S C H O O L

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? FACING IMMIGRATION



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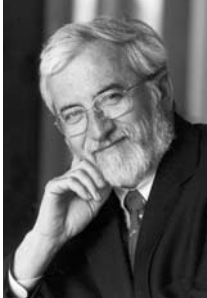
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Canyon Zapata: Mexican immigrants near Tijuana, south of San Diego, wait for the last rays of sunset to disappear before dashing for the U.S. border. ►

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? FACING IMMIGRATION



From the Dean's Desk



Harold W. Attridge

Dean of Yale Divinity School
& Lillian Claus Professor
of New Testament

As this issue of *Reflections* goes to press we stand in the middle of a hotly contested presidential campaign and a worsening global financial and economic crisis. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to drain economic and spiritual resources. In a setting where troubles abound it is easy to lose sight of a problem that has loomed large in recent years and that plays a somewhat muted role in both the presidential campaign and the tale of economic woe.

Yet the problems revolving around immigration that our political leaders sidestepped in the last two years will no doubt resurface in the new administration, whoever wins in November. In the meantime, the plight of immigrants, especially the undocumented, continues to challenge churches, which have generally responded with compassion and with conviction. In worsening economic times, the situation of immigrants is unlikely to improve, while the resources of those who try to provide support will be severely strained.

In this context *Reflections* attempts to set the often-fractured debates about immigrants into a broader framework. What we have experienced in the United States in recent years is in fact part of a global phenomenon. Forces similar to those which have driven vast accumulations of capital across national boundaries, a development at least partially to blame for the current economic crisis, have also driven workers to seek employment in foreign lands. We need to keep those larger forces in view when we think about our own immigration issues.

The phenomenon of immigration in the early years of the twenty-first century is reshaping the face of America and the ways in which our fellow citizens understand and identify themselves. The reshaping of

American identity has certainly been an issue in the current presidential contest, where questions about “Who is Barack Obama?” mask deeper questions about who counts as a proper American. Hidden doubts and fears about our identity as a nation weave through the debates about immigration, and part of the theologian’s service in addressing the issue of immigration is to name those doubts and fears and put them in proper perspective.

As the population of the U.S. shifts under the influence of immigrants, churches will face new challenges, both practical and conceptual. How will they be faithful to the call of Scripture to attend to the alien and sojourner, to welcome the stranger, to heal, to nurture, to protect the least among us? And how will they do so in an environment where resources are limited and fear and suspicion run rampant?

This issue of *Reflections* attempts to address such issues and will, we hope, provide some resources for people of faith who remember that our ancestors in faith were oppressed immigrants in a land not their own, and all of whose physical forebears were also once part of the huddled masses that yearned to breathe free on this side of Liberty’s torch.

I am particularly grateful to our guest editor for this issue, Prof. Harlon Dalton, of Yale Law School, who for the last two years has been collaborating with colleagues at Yale Divinity School on issues of law, religion, and politics. His contribution to this number is thus part of a larger endeavor to bring together some of the resources of the university in an interdisciplinary way to address vital topics of the day.



Harold W. Attridge
Dean

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Opening Doors on a Difficult Debate

By Harlon Dalton

“We should fling the church doors wide open!” That was the first thing that came to mind as we grappled with how to respond to the horrifying news on September 11, 2001. “Yes, we should fling the doors wide open.”

I had spent that morning at Yale Law School straddling the line between teacher and pastor, knowing better than to engage my students in the intricacies of civil procedure, but uncertain about how far I should go in providing comfort and care.

I felt oddly constrained by the fact that in addition to being a law professor I am an Episcopal priest. Even though I had (figuratively speaking) removed my clerical collar before entering the Temple of Reason, I worried that my efforts to do what any empathetic person would do might be misinterpreted.

Later in the day, I made the trek from the law school to the parish I serve as part-time associate rector. Usually I did not drop by on Tuesdays, but I had a feeling that it was where I needed to be. Others felt that way too. The entire staff spontaneously gathered there, as did several parishioners. We quickly set about discerning how the church should respond to the unfolding events.

I think it was Barbara Cheney, the rector, who first came up with the idea of flinging wide the doors, from early in the morning to late at night. We all instantly agreed. Such a move was not without risk, given our urban location and a recent spate of thefts, but it was still an easy call. We then turned our attention to liturgy. What should we say and do? Given the tangled emotions and deep uncertainty of the moment, what could we offer that would be comforting, reassuring, uplifting?

Hearing the Hurt

At the end of one of the services that week, I was approached by a parishioner whom I did not know well. “Mary” was clearly on edge and she spoke with

an edge. “Why are we not flying the American flag? Our country has been attacked. Don’t you care? Why are we not flying the flag? We should be showing our patriotism.”

I tried to acknowledge Mary’s feelings, and to honor her sense of having been violated, but in truth I was eager to get to the theological heart of the matter.

“The church,” I explained in tones more self-righteous than I care to admit, “does not belong to any one country, including our own. As Christians, we are members of the body of Christ, a community of the faithful that bridges every division that we human beings create, including national borders. God does not care whether we are Americans or Russians or whatever, only that we remain loving and faithful.”

I could tell from Mary’s body language that my theological brilliance did not sway her. She had not heard a thing I said, because of how much she was hurting and because of my failure to speak to that hurt.

A few years later, long after Mary’s questions had faded from memory, I was flagged down at coffee hour by one of the newer members of the congregation, “Tim.”

“I just wanted you to know,” he said, “how grateful I am to be here. It is such a comfort to know that I can settle into the worship service and not have to worry about being excluded or demeaned.”

Noting my quizzical look, he continued: “This is one of the few places I’ve been where being faithful doesn’t get mixed up with being patriotic. In most churches I’ve been to, there is a subtle and some-

times not-so-subtle suggestion that you can't be a good Christian if you don't also worship America. As someone whose allegiance isn't solely to the United States, it leaves me feeling like I don't belong. That never happens here."

Tim's observations took me aback. Although I knew that his father immigrated from Thailand and that he strongly identified with his Thai heritage, I had not given two seconds' thought to how this allegiance might affect his experience of worship.

The church occupies a moral, conceptual, and existential space separate and apart from the nation-state. One consequence of this apartness is that boundaries which can seem so fixed to us as citizens become quite contingent when we imagine the church universal.

That said, we do refrain from jingoism at St. PJ's, not out of pastoral concern for the Tims among us (although that would be appropriate), but because we understand the church and the nation to be disparate realms.

I begin with these scenes from a parish because together they illustrate why people of faith are uniquely positioned to re-frame how we think and talk about immigration. As Christians we observe the world from a distinctive vantage point. The church occupies a moral, conceptual, and existential space separate and apart from the nation-state. One consequence of this apartness is that boundaries that can seem so fixed to us as citizens – boundaries based on geography and language, kinship and descent – become quite contingent when we imagine the church universal. Moreover, many Christians, especially those who belong to denominations or polities that transcend civic boundaries, have firsthand experience of the possibilities when we wear our "man-made" lines of demarcation lightly. Imagine how different our thinking would be were we to bring that same sense of contingency and permeability to the immigration conversation.

Civic Eschatology

Similarly, how different would the conversation be if we approached immigration from a global rather than a national perspective? What would happen, for example, if we took seriously George Rupp's suggestion in this *Reflections* issue that we attend to the political, cultural, and economic dynamics of "sender" countries instead of focusing narrowly

on protecting our own borders and dealing with those who unlawfully cross them? We just might discover that a wise immigration policy would include significant financial and other assistance to such countries in order to relieve the pressures that drive out-migration in the first place.

As citizens, we often succumb to the tyranny of "is" over "ought." We wind up using the status quo as the template for all our thinking, rendering transformation impossible. I suspect that the world "as it is" would have far less of a grip on our imaginations if we brought to the civic arena the capacity we prize as Christians to envision *and then live into* the world as it ought to be. A whole new set of possibilities would present themselves were we to infuse the immigration conversation with what might be thought of as "civic eschatology."

The conversation would be further enriched by the introduction of a moral dimension rooted in Scripture. Several of the essays in this volume testify to the richness of the Bible's many migration stories and the lessons we can draw from them. In addition to such stories, both the law and the prophets are clear that nations as well as individuals will be condemned for mistreating aliens in their midst. At a minimum, the Biblical witness provides powerful support for those who insist that justice for immigrants be a central concern in any debate over immigration policy. Moreover, it is easy to imagine people of faith becoming a powerful force in moving the conversation away from self-interest, narrowly understood.

Theological Frontiers

I hold out even more hope for the role that theology can play in re-framing the conversation. That is because the essence of theology as a discipline is to structure and organize how we think about basic questions of faith, and to provide a lens for answering them. In other words, theology is all about framing. In this *Reflections* we are fortunate to have a contribution from Daniel Groody, who has played a leading role in mapping out the contours of a prophetic theology of immigration.

Recasting the conversation will not be easy. And doing so is just the first step.

If we are faithful, we need also to act in ways that further our vision. In part that means supporting sound immigration policies and opposing policies that are xenophobic, short-sighted, morally suspect, or incompatible with our basic understandings of how God would have us order our lives. This, too, is no mean task, primarily because immigration policy and law are notoriously arcane and complex. We

need, therefore, to search out and rely upon lawyers and policy experts who not only are technically competent but also are attuned to our concerns as people of faith. As you will soon discover, two of the very best – Julia Thorne and Bill Ong Hing – are contributors to this *Reflections* issue.

There is another kind of action that is ours to take, action of a sort that is quite familiar. We are called to be present to the strangers among us. To those who qualify as refugees or asylum seekers,

What is America? We need to offer a vision that is rooted in values rather than ethnic appearances, in commitments rather than lines of descent.

and to those who are simply undocumented. To those who eagerly embrace every opportunity afforded them, and to those who have difficulty adjusting and act out in ways that trouble us. To do this we have to extend ourselves and learn about cultures different from our own. To do this we get to extend ourselves and are blessed to learn about cultures different from our own.

Empathy All Around

We are called, as well, to be pastoral to those in our midst who are struggling with the prospect of immigration, who feel threatened by it, who are troubled by the fact that the undocumented are skirting the law, or whose compassion for the stranger is offset by a genuine concern that their own lives will be negatively affected. I press this point with some trepidation, having already confessed to you my pastoral shortcoming with my parishioner Mary, but the flip side is that that encounter has become a great teaching moment for me. I now appreciate how important it is to be pastoral and prophetic at the same time. My goal is (our goal should be) that no one gets ground down or left by the wayside in our pursuit of justice.

Quite often, I suspect, opposition to immigration is rooted in a fear not just of personal displacement but of national displacement as well. Some years ago I read about several small towns in California whose citizens had readily embraced an influx of Taiwanese immigrants. The townsfolk found the newcomers to be congenial and were particularly pleased with the new businesses they had launched. But then something happened that changed all that. Several of the immigrants in each of the towns scraped together enough money to purchase signs advertising their businesses. And though some signs were in Eng-

lish, others were in Chinese. Several townspeople became visibly upset at this and began agitating for ordinances that would limit any further growth of the Taiwanese population. When pressed to explain why, one man captured the sentiment of many when he said: “When I walk down the street and see those signs on those shops, I feel like I am not in America anymore.”

Immigration does indeed pose a challenge to what America looks like. Of course, what America does or should look like is contestable. I am reminded of a phrase that President-elect Bill Clinton frequently used during the transition period before he took office. He said: “I want to appoint a Cabinet that looks like America.” For him, America looks like a land of equal opportunity, a place where all of God’s children come to the table. For him, “looks like” was a proxy for “is.”

That, indeed, is the deeper question behind the California townfolks’ lament: What *is* America? For them, the appearance of things may come as close as they could come to articulating the essence of things. They felt that America herself, a recognizable America, was slipping through their grasp – that they were in danger of losing whatever it is that makes America *America*, which is to say distinctive and a source of pride.

I’m guessing that a similar dynamic may be in play for most people whose reaction to immigration is negative and visceral. Like the California townsfolk, they equate America with what it looks like, or rather with what it used to look like, racially and ethnically, in their immediate surroundings. Given that equation, immigration indeed does threaten to upset or undo who we are as a nation.

In Search of American Values

If I am right about this, then in order to respond pastorally we have to acknowledge and honor their sense of loss. At the same time, we need to engage them in a conversation about how best to “see” America, about what America truly “is.” We need to offer a vision that is rooted in values rather than appearances, in commitments rather than lines of descent.

If we fail to articulate a national identity that is not based on the ethnic identity of its citizens, then *Reflections* contributor Amy Chua’s dour prediction may be right, that the immigration wars will continue unabated. On the other hand, if we succeed in achieving reasonable consensus on a set of values that “is” America, we will utterly transform the intellectual and emotional backdrop against which the immigration conversation takes place.

My fondest hope is that as a result of that transformation, our immigration policy will undergo a radical transformation. We need not fling the doors wide open, but we need to open them wide enough to accommodate those who yearn to breathe free, whose lives are in grave peril, or who suffer want far beyond our imagining. If we are wise, we will welcome as well those who have much to contribute to this country – not just those who possess rare and highly valued skills, but also people willing and eager to harness lesser talents that are increasingly needed in our ever-evolving economy.

Harlon Dalton (J.D. Yale, 1973) is professor of law at Yale Law School and an adjunct faculty member of Yale Divinity School. His books include Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Blacks & Whites (Doubleday, 1995). He is associate rector of Episcopal Church of St. Paul & St. James in New Haven, CT.

MINORITY IN THE MAJORITY

The U.S. Census predicts minorities will become the majority in the United States by 2042, when they will outnumber non-Hispanic whites in a historic shift.

Four years ago, the census calculated the shift would occur by 2050. The revised projection suggests the shift will come sooner than expected. Reasons include higher birthrates of immigrants and continued steady arrival of the foreign-born into the country. About 1.3 million immigrants arrive annually now. That number is expected to climb to two million a year by the 2040s.

The non-Hispanic, single-race white population is projected to lose population in the 2030s and 2040s, claiming 46 percent of the total population in 2050, down from 66 percent today.

By contrast, the Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 132.8 million, during the 2008-2050 period. Its share of the nation's total population is projected to double, from 15 percent to 30 percent. Nearly one in three U.S. residents would be Hispanic.

The Asian population is projected to climb from 15.5 million to 40.6 million. Its share of the nation's population is expected to rise from 5.1 percent to 9.2 percent.

The number of people who identify themselves as multi-racial is projected to more than triple, from 5.2 million to 16.2 million.

Source: U.S. Census



Law and Gospel at the Borders

By Julia Thorne

Northern California, September, 2007. Entering the church fellowship hall I look around – a large room filled with members of the church’s two congregations, the mostly Anglo Sunday morning worshipers and the mostly new immigrant Sunday afternoon worshipers. Both congregations bring interested friends – local employers, schoolteachers, health care providers. The League of Women Voters and local police officers are there also. Each hopes to walk away with a better understanding of the confusing, frustrating immigration situation in the United States.

Some are eager to learn how to “be church” together in a climate of fear and mistrust. New immigrants and employers come needing legal advice. Teachers, health care providers, and police want to get a better grip on policies that affect the people they serve. Everyone wants to know when the immigration situation will improve. I have lots of information to give, but I can offer little hope for actual change in the system: the prognosis for the next year appears discouraging. I can, however, suggest how to work together as a church and as a larger community – help them view current policies through a moral, historical, and legal lens that gives them a foundation for going forward and advocating change ...

In 2004 the Presbyterian Church (USA) decided to fund the position of immigration attorney to work in the national office and handle the growing number of questions about immigration.

It was a sign of the times. Facing an illogical immigration system, many denominations since 2000 have created such positions, either to advocate for new immigrants or expand refugee resettlement programs to include legal service clinics for low-income immigrants. I was hired by the PC(USA) in July 2005 to offer immigration law consultation, education and advocacy. In the three years since, I have traveled all over the U.S. and Mexico listening to people, working for change, and providing help to church members – both citizens and new immigrants.

Current U.S. immigration policy is extremely complex. It is not a one-dimensional issue. Many social, political, and economic pressures shape migration patterns around the world. Immigration problems cannot be resolved in isolation from foreign policy, trade agreements, globalization, political systems, social welfare and benefits, war, poverty, and global family relationships.

The immigration system is often referred to as “broken.” Congress has chosen for years to avoid overhauling a system that no longer reflects reality. Some people are fearful of large influxes of new immigrants, fearful that the newcomers will take too many jobs and services. There is fear that the culture of the U.S. will change. New immigrants are blamed for national problems with health care, crime, the environment, even high gas prices. Employers and trade associations around the country demand a system that will allow them to hire workers legally. Bill Gates has appeared before Congress the last two years requesting an increase in the number of professional workers allowed into the U.S. The numerical quotas for family reunification are so backlogged that families often choose to bring their spouses, children and parents into the U.S. without authorization. The problems, perceived *and* real, are myriad. Solutions will not be simple.

Faith communities have been involved in the immigration debate for several years: they sense a higher call to treat people with dignity and fairness, and many new immigrants are people of faith who become part of our religious communities. We

need to understand this connection between immigration, our faith, our history as a nation, and the ordeal of our current immigration policies. Until we make connections between a deeper theology of immigration and the truths of our current immigration system, we will not solve the problems we now face.

Doctrinal Disconnect

Today it is popular in our churches to go on mission trips. This is a good thing. We go to poorer countries (since it is difficult to find many richer) and do good things there. We build homes, we heal diseases. We buy local products. We take pictures. We begin to build some relationships with people whose lives are different from ours. We return home to share the story of our trip, describing the good we did and how welcoming and gracious were our hosts. We remember the poverty we witnessed, but we also see, in some ways, more similarities than differences – a human connection was made.

Yet upon our return, we somehow do not connect this experience with the unfolding reality in our communities, the immigrant reality. Often the same people who enjoyed the mission experience then become upset that the same people they just visited have moved into the neighborhood. We become fearful that our homes might be devalued or we might have to share our educational or health resources. The new immigrants could very well be

I can always tell that someone has no grasp of basic immigration law when the person declares, “Make them go home and come back in legally.”

family members of those we just met. They could be members of one of our churches down the street. We have little understanding of their struggles or their stories. We don't realize that immigrants arrive in our cities and towns because, in so many cases, their poverty has become unbearable. They bring hope of a better life.

This reaction to immigration exposes a strange disconnection between our faith and practice. Scripture is filled with story after story of the people of God moving from one place to another. They moved for reasons of family, famine, safety, survival, and God's direct call to “go.” The unwavering theme is that God was with them wherever they went. We need a new theology of immigration that goes beyond superficial welcome, beyond providing help when it is convenient or simply out of our abun-

dance. We need not just a theology of welcome but a theology of inclusion. Do we not believe that we have something to learn about God from brothers and sisters who view the world through a lens different from our own? Are we willing to open ourselves to new languages and new communities to discover that part of God not found in our own cultural worldview? We need truly to seek to become a new community much like the one described in Rev. 7: 9, “And behold, I saw a great multitude which no one could count, of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”

A Nation of Laws?

All over the country, people remind me again and again that the problem they have with the wave of immigration today is that immigrants are not coming in legally. “We are a nation of laws,” they say, and, “I don't mind that people immigrate to the United States, I just believe they should come in legally.”

The assumption seems to be that these laws are sacrosanct. We forget the string of unjust laws that shame our history. The Indian Removal Act of 1838 resulted in the Trail of Tears, where 70,000 Native Americans were uprooted at gunpoint from their homes. The Slave Fugitive Act of 1850 made helping a slave to freedom a violation of the law. The Page Law of 1875 prohibited Asian women from immigrating to the U.S., thus ensuring that Chinese workers could not form families. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese from immigrating; it was repealed only in 1943 under pressure from our allied relationship with China during World War II. Meanwhile, Executive Order 9066, signed on Feb. 19, 1942, gave the Army the power to arrest every Japanese-American on the West Coast. So 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent were sent to internment camps in barren isolated regions and kept under armed guard. Only in 1988 did Congress pass a bill to pay reparations of \$20,000 each to the survivors, and President Reagan admitted that the U.S. committed a “grave wrong.” Meanwhile, Jim Crow laws defined the segregated South, keeping African Americans marginalized and disenfranchised a century after the Civil War.

At other moments in our history, it was the lack of a humane law that was unjust. For millions of workers who were exploited in our nineteenth century factories – men, women, and children laboring incredibly long hours without safety standards and barely earning a living wage – there was no law to protect them. For women who wanted

a voice in government, there was no law allowing them the vote.

The church was active in former waves of immigration despite unjust laws of the land. In the Presbyterian Church there were pastors, missionaries and lay people who protested the Indian Removal Act; who provided safe houses and churches along the underground railroad; who rescued Chinese women who had been smuggled into the country

We cannot rest on the rule of law, unthinkingly placing law above a concern for people.

for labor or prostitution; who created settlement houses and community centers in the tenement slums of northeastern cities; who provided pastoral care and supplies to Japanese in internment camps; and who worked hard to desegregate our schools and public spaces during the 1960s.

The controversies our ancestors faced were not clear-cut or simple. But in retrospect, we regret as a nation the way we have treated minority populations. Today, as we look at the massive growth of for-profit immigration detention centers that hold men, women and children, and the militarization along our southern border, and the work-place raids that violate due process for workers and separate families and destroy small rural communities, we need to ask ourselves whether our descendents will be ashamed of our current policies. We cannot rest on the rule of law, unthinkingly placing law above a concern for people. Let us be the generation to end the historical cycle of abuse of new immigrant-laboring communities.

Today judges say immigration is one of the most complex of all the areas of law. This might explain why very few U.S. citizens seem to understand even the most fundamental of its tenets. If you listen to the general population speaking about immigration you may come away with the idea that there are only two kinds of people in the U.S. – citizens and undocumented people (often referred to as illegals). Yet there are at least four different categories of immigration status: citizens, permanent residents, non-immigrants, and undocumented persons.

Here I will briefly list definitions of some of the most important concepts encountered in the current system:

Citizens – To apply for citizenship, you must have been a permanent resident for three to five years. Applicants must speak, read, and write English, pay

taxes, have no felony record, and pass a citizenship test.

Permanent Residents – There are four ways to become a permanent resident:

- Win an immigration lottery, which is granted annually to thousands by the State Department.
- Enter as a refugee or ask for political asylum.
- Be sponsored by an employer.
- Be sponsored by a close family member.

Non-Immigrants – Most people apply at an American Consulate overseas and then after paying a substantial fee receive a visa interview to request permission to enter the U.S.

Undocumented Persons – There are two ways to become undocumented:

- enter the U.S. without the visa interview and without permission to enter the country, or
- overstay the time granted by Customs and Border Patrol at a port of entry.

Deportation – When individuals are found to be undocumented, they can be placed in removal proceedings. It does not matter if they have U.S. citizen spouses or children. It does not matter if they have been in the U.S. for twenty years. It does not matter if they own property or a business or if they have paid taxes. An immigration judge will determine whether their status as undocumented can be changed to allow them to remain; if not, they will be deported or asked to depart.

Numerical Quotas – Each year only a certain number of people are allowed to become permanent residents by winning the immigration lottery, or having an employer or family member sponsor them. This quota system leads to large backlogs of people waiting their turn to enter. Currently it can take at least five years for an unskilled laborer to be given permission to enter the U.S. The quota for unskilled laborers (such as construction, restaurant, and hotel workers) allows 5,000 to enter each year. Employers must prove that no qualified U.S. citizen has applied for the position.

Bars to Entry – If someone has been in the U.S. for more than one year without documents or has overstayed their permission to remain and now must leave the country, they will not be able to enter again legally for 10 years.

I can always tell that someone has no grasp of basic immigration law when the person declares, “Make them go home and come back in legally.” For most of the world, there is no legal way to enter the U.S., and even less opportunity to work here.

If a new pastor were to discover that people in her own congregation were starving, what would

she do to meet the crisis? If that pastor does not educate herself about the causes and solutions of hunger, the congregation will feel she does not care about this single most important aspect of their lives. For a growing number of people in the U.S., many of them churchgoers, their own immigration status is virtually their deepest concern. As we live in community with each other, it is urgent that we understand the experiences of new immigrants and the policies created in our name that they must maneuver through.

As faith communities, we have the chance to make a difference in how our nation faces its immigration challenge. Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said we should “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Julia Thorne is manager for immigration issues and immigration counsel in the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Louisville. A Presbyterian elder at Second Presbyterian Church in Lexington, KY., she is also an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and serves on its Religious Workers Committee.

A DECLINING NUMBER OF UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

The number of unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. – now about 11.9 million – is currently in decline, according to recent estimates.

Economic anxiety and slowdown in the U.S., as well as tougher enforcement of immigration laws, are cited as reasons.

The estimates, released by the Pew Hispanic Center, say the inflow of undocumented immigrants is now lower than that of immigrants who are legal permanent residents. “That reverses a trend that began a decade ago,” a Pew researcher said in October. “The turnaround appears to have occurred in 2007.”

The number of people entering the country illegally is now about 500,000 a year. About 650,000 legal permanent immigrant residents (they are not citizens) came to the U.S. in 2007. That number has been steady in recent years.

Despite the recent slowdown in the unauthorized population, its size has increased by more than 40 percent since 2000, when it was 8.4 million, Pew estimates. The most recent estimate of 11.9 million suggests that unauthorized immigrants make up 4 percent of the U.S. population.

Pew’s estimates are based mainly on data from the 2000 Census and the March Current Population Surveys for the years since then.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center

Confronting Six Misconceptions

A Report by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services

1. "Immigrants don't want to learn English."

FALSE. The development of English proficiency among non-English speaking immigrants today mirrors that of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration, when masses of Italian, German, and Eastern European immigrants came to the U.S. Though first-generation, non-English speaking immigrants predictably have lower rates of English proficiency than native speakers, 91 percent of second generation immigrants are fluent or near-fluent English speakers. By the third generation, 97 percent speak English with fluency or near-fluency.

2. "Immigrants don't pay taxes."

FALSE. Undocumented immigrants pay taxes. Between one-half and three-quarters of undocumented immigrants pay state and federal taxes. They also contribute to Medicare and provide as much as \$7 billion a year to the Social Security fund. Further still, undocumented workers pay sales taxes where applicable and property taxes – directly if they own and indirectly if they rent.

3. "Immigrants increase the crime rate."

FALSE. Recent research has shown that immigrant communities do not increase the crime rate and that immigrants commit fewer crimes than native-born Americans. While the undocumented immigrant population doubled from 1994 to 2005, violent crime dropped by 34 percent and property crimes decreased by 32 percent. Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has found that first-generation immigrants are 45 percent less likely to commit violent crimes than Americanized, third-generation immigrants.

4. "Immigrants take jobs away from Americans."

FALSE. A recent study produced by the Pew Hispanic Center says "rapid increases in the foreign-born population at the state level are not associated with negative effects on the employment of native-born workers." In fact, given that the number of native-born low-wage earners is falling nationally, immigrants are playing an important role in offsetting that decline. The Urban Institute reports that between 2000 and 2005 the total number of low-wage workers declined by approximately 1.8 million while the number of unskilled immigrant workers increased by 620,000, thus offsetting the total decline by about a third.

5. "Immigrants are a drain on the U.S. economy."

FALSE. The immigrant community is not a drain on the U.S. economy but, in fact, proves to be a net benefit. Research reported by both the CATO Institute and the President's Council of Economic Advisors reveals that the average immigrant pays a net \$80,000 more in taxes than an immigrant collects in government services. For immigrants with college degrees the net fiscal return is \$198,000. Furthermore, the American Farm Bureau asserts that without guest workers the U.S. economy would lose as much as \$9 billion a year in agricultural production and 20 percent of current production would go overseas.

6. "Undocumented immigrants are a burden on the health care system."

FALSE. Federal, state and local governments spend approximately \$1.1 billion annually on health care costs for undocumented immigrants, aged 18-64, or approximately \$11 in taxes for each U.S. household. This compares to \$88 billion spent on all health care for non-elderly adults in the U.S. in 2000. Foreign-born individuals tend to use fewer health care services because they are relatively healthier than their native-born counterparts. For example, in Los Angeles County, "total medical spending on undocumented immigrants was \$887 million in 2000 – 6 percent of total costs, although undocumented immigrants comprise 12 percent of the region's residents."

For sources for all these findings and further information, see www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

A Land of Immigrants, a Shifting Religious Marketplace

By Luis Lugo

Immigration is helping to reshape the religious landscape throughout the world. The U.S. is no exception. Let me offer a snapshot, a picture of what we found at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life when we conducted the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (RLS), which was published this year.

Based on more than 35,000 interviews, the RLS is some twenty times larger than a good-size survey. This allows us to dig deeper into the smaller religious traditions but also to examine some interesting dynamics within the larger religious traditions. The results underscore the impact of immigration and other religious trends on the U.S. I'd also suggest that the Roman Catholic Church is the leading edge of this change, the harbinger of the national religious demographic transformation underway today.

The first thing to notice from our findings is that the U.S. remains an overwhelmingly Christian country (see chart, p.15). That percentage has been declining, but it is still quite high – 78 percent. Immigration is not dramatically altering the Christian percentage of the U.S. If you look at immigration in Europe, a large percentage is Muslim. That is not the case in the U.S. As sociologist Stephen Warner has said, what immigration is bringing to the U.S. is not so much the “de-Christianization” of American society as the “de-Europeanization” of American Christianity, and our numbers bear that out.

The Coming Protestant Minority

Within Christianity we found the total Protestant population to be slightly over half, 51.3 percent. But in the not-too-distant future this country is going to become minority Protestant – and also minority white as well. (The subset of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, for instance, now represents only slightly over one-third of the U.S. public, about 37-38 percent.) American Christianity is becoming

less Protestant even as it remains predominantly Christian.¹

Our survey suggests that two major forces are reshaping the American religious landscape. One is conversion from one faith to another, and the second one is immigration. We asked everybody we interviewed, “What was your childhood religion?” and “What is your current religion?” What is happening is a constant churn. The figures show that every single religious community in this country is losing members – and every one of them is gaining members. The key question is always, What is the ratio of those two? For example, the unaffiliated are a big winner in terms of net change, picking up 12.7 percent of the American people – the people we interviewed who said they were raised in some religious tradition and have left whatever tradition that was. But note, too, that 3.9 percent of Americans who were brought up unaffiliated have now gone back to religion.

In short, there's an unbelievable rate of change going on out there – people moving around, not much brand loyalty – in today's religious “marketplace.”

The drama of immigration intensifies these dynamics of religious change. Catholicism, in particular, looks poised to be transformed in fundamental ways by immigration – ethnically and socially – making it the leading edge of a broader religious demographic transformation, and suggesting where the country as a whole might be going.

Among the native-born, Protestants outnumber Catholics almost three-to-one. But among the

foreign-born, Catholics outnumber Protestants two-to-one; 23 percent of all Catholics in this country today are foreign-born. Compare this to other groups such as Muslims, nearly two-thirds of whom are immigrants.²

Among the foreign-born we noticed an interesting pattern when we asked, “When did you come to the country?” If you divide the answers by decade, the numbers of foreign-born Protestants over time has been decreasing, 22 percent today compared to 33 percent before 1960.³ The Catholic number, which started fairly high, has gone up even higher, to 48 percent. As a result, today some three out of ten adult Catholics are Latino – three in ten. Among the major religious traditions, Catholicism has by far the heaviest immigrant, specifically Latino, influence.

A Catholic Surge

The “age and racial composition” chart (p.17) reinforces the point. Our findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of Catholics who are 50 and over are white. However, Latinos are almost half of all Catholics under 40 in this country today. This foreshadows what’s coming: as the older, less Hispanic cohorts die off, the next cohorts will be increasingly Hispanic.

This has consequences for the geographic distribution of Catholicism in this country. Catholics overall are fairly well spread out, although the Northeast predominates (white Catholics are heavily concentrated in the Northeast and, to a lesser extent, the Midwest). Among Latinos, however, the concentration is towards the South and particularly the West. So, immigration and the Latino growth in the Roman Catholic Church is shifting the demographic center of gravity of American Catholicism.

This trend also will be a socio-economic challenge for the U.S. Catholic Church, which as a whole is fairly middle class. The large presence of Latinos is introducing some important differences socio-economically within the Catholic Church. For example, the percentage of Catholic adults overall who are not high school graduates looks very similar to the rest of the country. However, there’s a seven-fold difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic Catholics when it comes to not graduating from high school. Only 6 percent of non-Hispanic Catholic adults have no high school degree; for Hispanic Catholics, the figure is 42 percent. There’s a similar pattern when it comes to income. The percentage of Catholics overall who make less than \$30,000

Religious Composition of the Native-Born and Foreign-Born

	Total Population	Born in U.S.	Foreign Country*
	%	%	%
Christian	78	79	74
Protestant	51	55	24
Evangelical churches	26	28	15
Mainline churches	18	20	7
Historically black churches	7	8	2
Catholic	24	21	46
Mormon	1.7	1.8	0.9
Jehovah’s Witness	0.7	0.7	1.0
Orthodox	0.6	0.4	1.8
Other Christian	0.3	0.4	<0.3
Other Religions	5	4	9
Jewish	1.7	1.8	1.5
Muslim	0.6	0.3	1.7
Buddhist	0.7	0.6	1.6
Hindu	0.4	<0.3	3.0
Other world religions	<0.3	<0.3	<0.3
Other faiths	1.2	1.3	0.5
Unaffiliated	16	16	16
Atheist	2	2	1
Agnostic	2	2	2
Secular unaffiliated	6	6	5
Religious unaffiliated	6	6	7
Don’t Know/Refused	1	1	1
	100	100	100

Share of Total Population (100%) (88%) (12%)

* Includes respondents who were born in U.S. territories (Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, etc.) and Puerto Rico

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100, and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

Source: “U.S. Religious Language Survey,” Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

per year is identical to the rest of the country. But non-Hispanic Catholics are a lot better off than the country as a whole, while Hispanics are a lot worse off. Hispanic Catholics are almost three times more likely than non-Hispanic Catholics to make less than \$30,000 per year.

Another difference we found between Hispanic and non-Hispanic Catholics, in a survey we conducted with the Pew Hispanic Center, a sister organization under the Pew Research Center umbrella, relates to the significant charismatic element within Latino Catholicism. I don't just mean "bringing the fiesta spirit to mass" – the clapping, the much more animated singing, the energetic worship. I am talking about "high-octane" Pentecostalism – speaking in tongues, divine healing, receiving words of prophecy. Pentecostalism is a remarkable global movement – perhaps the most dynamic religious force in the world today. And its impact is being felt far beyond Pentecostal churches. It is having a major impact on Christianity generally, whether Catholic or Anglican or Protestant. In some parts of the world,

Only one out of five immigrants in this country today is white. The two big groups are Latinos, who comprise about half of all immigrants, and Asians, about 25 percent.

Guatemala for instance, it has been difficult for us to find Protestant evangelicals to survey who are not Pentecostal. So this challenges the Roman Catholic Church to find ways to accommodate this increasing diversity of devotion and worship style.

Where will these trends take U.S. Catholics and everybody else? Looking at the foreign-born population by race and ethnicity, it is overwhelmingly non-white. Only one out of five immigrants in this country today is white. The two big groups are Latinos, who comprise about half of all immigrants, and Asians, about 25 percent. So, Latinos and Asians constitute three out of four of all immigrants in this country. That is going to have a significant impact.

Fertility Futures

Fertility rates also matter. The U.S. as a whole is at 2.1 percent, which demographers say is the replacement rate – that is, the population will remain constant if you are at 2.1 percent. In the U.S., Hispanics are at 2.9. Blacks are at not quite 2.1. Asians are not quite at replacement rate, but their numbers are growing because of immigration. Among whites the number is about 1.8 children per family.

There is not a European country that is even close to replacement rate. This defines part of their challenge to sustain a social welfare system that is much more generous than ours in the face of a decreasing number of workers to replace those who retire. The only way Europe can make up that difference, short of a radical restructuring of their social welfare programs, is immigration. But, as you know, this is causing quite a bit of anxiety in Europe. Europeans can't seem to live with immigrants and they can't seem to live without them; this is their dilemma.

When I came into this country from Cuba in 1962, there were very few Hispanics around. I went to Long Island, New York, for the first couple of years, and then the Washington, D.C., area. The high school I graduated from in the Washington area had a huge graduating class, but only a handful of Hispanics. If you go to that area of Prince George's County today, there are Hispanics everywhere. In Long Island, too, I remember in our elementary and junior high school, a handful of Latino kids, very few. But look at today's national pattern. The Pew Hispanic Center estimates there are more than 45 million Hispanics in the U.S. today. That number will triple by 2050, to 127 million, because of fertility rates, further immigration, and other factors.

What about the country's race and ethnic mix in the future? In 1960, the overwhelming majority of the American people were white – over 80 percent. By 2005, it had dipped below 70 percent. By 2050 it will be about 47 percent. Blacks will remain fairly constant, at about 12-13 percent. Asians will grow to about 10 percent of the population by 2050. The big growth, however, will be among Hispanics, going from 3.5 percent in 1960, to about 14 percent today, to 30 percent of the population by 2050.

This is almost the exact same number right now in the U.S. Catholic Church: some 30 percent of adult Catholics are Hispanics, while in 2050, 30 percent of all Americans will be Hispanics. That is why I say that the Catholic Church is a harbinger in this demographic transformation in the U.S., which itself is but a chapter in an amazing global story – the massive movements of people within and across national boundaries and the profound religious changes this portends.

Luis Lugo is director of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in Washington, D.C.

Age and Racial Composition of U.S. Catholicism and Protestantism

Catholics

	All Catholic	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
% who are	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	65	47	51	68	75	78	85
Black	2	3	2	2	2	3	1
Latino	29	45	44	26	20	17	12
Other/Mixed	4	5	3	4	4	2	2
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Protestants

	All Protestants	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
% who are	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
White	74	61	71	73	77	80	83
Black	16	23	16	16	16	14	12
Latino	5	10	9	6	3	3	2
Other/Mixed	4	6	5	5	4	3	2
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100. Results have been re-percentaged to exclude non-response.

Source: "U.S. Religious Language Survey," Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Notes

- 1 We also note the rising significance of the unaffiliated, which we found to be the fastest growing group – 16 percent of the American public. But let me add a word of caution here. Unaffiliated does not necessarily mean “secular” or non-religious. Secular is not really a very good description of this community. We found that in fact 40 percent of those people who are unaffiliated are fairly religious. They have become disaffiliated from religious institutions but not necessarily from religion. In fact, some of them pray and attend church more often than many people who associate with a faith tradition but are not very observant. These “religious unaffiliated” as we call them – some people call them “spiritual but not religious” – are a very interesting subgroup that bears watching.
- 2 Coming into play because of immigration’s impact are world religions other than Christianity. The foreign-born percentage for Muslims, for instance, or Buddhists and Hindus, is much

higher than for native-born adherents. About 5 percent of the American population now belongs to those traditions; this presents new challenges for accommodating religious differences in the workplace and other areas of public life.

- 3 The mix within Protestantism among the foreign-born is also shifting. The majority of Protestant immigrants who came to the country prior to 1960 told us they belong to mainline Protestant churches. For those who came during the '60s, it was already pretty even between mainline and evangelical churches. In the last two decades, however, immigrants who are Protestant have overwhelmingly gravitated towards evangelical churches; many of them are now Pentecostal Protestant.



“Not Like Us”: The Mainline’s Immigration Problem

by Dan Romero

Some years ago a colleague friend of mine and I were discussing the experience of the United Church of Christ’s outreach to the Latino community. In the midst of the conversation he remarked, “But they’re not like you ...”

Although it was years ago, the encounter remains etched in my memory. This colleague is a Euro-American leader in the progressive Christian movement, someone I have respected and admired for decades. His social activist credentials are second to none; he has demonstrated a commitment to the Latino community throughout his ministry.

But when it came to embracing Latinos and Latinas within the same institutional denominational community, there were some “buts.”

Church Racism and Double Standards

Across the 30-plus years of my ordained ministry, I have encountered, much to my disappointment, barriers, double standards, stereotypes and considerable racism targeted at the emerging Latino community. Though I can only speak from my experience in the United Church of Christ, I suspect that others from the ecumenical mainline tradition have witnessed similar dynamics. When a person tells me, “But they’re not like you,” I don’t take it as a compliment. The statement is basically communicating: “You are not like the others, you are more like us,” and therefore more acceptable.

For an otherwise progressive denomination like the UCC, which has championed the cause of diversity and inclusivity for decades, it strikes me as duplicitous to have to put an asterisk on “inclusivity.” Now that the “them” are emerging in greater numbers and seeking a place at the table, we’ve discovered that indeed “they aren’t exactly like us.” Perhaps there was an unwritten requirement that Latinos be sufficiently assimilated into mainline belief and liturgy before they would be included.

The fact is, the Latino community has never been a “natural fit” for the U.S. mainline churches. While Latin Americans in general come from very deep spiritual roots, the overwhelming Roman Catholic influence among them has caused many in the U.S. Protestant community to dismiss Latinos since “they’re all Catholics anyway.” This has made it easy to avoid taking the community seriously as potential newcomers or members in the overall picture of U.S. mainline Protestant growth. The presence of the Pentecostal church in Latin America creates another barrier for mainliners who are uncomfortable with more emotional expressions of the faith. The intellectual style of our faith has been a dominant force in many of our denominations where a certain level of education is expected.

One might argue that traditional Catholicism and Pentecostalism presided on a continent whose people have suffered such oppression and poverty. Though acknowledging the reality of poverty, the Pentecostals and Catholic hierarchy did not customarily deal directly with the systemic causes of poverty and its stranglehold on the population. Rather, they found common ground in an eschatology that offers “a better place” later.

That was the case until liberation theology, Latino style, emerged in the 1970s and ’80s, offering a new methodology for those in the pews who were wilting from waiting for better days and eager to connect faith and action.

The theology of liberation offered many U.S. Latino and white Christians an anchor for social activism. It became respectable to include liberation

themes in seminary studies. Many white liberals joined in to champion causes of just immigration reform, support farm workers, oppose the inequities of economic globalization, and back the unionization efforts of the emerging Latino labor force in the U.S. Liberation theology was the inspiration.

The Winds of Liberation

During this same period, however, overseas Christian communities who had related to mainline Protestant denominations in the U.S. attempted to break free of the dependency that had defined their relationships. Christians abroad who were reclaiming their indigenous roots started asserting their own authority.

“Partnership” was the new definition of these global relationships. Important global partnerships were established and nurtured in Latin America with mainline U.S. Protestants; these partnerships helped North Americans better understand actual living conditions in Latin America. U.S. support for corrupt dictatorships was unmasked, and religious communities in the U.S. rose up in indignation. These global partnerships opened a new chapter in the relationship between U.S. Latinos and mainline Protestants.

The experience revealed something else as well – how much easier and more comfortable it was for mainline Christians in this country to partner with brother and sister Christians in Latin America than to integrate these same Latinos into the family of the mainline church in the United States. In the 1980s and ’90s, I attended many an international ecumenical gathering in Latin America where mainline Protestants joined in the spirited worship, tried to speak Spanish, and committed themselves to the justice issues of the day (they might even have participated in an altar call!). Though these encounters were driven by good intentions and a common mission agenda, they were often carried along only by the spiritual highs of the moment, rituals that masked real differences among us.

Those differences become evident when church leaders propose issues and policies that compel the sharing of deeper scriptural and theological understandings and the spiritual commitments that inform both Latinos and Euro-American mainline Protestants. Those differences emerge not in forums where there are common agendas, but in institutional settings where church leaders plan the development of new congregations; where church members examine biblical interpretations of ordination and ministry; and where the role of women, the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender

(GLBT) persons in ministry become topics of discomfort or avoidance.

The inclusion of GLBT persons in ministry, along with the recent denominational decisions regarding equality in marriage for gay and lesbian couples, has stirred the already complex pot of emotions not only for Latinos but for Anglo mainliners as well. This is precisely the time to discuss these issues rather than run from them. Euro-American clergy and lay people are often reluctant to speak up for fear of offending Latino colleagues or because they are unable to articulate a sound basis for their decisions if they are uncertain themselves of their biblical or theological understanding.

Leaving the Comfort Zone

“But they’re not like you” summarizes a comfort zone that the dominant mainline Protestant community has carved out for itself. To sit at the table with those who are “like us” is easy. But taking the easy road discredits God’s gift of diversity and blocks opportunities for genuine relationship-building and mutual transformation.

Building community and relationships among different cultural groups does happen now at various levels. As I indicated, the ecumenical mainline denominations have been active in issues important to Latinos – immigration, economic globalization, farm-worker conditions, worker justice and education. When focused on issues of common concern,

I know many a congregation that would rather close its doors to the changing world around it than find ways to reach out and extend God’s love and hope to others who are ... “not like us.”

Euro-Americans and Latinos have linked arms and shared many an *abrazo* (hug) with each other. This is one level of relationship. These *abrazos* are not necessarily transformative. The relationship remains paternalistic if Latinos are considered objects of mission. Paternalistic dynamics that existed with overseas Christians for centuries – but which are subsiding abroad – continue to exist here. Where is the partnership? How does one move to genuine partnership?

As much as Latinos are eager to be partners in mission with mainline church folks, they are often still treated as a “social justice” issue of the church, not true participants in setting mission agendas.

Admittedly, there are examples in the mainline churches where Latino leaders rise through the

ranks and take their place in the hierarchy of their respective denominations. These leaders have done much to further the cause of Latino ministry in their various settings.

But when you compare the leadership shifts in the secular world with those in the church, the church lags far behind in sharing leadership with the large Latino constituency emerging in our communities.

For the sake of the gospel, the present beckons us to a moment of sharing life together in order to respond to the enormous demographic shifts taking place among us. In our multicultural world, our faith demands that we discover each other anew. We continue to dance around the uncomfortable issues, yet it is precisely by tackling those issues honestly, with awareness of history and with theological sensitivity, that we will build these relationships. And transformation can occur. We believe God can transform all of us through constructive dialogue and interchange.

Tacos and Theology

But we must also believe that the spirituality of “the other” has something to offer us, something we can embrace as our own. Attending a periodic fiesta, eating a few tacos and enchiladas, moving and clapping at an occasional multicultural worship experience just isn’t going to do it. Acting upon stereotypes

However, he says, it appears we “are losing faith in such ideas.”

“We have become suspicious of trade, openness, immigration and investment because now it’s not Americans going abroad but foreigners coming to America. Just as the world is opening up, we are closing down.”

I know many a congregation that would rather close its doors to the changing world around it than find ways to reach out and extend God’s love and hope to others who are ... “not like us.” Jesus reached out precisely to those “not like him” in order to build God’s kingdom. We can do no less.

The Rev. Dan Romero, a Los Angeles native, has been a United Church of Christ minister nearly 40 years. Now retired, he has served as general secretary for the Mission Program of the United Church Board for World Ministries, and, most recently, was conference minister for the Southern California-Nevada Conference. He is also an attorney who currently works in the area of immigration law. He is the author of Our Futures Inextricably Linked: A Vision of Pluralism, published by the United Church Board of Homeland Ministries.

As much as Latinos are eager to be partners in mission with mainline church folks, they are often still treated as objects of mission.

and disrespecting the integrity of other faith communities is a recipe for disaster and shallowness. Expecting the Latino community to “be like us” before they are fully embraced as partners in mission will deny the mainline churches access to one of the fastest growing, most dynamic, and potent agents for God’s mission in the world.

In a new book, *The Post-American World*, journalist Fareed Zakaria says U.S. immigrant history and identity represent America’s great strength. “(The U.S.) remains the most open, flexible society in the world, able to absorb other people, cultures, ideas, goods and services. The country thrives on the hunger and energy of the poor immigrants When you compare this dynamism with the closed and hierarchical nations that were once superpowers, you sense that the United States is different and may not fall into the trap of becoming rich and fat and lazy.”

MOTHER PICKING PRODUCE

By Richard Blanco

She scratches the oranges then smells the peel,
presses an avocado just enough to judge its ripeness,
polishes the Macintoshes searching for bruises.

She selects with hands that have thickened, fingers
that have swollen with history around the white gold
of a wedding ring she now wears as a widow.

Unlike the archived photos of young, slender digits
captive around black and white orange blossoms,
her spotted hands now reaching into the colors.

I see all the folklore of her childhood, the fields,
the fruit she once picked from the very tree,
the wiry roots she pulled out of the very ground.

And now, among the collapsed boxes of yucca,
through crumbling pyramids of golden mangos,
she moves with the same instinct and skill.

This is how she survives death and her son,
on these humble duties that will never change,
on those habits of living which keep a life a life.

She holds up red grapes to ask me what I think,
and what I think is this, a new poem about her –
the grapes look like dusty rubies in her hands,

what I say is this: *they look sweet, very sweet.*

Sending, Receiving, Embracing: The Pulse of Global Immigration

By George Rupp

The scale of globalization today is unprecedented. It entails increasingly efficient transfers of money, goods and services, and ideas across every sort of social and cultural border. It puts us more frequently, more rapidly, more intensively in contact with others all over the world.

Yet the movement of money, goods, and ideas is relatively straightforward compared to the movement of people – and today, the world as a whole is confronting more people on the move from more directions and with more diverse motivations than ever before in human history.

Our American experience as a nation of immigrants, with its proud tradition of welcoming newcomers, serves us well as we grapple with this new set of challenges. It gives us a significant advantage compared to countries with more homogeneous populations. This comparative advantage has allowed the United States to develop a relatively open labor market that can attract needed workers from outside the country and, over time, integrate them into our society.

Many developed countries have not been so successful. Think of the persistent failure of Germany to accept Turkish or Greek guest workers as full citizens – or even their children who are born and live their entire lives in Germany. Or consider the marginalized status of generations of Koreans in Japan.

Resisting Nostalgia

I do not need to emphasize the stresses that can accompany a nation's diverse cultural traditions. But nostalgia for some mythic monocultural past is a loser – for the U.S. and for the world. On this set of issues, the U.S., United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia show more promise than France or Germany. Similarly, an India that incorporates its large Muslim minority is a better bet than a Pakistan that

defines itself as Muslim. Accepting the challenges of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity is a more promising prescription for vitality than defining a nation monoculturally.

Yet our experience as a nation of immigrants is not an adequate guide for the new global situation we face. Even in the case of economic immigrants, the U.S. has certainly not had an open door. One result is, as we all know, a large influx of illegal immigrants, which constitutes a major policy conundrum for this country. But our attempts to comprehend the issue of illegal entry into the U.S. should call attention to the larger, global dynamic at work: we cannot adequately address the challenge of immigration that faces the “receiving countries” unless we also attend to the underlying conditions that shape the “sending countries.”

I will examine this rising global dynamic, as well as post-9/11 attitudes of the U.S. toward immigration, by considering an important subset of global migration – the plight of the world's displaced people, the world's forced migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

Aside from the immeasurable numbers of voluntary economic immigrants, there are also some 35 million displaced people in the world – people who have been driven from their home communities and are seeking refuge wherever they can find it. If they have crossed an international border, they are officially designated as refugees, according to international law and United Nations definitions. If they remain within their country of origin, they are

typically referred to as internally displaced persons. But all have been forced from their home communities.

These displaced millions figure prominently in our image of global dislocation: throngs of people clutching their belongings as they flee conflict; long lines of supplicants who wait for food or shelter or application papers; circles of family members who rejoice as they are reunited after years of separation. Such refugees and asylum seekers are salient in our American traditions too, from the Pilgrims on. But these people on the move often pose an even more demanding challenge than immigrants who

leave their homelands voluntarily to seek economic opportunities. The organization I lead focuses its efforts on these dislocated individuals and communities.

The International Rescue Committee was founded in 1933 at the suggestion of Albert Einstein. Its first governing board included John Dewey and Reinhold Niebuhr, among other luminaries. It had a straightforward mission: to rescue refugees from Europe and to help them get resettled here in the United States. To that end, it had operations in Europe to expedite escape from Germany and countries under Nazi occupation and an office in

AFGHANISTAN: A REFUGEE CASE STUDY

The example of Afghanistan illustrates how the IRC and others in the international community address the ordeal of the vast numbers of displaced people victimized by protracted conflict.

We first became engaged there when the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan nearly 30 years ago generated large numbers of displaced people. The IRC has assisted about 7,000 Afghan refugees who have resettled in this country during these tumultuous decades – proud Americans who also remain deeply interested in Afghanistan. But in addition, we have worked with Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and with those who returned to Afghanistan.

The number of Afghan refugees reached a peak of around six million in the early 1990s – almost a thousand times as many as we helped to resettle here. The vast majority of those millions of refugees fled to either Iran or Pakistan. Many have returned to their homeland. In the fall of 2003 alone, almost two million refugees seized this opportunity, and several million more have returned since then.

But not all the refugees return. Perhaps as many as two million have opted for local integration, especially in the ethnically similar northwest frontier province of Pakistan. The IRC has been actively engaged with refugee settlements in this region for about twenty-five years. The children who have grown up in these settlements are now adults who have never lived in Afghanistan. Their villages are relatively well integrated into the social and economic patterns of that part of Pakistan. In some respects, notably education and health care, their situation is more favorable than that of the local Pakistanis. We are, therefore, increasingly opening up access to our programs to the Pakistani population as well, so as to nurture the full acceptance of Afghan refugees into what has become their new home.

In every case our intention is to help refugees so they can restart their lives. As in most of the countries where we are active, our programs include water and sanitation, housing, health care, and education. The educational programs have been especially important, because they have prepared a generation of leaders, some who have been in Afghanistan for years and others who are now returning from Pakistan. Inside Afghanistan, the IRC administered a system of small house-based schools that continued even during the rule of the Taliban. And we educated girls as well as boys, which the Taliban tolerated because the parents insisted on it. Interestingly, Afghan President Hamid Karzai himself once taught English in our school for Afghan refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan, as he proudly reminded me when we first met in Kabul.

One initiative that focuses directly on the need to establish both a viable national government and sustainable local communities is called the National Solidarity Program, funded primarily by the World Bank. The IRC is one of the implementing partners. The program as deployed in Afghanistan begins with the empowering of local village councils – at this point the IRC is active in more than a thousand villages – and then works to provide national and international support for development priorities established through deliberations at that level.

Afghanistan is not yet safely beyond the turmoil of the past. It is still on a knife edge and could again fall back into chaos. That is why it is crucial that the U.S. and other developed countries follow through on the assistance we have promised. If we do, and if the Afghans rise to the enormous challenges they still face, we will all have reason to be proud.

—George Rupp

New York from which this “committee” provided assistance to refugees in becoming reestablished in this country.

A World On the Move

The IRC continues this double tradition: we are often the first on the scene of disaster through our emergency response unit, and we work with refugees as they resettle in this country. In the work of resettlement, we have twenty-four offices across the U.S., including one in New York City, where we also have our international headquarters.

Through those offices, in normal times we help to resettle about 10,000 refugees annually in the U.S. It is exhilarating work, which we do with roughly seven times as many volunteers as employees. Most of our employees are themselves former refugees who are perfectly placed to press our agenda of tough love: a new start within six months, including a place to live, language training, a job, and school for any children.

It is enormously rewarding to witness how the refugees with whom we work make the most of every opportunity offered to them. It is therefore all the more disheartening to see the sharp contraction in refugee admissions since September 11, 2001.

Over the two decades before 9/11, even the target number for refugee admissions had declined from a high of 231,000 to 70,000. In his first year in office, President Bush committed himself to increasing the number steadily to get back to 90,000. But

The arithmetic is: 998 out of every 1,000 displaced persons in the world have no prospect of resettling in the U.S.

after 9/11, security concerns drastically curtailed refugee admissions. Even family reunifications of husband and wife or parents and children often took over a year to adjudicate. Overall, the numbers dropped two-thirds. They have gradually increased since that low point but still have not reached the 70,000 level.

We as a nation should move expeditiously to return to historic levels of refugee admissions. But even if we do, the challenge of displaced persons cannot come close to being met through resettlement of refugees in this country. If, for example, we were to reach our present presidentially established ceiling, the 70,000 refugees admitted would account for only about two out of every thousand displaced people worldwide. It is wonderful to provide opportunities for those two, and the IRC is proud to contribute to making the most of those opportunities. But that leaves 998 out of every 1,000

who have no hope of resettling here.

This arithmetic – 998 out of every 1,000 displaced persons have no prospect of resettling in the U.S. – is why the IRC is also engaged in two dozen countries around the world. We do there what we do here: we seek to assist displaced people to gain a new start. For a tiny fraction of the total, this new start will take place in other developed countries. But for the vast majority of migrants, it means becoming integrated into the nation where they have taken refuge or at some point voluntary repatriation to their homeland.

The Sending Countries

It is therefore imperative that we address the needs of the places that generate displaced populations – the sending countries. Only if their needs are addressed do we have any chance of grasping the challenge of immigration to the U.S. and other receiving countries.

The dramas of the sending countries teach three lessons we must learn.

One is directed towards organizations like the IRC. From the very beginning of our intervention in any crisis, we must not foster dependence on the part of those victimized by conflict. Put positively, we must focus at the outset on building the capacity of those with whom we work to begin their lives anew.

This lesson is, of course, much easier to state than to exemplify. In the heat of an emergency, the first priority is to meet immediate needs. When the death toll from readily preventable diseases is rising sharply – for example, from diarrhea or cholera – what is immediately required is potable water and rehydration therapy rather than a long-term plan for rehabilitation.

Yet even as the most pressing demands for assistance must be met, the danger to avoid is the undermining of longer-term self-subsistence. All of us must work in every way we can to move expeditiously from sustenance that fosters dependence to building the capacity to start anew. This requires firm advocacy directed to the UN, to countries that host refugees, and to governments that have allowed their residents to be displaced. It requires programs that offer education, training, and employment so that the uprooted are prepared to be productive members of the communities to which they return or into which they are integrated locally.

A second lesson also comes into sharp focus in the settings in which we work: communities at all levels, including governments themselves, are crucial for human flourishing and human survival.

Through my IRC work, I have visited more than twenty countries that illustrate the cataclysmic consequences of the collapse of communities – often because of a record of persistently bad government.

Catastrophic Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vivid example. The disastrous state of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) has a long history that includes voracious colonial exploitation beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century under King Leopold II of Belgium and later the corrupt post-colonial rule of Mobutu Sese Seko. But its most recent turmoil stems from 1994 when many of the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda fled into eastern Zaire.

The most recent IRC mortality survey has found that 5,400,000 people have died from war-related causes in Congo since 1998, the world's deadliest documented conflict since World War II. The vast majority died from non-violent causes such as malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition – easily preventable and treatable conditions when people have access to health care and nutritious food. These shocking numbers are the highest totals for any war in Africa, yet they go largely unnoticed. To put the point sharply, this death toll is the equivalent in loss of life of the World Trade Center disaster every day for five years.

Yet as awful as this news is, there is also a glimmer of good news. Comparing the figures in the last two surveys with the earlier ones, the mortality rate is declining. It is still extremely high. But the recent peace accord, the arrival of UN observers and a peacekeeping force, and greater access for humanitarian assistance have all contributed to a reduced level of violent conflict. Though this relative stability is very fragile, as the recent resurgence of conflict in North Kivu demonstrates, it is still a major achievement.

The Good of Government

The challenge is to continue this modestly positive trajectory. To do so requires the further consolidation of protection and security. It also calls for the adjudication of conflicting claims and the establishment of social order acceptable to opposed parties. In short, it entails the authority that sound governance provides to well-ordered communities – a lesson that can be generalized to dozens of other conflict and post-conflict settings around the world.

This lesson is especially important for us Americans to learn. Criticism of the state has a long and

honorable history here. None of us has much patience with the bureaucratic red tape that not infrequently characterizes government programs. But criticism of government has in recent years too often become a denigration of government as such. For any of us who spend time in failed states, this refusal to recognize the crucial role of government in establishing the order that our common life requires is a serious mistake. To address the challenges of conflict situations worldwide, we must embrace the positive role of government in building communities that are stable and secure. And only the support of more adequate governance can staunch the hemorrhaging of people from the

Immigrants who remain loyal to the traditions of their country of origin still become fully American.

sending countries in numbers that the receiving countries cannot absorb.

The third lesson follows from this acknowledgement of the crucial role of government in establishing ordered communities: catastrophe prevention is vastly preferable to emergency intervention.

Prevention of catastrophe in failing states requires investment in peacekeeping forces that have an unambiguous mandate, sufficient numbers of well-trained troops, and adequate logistical support.

It also calls for trade policies that more consistently allow poor countries to benefit from globalization. Here there is much room for improvement. To note perhaps the most egregious instance, subsidies that the U.S. pays to its cotton growers allow American exports to undersell otherwise fully competitive West African farmers. This state of affairs is hard to defend – especially if we are serious about preventing conflict through orderly development.

Along with contributing more substantially to multilateral peacekeeping and leveling the playing field in trade, the developed world must also increase foreign assistance for investment in basic health care, education, and livelihoods. For more than ten years, the developed world has agreed on the target of 0.7 percent of gross national product as a goal for development assistance. In recent years, five countries had reached or surpassed this goal: Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Sweden. The average for the twenty-two developed countries as a group is far short of the mark. The U.S. has consistently been at or near the bottom of that list.

A Generous Nation?

What is striking is not only the U.S.'s low ranking but also the extent of national self-deception on the issue. Polls consistently show that most of us think we are a more generous nation than others are in giving economic aid to developing countries. I think two considerations help to explain the discrepancy between the actual facts and our sense of ourselves.

The first is that Americans do give generously to private or nongovernmental agencies, a resource not included in international comparisons of official development assistance. Second, our own past performance was in fact far more generous than the more recent pattern.

In the late 1940s, at the height of the Marshall Plan, the fraction of the federal budget commit-

THE CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND *by Rima Salah*

Despite the many economic benefits of migration, it also poses challenges. These include risks to the healthy mental and physical development of children or increases on the workload of women and children left behind in the countries of origin.

In labor-sending countries, a growing number of children are left behind by one or both parents. Since 2000, more than 300,000 youngsters have been left by parents in Ecuador, for instance.

The migration implications for children and adolescents have received little attention so far. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) protects every child regardless of nationality or immigration status. States have obligations to adopt Convention principles regarding every child in their jurisdiction. The principles include the right to a nationality, health and education, and freedom from discrimination and exploitation.

Studies undertaken by UNICEF in some countries suggest children and adolescents left behind may be at greater risk of drug abuse, psycho-social problems, and violent behavior. They may face challenges in adapting to host societies.

UNICEF and other UN agencies are accompanying governments and other stakeholders in order to develop policies to maximize the benefits of migration while limiting negative effects on children and families.

Unfortunately, the complexity of today's displacement goes well beyond voluntary migration. We see more people forced to move because of extreme deprivation, war, and persecution. Millions of children are growing up in families and communities torn apart by armed conflict and war.

I was born a refugee. While growing up, I remember asking my parents, "What is a refugee? Why are we refugees?" As a young child, it was difficult to understand why we were different and what could be done to be part of normal life again.

Later, when I lived in a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jordan to conduct research for my doctoral thesis, I witnessed the terrible effects of war. Despite all

of the indicators that we have in social science, I learned there are no indicators to capture the full extent of people's pain, suffering, loss, and sadness. There are no indicators either for human dignity, resilience, moral courage, and wisdom.

My work for UNICEF took me to some of the world's poorest countries, crippled by political instability and conflict.

I will never forget the vivid images I have of families and little children fleeing Monrovia, Liberia, with all their belongings wrapped in bundles on their heads.

I met Maimouna in one of the camps in Mali in 2002, after her shanty-town in Cote d'Ivoire burned and was bulldozed to the ground: "My husband and I saved what we could but there wasn't much time. Men were beaten and some women were raped. I don't want to go back. I'm too scared and so are my children. We only have what is here in these sacks," she said. "The rest has been stolen, burned or destroyed. We've got to start our lives all over again due to the war. We need to find jobs and our children need to go to school."

The United Nations and its partners work together to improve life in the camps. In 2007, over half a million refugees returned to Afghanistan, southern Sudan, Burundi and the Congo, all this with the assistance of the UN and partners.

Despite those achievements, we must acknowledge that the only effective way to protect children and their families during war and conflict is to protect them from conflict and war. We know that the unacceptable cycle of disparities, poverty and marginalization is the central cause of most conflicts. We need to intensify efforts to promote social justice and respect of human rights – in times of peace and in times of conflict.

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ted to foreign assistance was over 18 percent, an astonishingly large proportion. In terms of gross national income, that amounts to 4.2 percent – or six times the current target! By the early 1960s, this percentage had dropped by a factor of seven to 0.6 percent – much lower but still within striking range of the 0.7 percent target. Today the figure is 0.2

We all know the dominant American narrative. Its motto is *e pluribus unum*. Its metaphor is the melting pot. ... Yet it is no longer just a melting pot.

percent, one-third of the level in the early 1960s and one-twentieth of the level in 1948.

However we explain the discrepancy between our sense of our own generosity and the facts, we need to focus our energy and attention on rectifying the situation so the U.S. moves closer to its fair share of the investment in health care and education that are crucial for sustainable development worldwide.

To bring such dry statistics to life, think in terms of \$10 as the total gross national income of a country. Of that \$10 the most generous nation, Norway, gives about a dime for development assistance, while the U.S. gives two pennies – not out of a dollar but out of \$10. That is how feeble our current effort is. Even if we add in all non-governmental donations – personal contributions, corporate gifts, and foundation grants – those amount to only another two or three cents for a total of a nickel out of \$10.

If we rise to the challenge of approximating the level of commitment of Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, and others, we could have tremendous impact on the forward movement of the developing world. If increased investment is carefully targeted, if it includes incentives for governments in developing countries to shoulder their responsibilities, and if it is combined with more adequately supported multilateral security forces and fairer global trade agreements, the result could be a major transformation in the developing world – in particular in sub-Saharan Africa – over the next generation.

The Receiving Countries

These three lessons are crucial if the international community is going to address the needs of the sending countries and thereby counter the push factor that drives people from the developing world to the developed world.

That brings us to another set of three lessons – those affecting the receiving countries.

The first lesson impels us to get our immigration vetting and approvals into some semblance of efficient order instead of allowing fears of worldwide terrorism to paralyze the process. We need to increase the numbers of legal immigrants in general and refugees in particular. But the U.S. must also streamline its procedures and organize the respective responsibilities of the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security so the approval process is less convoluted and protracted.

As an example, look at the current situation of Iraqi refugees. There are some two million Iraqi refugees in surrounding countries – in addition to the more than two million displaced within Iraq itself. Earlier this spring I visited the two neighboring countries with the largest number of refugees – Syria and Jordan. The situation of the refugees is truly deplorable. They are living in squalid conditions in the poorest parts of Amman and Damascus, not in separate settlements but in and among Jordanians and Syrians. They are not allowed to work, they have exhausted their savings, and they have limited access to health care and education. Jordan and Syria are bearing the brunt of the impact: 500,000 Iraqis in Jordan, which has a total population of about 7 million; 1.5 million in Syria, with a total population of about 20 million.

The Fate of Iraqi Refugees

The only long-term solution is for these Iraqis to be able to return home voluntarily to a secure Iraq. But the odds of that solution are not good for the immediate future. In the meantime, the international community must do much more to provide assistance to Jordan and Syria as they struggle to cope with the problem. And other countries – in particular, the U.S. in view of our responsibility for their plight – must admit much larger numbers for resettlement. Here we have fallen woefully short. Last year we set a miniscule target of 7,000 Iraqi nationals – and admitted only 1,600, mostly from the pre-war caseload. This year we have set a goal of 12,000. Legislation sponsored by Senator Ted Kennedy called for also admitting another 5,000 per year on what are termed “Special Immigrant Visas” intended specifically for those Iraqi nationals who worked directly with the U.S. government or American contractors.

All of these pledges are caught up in endless bureaucratic impediments. Frankly, much of the problem is that the administration has no interest in facilitating the arrival of large numbers of Iraqis whose very presence here will call attention to the disaster in their home country. Yet we simply must

do better in expediting the admissions of refugees and immigrants who are in dire straits because of our actions.

Lesson two focuses on the prospect of welcoming connections between immigrants and the places they left. We all need to be more aware and more vocal about the enormous contributions that immigrants make to this country as energetic workers and responsible citizens. But we should also affirm the connections of these new Americans to their countries of origin. One connection is the enormous sum of remittances that migrants around the world send back home. The best estimate is \$300 billion. That is triple the total of foreign assistance from all sources worldwide. They are agents of significant development in their countries of origin.

American Mosaic

A third lesson we need to learn concerns how we develop a culture of inclusion adequate to this time of massive global migration. We all know the dominant American narrative. Its motto is *e pluribus unum*. Its metaphor is the melting pot. It is a compelling story. I personally identify with it to a considerable degree; my own family history illustrates that this account is not just a fondly told fairy tale.

My parents were both immigrants – from culturally different parts of Germany. My father arrived in 1930 from the Black Forest in Baden-Wittenberg; my mother in 1937 from the Rhineland. I spoke German before I learned English, and I lived in Germany as a student and faculty member. But I married an American.

My wife Nancy traces her family on both sides back to the Mayflower. Both families had lived in New England for the several centuries until Nancy's father accepted a position in Pennsylvania in 1952 and then, in 1956, moved the family to New Jersey, where Nancy and I met in high school. From Nancy's undiluted Mayflower-originated New England family, the next generation went astray: Nancy married me, son of German immigrants; and her brother married the daughter of Irish Catholics, a significant departure for the Congregationalist family. Even more remarkable is the story of the next generation, a total of four children including our two daughters. One married the son of Italian Catholic immigrants; the second married a Catholic Singaporean of Chinese and Malay ancestry; the third married a Catholic Puerto Rican; and the fourth married an Indian Sikh.

All members of this remarkably diverse brood speak English, although in several cases with distinct accents. All are fully capable of flourishing in

the U.S. In this sense they embody the metaphor of the melting pot.

And yet they also express what is new about our situation. It is no longer just a melting pot. The Singaporean has strong ties to his homeland. His family is there. He owns property there. He is fending off job offers to return. The family of the Puerto Rican is bi-located, with homes and business interests in both Florida and Puerto Rico. The parents of the Indian have moved back to India to live there in their retirement. These ongoing connections between the U.S. and other lands are completely consistent with our globalized world but different from the pattern of the past.

As all of us seek to address the challenges of immigration, we should focus again on the impressive resources we have. Our experience as a nation of immigrants serves us well. We can continue to make a case for the resilience and absorptive capacity of the U.S. – if only we do not press prematurely for the melting pot as the only ideal we cherish. Even if in the very long run we will be a melting pot, in the shorter term we need to affirm the pluralism of our salad bowl or our mosaic.

I do not believe there are unmeltable ethnics. But I am convinced that we impoverish ourselves if we move quickly to insist on a least common denominator. Immigrants who remain loyal to the traditions of their country of origin still become fully American. Our challenge is to recognize them and value the way they are our fellow citizens even if their way is not identical to ours. That is how I would frame our new American conversation.

George Rupp (YDS, 1967) has been president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee since 2002. He was president of Columbia University from 1993-2002. He has also been president of Rice University and dean of the Harvard Divinity School. He is the author of five books, including Globalization Challenged: Commitment, Conflict, Community (Columbia University Press, 2006).

REFUGEES

By Adam Zagajewski

Bent under burdens which sometimes
can be seen and sometimes can't,
they trudge through mud or desert sands,
hunched, hungry,

silent men in heavy jackets,
dressed for all four seasons,
old women with crumpled faces,
clutching something – a child, the family
lamp, the last loaf of bread?

It could be Bosnia today,
Poland in September '39, France
eight months later, Germany in '45,
Somalia, Afghanistan, Egypt.

There's always a wagon or at least a wheelbarrow
full of treasures (a quilt, a silver cup,
the fading scent of home),
a car out of gas marooned in a ditch,
a horse (soon left behind), snow, a lot of snow,
too much snow, too much sun, too much rain,

and always that special slouch
as if leaning toward another, better planet,
with less ambitious generals,
less snow, less wind, fewer cannons,
less History (alas, there's no
such planet, just that slouch).

Shuffling their feet,
they move slowly, very slowly
toward the country of nowhere,
and the city of no one
on the river of never.

Dying to Live: Theology, Migration, and the Human Journey

By Daniel G. Groody, c.s.c.

A few years ago I was working in Mexico at a border outreach center that offered material and pastoral support to those on the move. Some were traveling northwards in search of better lives, and others had tried to enter the U.S. but failed and were deported back to Mexico.

One day a group of forty immigrants arrived in the center, sojourners who had hoped to reach the U.S. It had been a long night for them – and an even longer week. For three days they had crossed through the Arizona desert in temperatures that reach 120 degrees in the shade. Amid the challenges of the desert terrain – their personal vulnerability to everything from heat stroke to poisonous snakes – they had braved a perilous journey and tried to make their way to the U.S., often under the cover of darkness. They walked remote and diffuse trails that have taken the lives of thousands of immigrants – an estimated 300-500 annually since 1994.

Why were they willing to take such risks and leave their home country? When I asked them, some said they had relatives back home who needed medication they could not afford. Others said the \$3-\$5 a day they earned for a twelve-hour work day in Mexico was not enough to put much more than beans and tortillas on the table. Still others said potato chips had become a luxury they could no longer afford, and they could not stand to look their children in the eyes when they complained of hunger.

The Desert Ordeal

“We are migrating not because we want to but because we have to,” said Mario. “My family at home depends on me. I’m already dead in Mexico, and getting to the U.S. gives us the hope of living, even though I may die.”

But now they were back on the border after a week-long ordeal. While walking through the Arizona desert, they had suddenly heard a rumbling

sound on the horizon. Then a white laser-like light cut their world in two. Within moments a border patrol helicopter surrounded them and threw the group into chaos.

“So they circled around us and then rounded us up like we were cattle,” said Maria. “I said, no, dear God ... I’ve gone through so much sacrifice to come this far ... please don’t let them send us back where we came from.”

“It was an awful night,” added Gustavo. “But the worst part was when they started playing the song, ‘La Cucaracha’ over the helicopter intercom. I never felt so humiliated in my life, like I was the lowest form of life of earth, like I wasn’t even a human being.”

The story of Mario, Maria and Gustavo gives witness to their particular journey across the U.S.-Mexico border, but its dynamics are universal in scope. Today there are more than 200 million people migrating around the world, or one out of every thirty-five people on the planet, which is equivalent to the population of Brazil. Some 30-40 million of these are undocumented, 24 million are internally displaced and about 10 million are refugees.¹ For many reasons some scholars refer to these days as the “age of migration,” touching every area of human life.² The immigration issue underscores not only conflict at geographical borders but the turbulent crossroads between national security and human insecurity, national sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law, and citizenship and discipleship.³

Amid these contentious debates, much has been written about the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of immigration. But surprisingly very little has been written from a theological perspective, even less from the vantage point of the immigrants themselves. Yet the theme of migration is as old as the Scriptures. From the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt, from Israel's wandering in the desert to the experience of exile, from the holy family's flight into Egypt to the missionary activity of the Church, the very identity of the People of God is inextricably intertwined with stories of movement, risk, and hospitality.

Broken Borders: God's Migration

But what exactly can theology offer to this complex issue of immigration? Here I will highlight three Christian themes that touch directly on the migration debate and help us understand that crossing borders is at the heart of human life, divine revelation, and Christian identity. These three areas are the *Imago Dei* (the Image of God), the *Verbum Dei* (the Word of God), and the *Missio Dei* (the Mission of God).⁴

The notion of the *Imago Dei* emerges in the earliest pages of Scripture. We read in the first creation account that human beings are created in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). No text is more foundational or more significant in its implication for the immigration debate. It reveals that immigration is not just about a political "problem" but about real people. The *Imago Dei* is the core symbol of

The *Imago Dei* insists that we see immigrants not as problems to be solved but people to be healed and empowered.

human dignity, the infinite worth of every human being, and the divine attributes that are part of every human life, including will, memory, emotions, understanding, and the capacity to love and enter into relationship with others.

Listening to stories of immigrants along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as the borders between Slovakia-Ukraine, Malta-Libya, and others, I have discovered that a common denominator around the world among all who migrate is their experience of dehumanization.

I recently was speaking with a group of refugees in the Spanish-occupied territory of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast. They took me up to the mountains to meet some people from India, who were hiding out in cardboard shacks in the mountains.

The only place available to them was a small plot of land, where they built a cardboard shack, located above an animal shelter that had hundreds of dogs, which barked all through the night. "Even many of the animals here live better than we do here," said one refugee, part of a group from India that was seeking work in the European Union. "It is as if we are worth nothing to the people who live here, and if we die, it won't matter."

The insults they endure are not just a direct assault on their pride but on their very existence. Their vulnerability and sense of meaninglessness weigh heavily on them; they often feel that the most difficult part of being an immigrant is to be no one to anyone. The *Imago Dei* brings to the forefront the human costs embedded in the immigration equation, and it challenges a society more oriented towards profit than people to accept that the economy should be made for people and not people for the economy. It is a reminder that the moral health of an economy is measured by how well the most vulnerable are faring.⁵ The *Imago Dei* insists that we see immigrants not as problems to be solved but people to be healed and empowered.

Crossing Borders: Jesus the Refugee

The second theological notion that is central to the immigration debate is the *Verbum Dei*. It declares that God in Jesus crosses the divide that exists between divine life and human life. In the incarnation God migrates to the human race and, as Karl Barth notes, makes his way into the "far country."⁶ This far country is one of human discord and disorder, a place of division and dissension, a territory marked by death and the demeaning treatment of human beings.

The Gospel of Matthew says God in Jesus not only takes on human flesh and migrates into our world but actually becomes a refugee himself when he and his family flee political persecution and escape into Egypt (Matt 2:13-15). The divine takes on not just any human narrative but that of the most vulnerable among us. This movement toward the human race takes place not on the strength of any human initiative or human accomplishment but through divine gratuity. Walking the way of the cross, overcoming the forces of death that threaten human life, Jesus gives hope to all who go through the agony of economic injustice, family separation, cultural uprootedness, and even a premature and painful death. Certainly migrants who cross the deserts in search of more dignified lives see in the Jesus story their own story: he opens up a reason to hope despite the most hopeless of circumstances.

What impresses me most in speaking to migrants in the midst of their arduous journey is their ability to believe in God even in the most godless of situations. They speak about trusting in God even after all has been taken away, and they affirm God's goodness even when their lot has been marked by such suffering and pain.

Beyond Borders: A Civilization of Love

A third notion from theology that gives us a different way of understanding immigration is the *Missio Dei*. The mission of the Church is to proclaim a God of life and make our world more human by building up, in Pope Paul VI's words, the "civilization of love." In imitation of Jesus, it seeks to make real the practice of table fellowship. The significance of Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and social outcasts is that he crosses over the human borders that divide one human being from another. If the incarnation is about God crossing over the divine-human divide, the mission of the Church is to cross the human-human divide. It is fundamentally a mission of reconciliation, a realization that the borders that define countries may have some proximate value but are not ultimately those that define the body of Christ.

One of the most remarkable ritual expressions of this unity takes place each year near El Paso, Texas. In the dry, rugged, sun-scorched terrain where many immigrants lose their lives, bishops, priests, and lay people come together annually to celebrate the Eucharist. Like at other liturgies, they pray and worship together. Unlike other liturgies, a sixteen-foot-high iron fence divides this community in half, with one side in Mexico and the other in the U.S. Amid a desert of death and a culture of fear, this Eucharist is not just a tool for activism or social reform but a testimony of God's universal, undivided, and unrestricted love for all people. It speaks of the gift and challenge of Christian faith and the call to feed the world's hunger for peace, justice and reconciliation. In uniting people beyond the political constructions that divide us, it gives tangible expression to the moral demands of the Kingdom of God, the ethical possibilities of global solidarity, and the Christian vision of a journey of hope.

Immigration is arguably the most challenging issue of the new century, but this need not blind us to the core issues that lay at the heart of every one of us. How we respond to those most in need says more about who we are individually and collectively than it does about those on the move. Theology supplies a way of thinking about migration that keeps the human issues at the center of the debate

and reminds us that our own existence as a pilgrim people is migratory in nature.

Theology offers not just more information but a new imagination, one that reflects at its core what it means to be human before God and to live together in community. In seeking to overcome all that divides us in order to reconcile us in all our relationships, Christian discipleship reminds us that the more difficult walls to cross are the ones that exist in the hearts of each of us. Unable to cross this divide by ourselves, Christian faith rests ultimately in the one who migrated from heaven to earth, and through his death and resurrection, passed over from death to life. From a Christian perspective, the true aliens are not those who lack political documentation but those who have so disconnected themselves from their neighbor in need that they fail to see in the eyes of the stranger a mirror of themselves, the image of Christ (Matt 25:31-46), and the call to human solidarity.

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Notes

- 1 For more on these statistics, see the website for the International Organization for Migration, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/254>.
- 2 Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age Of Migration: International Population Movements In The Modern World* (The Guilford Press, 2003).
- 3 Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese, eds., *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2008)
- 4 This article is drawn in part from a longer essay that will appear in *Theological Studies* in 2009.
- 5 These themes are particularly brought out in *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, Washington, D.C: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986.
- 6 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV.1, "The Doctrine of Reconciliation," trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (T&T Clark International, 1956/2004), 157-210.

LOVING THY NEIGHBORHOOD AS THYSELF

A banner at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manhattan says: "Love your neighborhood as yourself," a sly variation on a Biblical mandate that guides Pastor Heidi Neumark's life.

In the changing neighborhoods of a changing America, it's not an easy or frictionless task. It takes creativity and intentionality to bring old members and new immigrants together across language, culture, and class and still thrive as "one church."

Under Neumark's guidance, it's working at Trinity church, 164 West 100th St., a small congregation that is 40 per cent white, 30 percent African American, 30 percent Hispanic.

"Any time you try to nurture a multicultural congregation, people imagine it will bring more problems – but in fact it is revitalizing," she says. "The church finds ways to go deeper into its common life."

Neumark is a pastor, writer, speaker, wife, mother, and advocate. Her empathy and imagination move to the rhythms of struggling people, vulnerable immigrants, and Bible heroes who point a way forward through the uncertainty. She spent nearly 20 years as pastor of a South Bronx church, bringing it back from near-extinction, healing a community of abused women, drug abusers, gang members, and people with AIDS. In her 2003 memoir, *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx* (Beacon Press), she writes: "When Teresa of Avila, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic and reformer, was seeking a structure for her treatise on prayer, she turned to the realm of architecture. Her book, *The Interior Castle*, traces a spiritual journey described as a progression through a series of mansions or rooms of a castle. When I first encountered this book in college, I aspired to follow Teresa's path, but to this day have never reached the innermost mansion of ecstatic rapture that seems as remote as some fairy-tale room of spun gold. Here in the South Bronx, I have traveled a different path. The only castle in the vicinity sells small, cheap hamburgers and onion rings. Nevertheless, like Teresa, we have engaged in an architecture of the spirit which has included construction with brick and mortar along with heart and soul."

For the last five years Neumark has been minister at Trinity church, which has its own dramatic neighborhood dynamics – public housing on one side, plush apartments off to the south, and scattered, cramped housing nearby for undocumented immigrants.

The church, founded by German immigrants in 1889, has known turbulent periods of adjustment to the city's changing demographics, but it has found ways to shape an identity of hospitality over the decades.

Today, the church is a welcoming congregation on many fronts (including its designation as a Reconciling in Christ congregation, extending a welcome to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals and couples as fully participating members).

But a challenge is to create unity despite language barriers under its own roof. It has launched several initiatives to underscore that unity practically and theologically. The church hosts separate weekly services in English and in Spanish, but nine times a year sponsors a single multi-

language service for everyone to attend. Over time, the congregation has learned a repertoire of bilingual liturgical songs, music that includes both English and Spanish lyrics. At special congregational dinners, translators are posted at tables so that English-only and Spanish-only speakers can converse. The church hosts occasions that match members one-on-one, with a translator, to get to know each other better.

Throwing in some fun doesn't hurt. The church sponsors games like Bible charades, which is played not with words but gestures, uniting people in the Biblical stories they know together whatever the language barrier. By now the neighborhood is well acquainted with Trinity's Palm Sunday outdoor procession, led by a mariachi band, and its mid-December Guadalupe celebration, which floods the sanctuary with blooming roses.

Neumark's advice to other congregations learning to be more welcoming in an altered cultural landscape: "Help individuals get to know each other. Help them get over stereotypes. Get to know people in the neighborhood. Listen to what they have to say. Instead of telling people to come to church, tell them you're there to learn about them."

Neumark grew up in New Jersey in a Lutheran family of German Lutheran heritage. She eventually came to see the Jesus of the Gospels as a figure who fearlessly crossed borders to offer radical hospitality. She went to seminary at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, spending a year of study in Latin America. There, she encountered base communities in Argentina and a theological mentor in Peru, liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez.

For decades now, Neumark has framed her work by looking for resurrection and hope in the experiences of poor people, and nudging churches to become emotionally open to the stories of people on the periphery. She takes inspiration from the immigrants and "resident aliens" in the Bible itself – Abraham and Sarah leaving their land for a future guided only by faith; Moses the child stranger in Midian; Ruth a field-working migrant grateful for the gleanings left on the ground; Jesus and his family seeking haven and hospitality on foreign frontiers.

In *Getting on Message: Challenging the Christian Right from the Heart of the Gospel* (edited by Peter Laarman and published in 2006 by Beacon Press), she reflects on her journey as a witness to the turbulence of these days and the Bible's unblinking clarity: "We don't label our biblical ancestors as suspect strangers or terrorists; we honor them and love them as foremothers and forefathers of our faith. We regularly welcome them into our churches and homes. We hail their stories as holy and introduce them to our children and our grandchildren. But what if they appeared today? What would happen to Moses and his band at the Arizona border? Would Joseph have remained in detention until he was deported to perish with his family in the famine?"

—Ray Waddle



The Lessons of Hyperpowers and the Future of National Identity

By Amy Chua

The questions — so harsh, insistent, and ambivalent — erupt across the political spectrum of debate: Are too many Third World, non-English-speaking immigrants destroying our national identity? Or, on the contrary, are they part of the continuing American story? How many immigrants must we turn away — or does it contradict our national values to shut them out? Are we losing our competitive edge because our immigration policy is dysfunctional?

For the large majority, Democrats and Republicans alike, these questions are painful, with no easy answers. At some level, most of us cherish our legacy as a nation of immigrants. But are we, as the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington warns, in danger of losing our core values and devolving “into a loose confederation of ethnic, racial, cultural, and political groups, with little or nothing in common apart from their location in the territory of what had been the U.S. of America”?

My parents arrived in the U.S. in 1961, so poor that they couldn’t afford heat their first winter. I grew up speaking only Chinese at home (for every English word accidentally uttered, my sister and I got one whack of the chopsticks). Today, my father is a professor at Berkeley, and I’m a professor at Yale Law School. As the daughter of immigrants, a grateful beneficiary of America’s tolerance and opportunity, I could not be more pro-immigrant.

Nevertheless, I think Huntington has a point.

Around the world today, nations face violence and instability as a result of their increasing pluralism and diversity. Across Europe, immigration has resulted in unassimilated, largely Muslim enclaves that are hotbeds of unrest and even terrorism. With Muslims poised to become a majority in Amsterdam and elsewhere within a decade, major West European cities could undergo a profound transformation. Not surprisingly, virulent anti-immigration parties are on the rise.

Not long ago, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union disintegrated when their national identities proved too weak to bind together diverse peoples. Iraq is the latest example of how crucial national identity is. So far, it has found no overarching identity strong enough to unite its Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis.

The U.S. is in no danger of imminent disintegration. But this is because it has been so successful, at least since the Civil War, in forging a national identity — a commitment to values of tolerance, religious pluralism, enterprise, opportunity, and equality under the law — strong enough to hold together its widely divergent communities. But we should not take this unifying identity for granted. A new wave of questions presses upon us: Is our national identity today strong enough to absorb millions of new immigrants? Is immigration altering that identity? Do we have the glue it takes to keep us together?

The history of the world’s hyperpowers has much to teach us about the dynamics of immigration, the importance of tolerance, and what happens when the glue loses its grip.

Throughout history there have been only a handful of hyperpowers — nations that achieved such economic and military preeminence and projected their power on such a vast scale that they became world dominant. The list includes some, such as Rome and Great Britain, that are well known. Others are less so. The first hyperpower was ancient Persia, founded in 550 BCE by Cyrus the Great, which ruled

over a third of the world's population at the height of its power. Another was the great Mongol Empire founded by Genghis Khan, which in the thirteenth century conquered half the known world. The U.S. is the latest member of this exclusive club.

The Secret Weapon: Tolerance

Examined together, hyperpowers reveal a remarkable pattern. For all their enormous differences, every hyperpower in history was strikingly tolerant and pluralistic, at least judged by the standards of its time. In fact, tolerance was in every case vital to the achievement of hegemony. Conversely, the decline of hyperpowers has repeatedly coincided with xenophobia. In other words, the secret to world dominance is tolerance.

"Tolerance" in this context does not mean equality or even respect in the modern, human rights sense of the word. Instead, tolerance here simply

The U.S. is in a fierce global competition to attract the world's best high-tech scientists and engineers – most of whom are not white Christians.

means letting very different kinds of people – regardless of ethnicity, religion, or skin color – live, work, and prosper, even if for self-interested reasons.

Why is tolerance necessary for world dominance? Simple. To dominate vast portions of the globe, not just the bits close to home, a society must be at the forefront of global technological, military, and economic frontiers. And at any given historical moment, the most valuable human capital, whether in the form of intelligence, physical strength, skill, knowledge, networks, or creativity, is never found within any one ethnic or religious group. To pull away from its rivals on a global scale, a society must have the best and the brightest, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or background.

Persia and Rome, for instance, accepted warriors of every ethnicity and religion into their fold, unlike the ancient Greeks who were fixated on "pure blood." Thus, Persians and Romans built the mightiest armies of their time. Tolerance was similarly crucial for the Mongols. Only by absorbing the best human capital from conquered lands, particularly Chinese engineers capable of building massive siege machines, were the Mongols able to overcome the great walled cities of Europe and the Middle East.

In the modern era, as commerce and innovation replaced plunder and expropriation as the engines of wealth, tolerance assumed a new form – immigra-

tion. Allowing people in replaced conquest as the most effective way for a society to incorporate the world's best thinkers and laborers.

Today's U.S. is the quintessential example of this modern model. Relative tolerance, immigrant labor, and talent propelled U.S. growth and influence, from westward expansion in the nineteenth century, to industrial juggernaut and victory in the twentieth-century atomic race, to today's staggering preeminence in the digital age.

National transformation and national identity have worked together. The experience of the 1800s and early 1900s was pivotal. Between 1820 and 1914, the U.S. absorbed the largest human migration in world history – more than thirty million people arrived. Three crucial features made nineteenth-century U.S. society welcoming to people of remarkably diverse backgrounds. Its freewheeling religious pluralism not only permitted newcomers to worship as they wanted but sparked brand-new faiths. (By the twentieth century, at least five "homegrown" religions had been founded – Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalism and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) The nation's democratic system of government was capable of giving newcomers some actual political influence, at least at the local level. And its rollicking free market demanded labor, rewarded mechanical skill, and provided unprecedented opportunity to the enterprising, driving the nation's technological and military superiority.

Too Much Diversity?

These three forms of tolerance – religious, economic, and political – were so effective in drawing in newcomers that by the mid-twentieth century the U.S. enjoyed a sheer manpower advantage over its most important rivals. In 1816, America's population was just 8.5 million, compared to Russia's 51.2 million. By 1950, the U.S. population topped 150 million, while Russia's was about 109 million.

The secret to our success for more than 200 years has been our ability to attract the best and the brightest from all over the world. But the U.S. formula for success is now in danger. As with previous hyperpowers, the U.S. may have hit a tipping point where "too much diversity" becomes a liability, triggering conflict, strife, and backlash.

The greatest empire in history, ancient Rome, collapsed when its cultural and political glue dissolved, and peoples who had long thought of themselves as Romans turned against the empire. In part, this fragmentation occurred because of a massive influx of immigrants from a very different culture.

The “barbarians” who sacked Rome were Germanic immigrants who never fully assimilated.

A backlash may now be occurring in the U.S. Increasing numbers of Americans are calling for a crackdown on immigration. Highly skilled workers from Europe and Asia find it difficult or impos-

Immigration advocates are too often guilty of an uncritical political correctness that avoids hard questions about national identity and imposes no obligations on immigrants.

sible to obtain employment visas. Television talking heads often feature stories that cast a negative light on immigrants, and scholars such as Huntington warn ominously about the danger posed to the U.S. by Hispanic immigration.

This anti-immigration turn poses a serious economic threat to the U.S.. Last year, Microsoft opened a massive research and development center in Canada, in part because foreign engineers can more easily obtain employment visas there. As Google’s Vice President for People Laszlo Bock put it, “Every day we find ourselves unable to pursue highly qualified candidates because there are not enough H-1B visas.”¹

Americanus Rex

There is an even larger danger – a threat to the U.S.’s international standing and national security. It has become *de rigueur* to compare the U.S. to Rome. But in at least one respect, the analogy is badly misplaced. Ancient Rome had an advantage in that it could make the peoples it conquered from Europe to Africa subjects or even citizens of the Roman Empire. The U.S. can do no such thing. Because it’s a democracy, the U.S. does not try or want to make foreign populations its subjects – and certainly not its citizens. When U.S. officials speak of bringing democracy to the Middle East, they are not envisioning Iraqis voting in the next U.S. presidential election.

As a result, millions if not billions of people all over the world today feel dominated by – but no connection or loyalty to – the U.S. This is a recipe for anti-Americanism, which is not only bad for business but, in its extreme form, breeds terrorism.

A relatively open immigration policy is one of the only effective ways for the U.S. to forge goodwill and close ties with the world it dominates. Through legal immigration, the U.S. offers opportunities to more than a million foreigners annually. Millions more think of the U.S. as a home to their relatives

and a place they might someday also live. No one believes that immigration should be left unchecked or that national security should be compromised in the name of friendship or economic progress. But a xenophobic anti-immigration turn is a surefire way to bring down the American hyperpower.²

The anti-immigration camp makes at least two critical mistakes.

First, it neglects the indispensable role that immigrants have played in building American wealth and power. In the nineteenth century, the U.S. would never have become an industrial and agricultural powerhouse without the millions of poor Irish, Polish, Italian, and other newcomers who mined coal, laid rail, and milled steel. European immigrants led to the U.S. winning the race for the atomic bomb. Today, American leadership in the digital revolution – so central to our military and economic preeminence – owes an enormous debt to immigrant contributions. Andrew Grove (cofounder of Intel), Vinod Khosla (Sun Microsystems) and Sergey Brin (Google) are immigrants. Between 1995 and 2005, 52 percent of Silicon Valley start-ups had one key immigrant founder. Vikram S. Pundit’s appointment to the helm of CitiGroup last year meant that fourteen chief executives of Fortune 100 companies are foreign-born. The U.S. is in a fierce global competition to attract the world’s best high-tech scientists and engineers – most of whom are not white Christians.

Second, anti-immigration talking heads forget that their own scapegoating vitriol will, if anything, drive immigrants farther from the U.S. mainstream. One reason we don’t have Europe’s enclaves is our unique success in forging an ethnically and religiously neutral national identity, uniting individuals of all backgrounds. This is America’s glue, and anti-immigration ideologues unwittingly imperil it.

Nevertheless, immigration naysayers also have a point. America’s glue can be subverted by too much tolerance. Immigration advocates are too often guilty of an uncritical political correctness that avoids hard questions about national identity and imposes no obligations on immigrants. For these well-meaning idealists, there is no such thing as too much diversity.

The right thing for the U.S. to do – and the best way to keep Americans in favor of immigration – is to take national identity seriously while maintaining our heritage as a land of opportunity.

Amy Chua is a professor at Yale Law School. Her books include Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – And Why They Fall (Doubleday, 2007) and World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability (Anchor, 2004).

Notes

1 The U.S. should overhaul its admission priorities. Since 1965, the chief admission criterion has been family reunification. This was a welcome replacement for the ethnically discriminatory quota system that preceded it. But once the brothers and sisters of a current U.S. resident get in, they can sponsor their own extended families. In 2006, more than 800,000 immigrants were admitted on this basis. By contrast, only about 70,000 immigrants were admitted on the basis of employment skills, with an additional 65,000 temporary visas granted to highly skilled workers.

This is backwards. Apart from nuclear families (spouse, minor children, possibly parents), the special preference for family members should be drastically reduced. As soon as my father got citizenship, his relatives in the Philippines asked him to sponsor them. Soon, his mother, brother, sister and sister-in-law were also U.S. citizens or permanent residents. This was nice for my family, but, frankly, there was nothing especially fair about it. Instead, the immigration system should reward ability and be keyed to the country's labor needs – skilled or unskilled, technological or agricultural. In particular, we should significantly increase the number of visas for highly skilled workers, putting them on a fast track for citizenship.

2 I believe it is important to stress that immigrants should embrace the nation's civic virtues. It took my parents years to see the importance of participating in the larger community. When I was in third grade, my mother signed me up for Girl Scouts. I think she liked the uniforms and merit badges, but when I told her that I was picking up trash and visiting soup kitchens, she was horrified.

For many immigrants, only family matters. Even when immigrants get involved in politics, they tend to focus on protecting their own and protesting discrimination. That they can do so is one of the great virtues of U.S. democracy. But a mindset based solely on taking care of your own factionalizes our society. Like all Americans, immigrants have a responsibility to contribute to the social fabric. It's up to each immigrant community to fight off an enclave mentality and give back to their new country. It's not healthy for Chinese to hire only Chinese, or Koreans only Koreans. By contrast, the free health clinic set up by Muslim-Americans in Los Angeles – serving the entire poor community – is a model to emulate. Immigrants are integrated at the moment when they realize that their success is linked with everyone else's.

THE NEWEST WAVE OF CITIZENS

Last year, 660,477 foreign-born persons became naturalized U.S. citizens, a drop by 6 percent since 2006, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The leading countries of birth of new citizens were Mexico (122,258), India (46,871), Philippines (38,830), China (33,134), and Vietnam (27,921).

Despite the overall decrease, the number of Mexican nationals who became American citizens increased by 46 percent between 2006 and 2007.

One reason for the increase, according to some media reports, was the stepped-up efforts of advocacy groups to encourage Latinos to apply for citizenship.

Overall, DHS says the number of naturalization applications nearly doubled last year, jumping from 730,000 in 2006 to 1.4 million in 2007.

Homeland Security defines naturalization as the process by which U.S. citizenship is conferred upon foreign citizens or nationals. Requirements set by Congress “specify that a foreign national must be at least 18 years of age; has been granted lawful permanent residence in the U.S.; and has resided in the country continuously for at least five years. Additional requirements include the ability to speak, read, and write the English language; knowledge of the U.S. government and history; and good moral character.”

Once naturalized, “foreign-born citizens enjoy nearly all the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities that the Constitution gives to native-born U.S. citizens, including the right to vote. Naturalized citizens can also apply for a U.S. passport to travel overseas and receive U.S. government protection and assistance when abroad.”

Source: Department of Homeland Security

RETURN TO MANKILLER FLATS, OKLAHOMA

FOR CHEROKEE CHIEF WILMA MANKILLER

By Mary Crescenzo

Another Trail of Tears,
from our Adair, Oklahoma farm to San Francisco,
moving us again, to live in a hotel
and work a strange land.

Objects of the blue-veined are foreign to native hands,
telephones and elevators, skates and hula hoops and the TV.
My sister and I read aloud, imitating sounds of those who fit,
becoming fluent in the San Franciscan tongue.

The memories of pie suppers, my mother's garden,
the ever present stranger in greater need
whom Dad would bring home,
now provide my direction on the return trail.

There have been other trails, of broken bones
and lifeless limbs, ones of crutches and determination,
others lining the heart, wrapped and suspended between trees.

Further trails of tears, bleached by erosion
from white-eyed stares, once inroads forged by Cherokee women
who ruled the tribe before our traditions
were blanched along the way.

On this land, still marked with familiar footprints, I return
to fight a war, not on the battlefield but in the empty pockets
and bellies of those whose spirits walked before.

The Latino Transformation of American Evangelicalism

By Samuel Rodriguez

The most powerful force transforming the narrative of twenty-first century U.S. evangelicalism lies embedded in a critical domestic public policy debate – immigration. Immigrants, particularly Hispanic immigrants, stand poised to reshape the Christian experience by broadening the evangelical agenda, inspiring a centrist political agenda and serving as ambassadors of a new public Christian vision here and globally – a “Kingdom Culture” ethos that reconciles righteousness and justice.

Sheer demographic numbers speak to its impact on America’s evangelical community: Hispanics are its fastest-growing group. Consider these statistics from the U.S. Census. The Hispanic population is now the largest minority group in the country – in 2005, 42.7 million, or 14 percent of the nation’s total population. This estimate does not include the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico or the entire undocumented population. Add those two groups and the total estimate stands at approximately 60 million.*

A Progressive New Turn

This community’s future growth capacity is dramatic: 75 percent of Hispanics are under 40 years of age and 34 percent are 18 or younger. This trend alone should force a redefinition of the priorities and strategies of church evangelism. By next year, one out of every six Americans will be of Hispanic

descent, and by 2020, the Latino population will total roughly 102.6 million people or 24 percent of the population. The changing ethnic landscape requires churches to reach out to this community, not as a matter of choice but as a prerequisite for survival and relevance.

This demographic juggernaut will in turn reshape the future of Christianity in North America – and the tone it sets will be socially moderate, fiscally progressive. The emerging generation of Hispanic American evangelicals looks more like a hybrid of Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr. than the Fallwells, Robertsons, and Bauers of the previous era.

Historically, white evangelicals built a public identity around a two-theme platform agenda – sanctity-of-life and marriage. On the other side of the aisle, progressive evangelicals and black Protestants coalesced around socio-economic issues such as health care, education, and poverty-alleviation. Brown Christians, particularly Hispanic evangelicals, are poised to redraw the moral map with a commitment to reconcile both sides, working within a framework of righteousness *and* justice.

Both Republicans and Democrats stand to gain if they endeavor to understand the ethos, and the pathos, of this emerging hybrid generation. The new evangelicals come from the barrios of L.A. and the

* Hispanics are an ethnically and racially diverse population. For example, in 2005, according to the U.S. Census, the Latino population on the U.S. mainland was composed of Mexican-Americans (64 percent), Puerto Ricans (10 percent), Cubans (3 percent), Salvadorans (3 percent), and Dominicans (3 percent). The remaining 17 percent are of some other Central American, South American, or other Latino origin.

housing projects in Chicago more than from rural America. Forging the twin themes of righteousness and justice – not “either/or” – these evangelicals embrace a Kingdom Culture Biblical worldview. It has ramifications for social policy. They stand committed to eradicating al-Qaeda as long as we equally commit ourselves to eradicating AIDS. They support a War on Terror only if it accompanies a Global War on Poverty.

On cultural issues, the Graham-King hybrid generation stands unequivocally as a vigorous pro-life movement that extends from womb to tomb. This new pro-life movement does not regard health care,

Many white evangelicals seem to adhere more to the rhetoric and philosophies of Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Lou Dobbs than to the Biblical guidance of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

education, and poverty-alleviation as secondary issues to sanctity-of-life and marriage but rather as top-tier extensions of a truly pro-life platform.

With respect to marriage, the hybrid generation defends traditional marriage while simultaneously repudiating homophobia and supporting legislation that protects all citizens from discrimination in the workplace regardless of sexual orientation and secures the civil rights of all Americans. As a result, both political parties will be pressed to gravitate towards a centrist platform in order to engage this emerging generation of evangelical voters.

“Hispanics will bring their cultural values to bear on evangelical Christianity with the influence of their collective worldview,” Albert Reyes, president of Buckner Children and Family Services, based in Dallas, Texas, told me in an interview. “Latino evangelical Christians will be more interested in the welfare of the community at large than their own personal welfare. Hispanics will help evangelical congregations gravitate toward a balanced application of the gospel to include issues of social justice and equality for everyone in the community. Social issues will take center stage in congregations because the Scripture bears witness to Jesus’ focus on the poor, the prisoner, the blind, and the oppressed.”



The current demographic drama is happening against a historic backdrop of change in Latin American Christianity. The Latino church is still in the midst of its own Protestant Reformation. The first serious Protestant impact in largely Roman Catholic Latin America came via the evangelical wing of the church – particularly the Pentecostal movement during its twentieth-century surge. The trajectory of this new reformation is anything but predictable, and its effects on church mission could have global ramifications.

Hispanic missionaries, for instance, are focusing on such places as India, Africa, and the Middle East. Why? In light of the current geopolitical environment, Latinos are being embraced with less trepidation than are North American Anglos.

In the U.S., meanwhile, the protracted immigration debate continues to threaten or postpone cross-cultural partnerships. Instead, the socio-political climate is inundated with xenophobic and nativist rhetoric. In the pews of America's Hispanic churches on any given Sunday sit two types of worshipers – those who are in this country legally and those who are not. The issues surrounding immigration

not only affect the dynamics of ministry but also catapult the church into the political battles of the moment.

In this climate, the churches stand at a crossroads. As raids continue, as deportations increase, and as cities continue to pass ordinances legitimating racial profiling, churches may be tempted to diminish or halt outreach to this targeted group in order to avoid the possible legal consequences. As a result, Latino immigrants may start avoiding churches – particularly those led by non-Hispanics. If so, major denominations such as the Assemblies of God, which in the last few years has experienced unprecedented growth because of its Hispanic congregations, may lose a significant portion of their fellowships.

Silence in the Church

Thus almost every major evangelical denomination, fellowship, or network has a stake in the Hispanic community. How pastors and leaders respond in this hour may determine whether Hispanics continue to forge strategic relationships with the non-Hispanic church – or isolate themselves even more,

Wild West: Casas de cambio establishments change pesos for dollars near the international bridge in Brownsville, Texas.



confirming the old paradigm of Sunday morning as the most segregated time in America.

Although we can all agree that the U.S. needs to protect its borders from the entry of individuals who want to do us harm, the question we must confront as pastors and church leaders is what we do with the undocumented or illegal immigrants currently here. Up until now, the evangelical churches in the U.S. have mostly stood silent on this issue. The reason: We evangelicals have historically resonated with the conservative-driven tenets of law and order within our society.

Yet many white evangelicals seem to adhere more to the rhetoric and philosophies of Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and Lou Dobbs than to the Biblical guidance of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. At times, white evangelicals seem to champion a warped convergence of nativism and spirituality, where being an American trumps Christian identity.

Biblical Directive

However, the issue of immigration demands that the church help reconcile this society founded on the Judeo-Christian value system, with the pillars of law and order and the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Only the church can bring these three elements together, and pastors and leaders must take the lead.

Does the Bible provide any guidance with respect to immigration? Biblical principles suggest a comprehensive solution. Leviticus 19:33-34 resounds: "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" (NIV).

Jesse Miranda, Global Chairman of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, sees the Biblical mandate of reconciliation as pivotal to changing the debate: "For too long the extremists have hijacked the issue of immigration and made it a rallying cry for nativism and racism. We do have a legitimate immigration situation that requires our attention. However the debate must convert to a dialogue, and reason must trump rhetoric. Racism is ultimately a spiritual problem, and it is only right the church become involved in seeking reconciliation."

We cannot deny the fact that the immigration issue has potential either to further polarize our society – or enrich our narrative. Hope embraces the latter. Hope that the Spirit of compassion, love, and tolerance stemming from a Judeo-Christian ethos

embedded in our collective narrative will prevail and embrace righteousness and justice for all. Hope that the Christian community will rise up, speak vigorously from the pulpit about reconciliation to all corridors of our society, and demand an end to extreme ideologies from all sides.

Looking to the example of U.S. history, whenever despair and desperation coalesced to threaten the defeat of reason, oracles of truth rose up to articulate the moral imperatives of practical, graceful liberation. From the revolutionary war, to the abolitionist movement, to the struggle for civil rights, our history has witnessed writers, scholars, and clergy make the case for truthful values compatible with a Biblical worldview.

Hispanic immigration will transform American Christianity by forging a platform of righteousness and justice, injecting the prophetic element of the Gospels, and activating a call to goodwill and love of neighbor. This Hispanic immigrant Christian sensibility stands committed to a Kingdom Culture DNA – multi-ethnic, multi-generational, Biblical, and just. It declares the Kingdom of God is not red state or blue state, native or immigrant, conservative or liberal, Republican or Democrat, but is defined by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is a generation committed to accompany Billy Graham to the Cross and to sit with Dr. King at the Master's table.

The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez is the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the country's largest Hispanic Christian organization, serving 16 million born-again Christians and approximately 18,000 churches.

RENEWALIST AND RISING: LATINO RELIGION

A major survey of Hispanic religious attitudes in the United States, released last year, concludes Latinos are transforming religion in the U.S., in part because they practice a distinctive, spirit-filled form of Christianity.

Conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, the detailed survey says Pentecostal and charismatic expressions of faith are a key attribute of worship for Hispanics in all the major religious traditions – far more so than among non-Latinos.

Catholicism, with its large numbers of Latinos, will be especially affected.

Moreover, the growth of the Hispanic population is leading to the emergence of Latino-oriented churches across the country.

“These two defining characteristics – the prevalence of spirit-filled religious expressions and of ethnic-oriented worship – combined with the rapid growth of the Hispanic population leave little doubt that a detailed understanding of religious faith among Latinos is essential to understanding the future of this population as well as the evolving nature of religion in the United States,” the survey reported.

Among the findings from the executive summary:

- More than two-thirds of Hispanics (68 percent) identify themselves as Roman Catholics. The next largest category, at 15 percent, is made up of born-again or evangelical Protestants. Another 8 percent do not identify with any religion. About a third of all Catholics in the U.S. are now Latinos, a number likely to climb for decades.
- Renewalist Christianity, which places special emphasis on God’s ongoing, day-to-day intervention in human affairs through the person of the Holy Spirit, is having a major impact on Hispanic Christianity. More than half of Hispanic Catholics identify themselves as charismatics, compared with only an eighth of non-Hispanic Catholics. Though committed to the church and its traditional teachings, many of these Latino Catholics say they have witnessed or experienced occurrences typical of spirit-filled or renewal movements, including divine healing and direct revelations from God. The renewal movement is a powerful presence among Latino Protestants too. More than half of Hispanic Protestants identify with spirit-filled religion, compared with about a fifth of non-Hispanic Protestants.
- Two-thirds of Latino worshipers attend churches with Latino clergy, services in Spanish, and heavily Latino congregations.
- For most Latinos, regardless of religious tradition, God is an active force in everyday life. Most Latinos pray every day, most have a religious object in their home, and most attend a religious service at least once a month. Religious Latinos largely believe that miracles are performed today just as in ancient times.
- Conversions are a key ingredient in the development of evangelicalism among Hispanics. Half of Hispanic evangelicals (51 percent) are converts; 43 percent of Hispanic evangelicals overall are former Catholics.
- Two-thirds of Hispanics say that their religious beliefs are an important influence on their political thinking. More than half say houses of worship should address the social and political questions of the day. By nearly a two-to-one margin, Latinos say that there has been too little expression of religious faith by political leaders rather than too much.
- Religious affiliation and church attendance are strongly related to political ideology and stances on a variety of social and public policy issues among Latinos. Latino evangelicals appear significantly more conservative than Catholics on social issues, foreign policy issues, and even in their attitudes toward the plight of the poor. Catholics, in turn, are somewhat more conservative than seculars when it comes to gay marriage, government-guaranteed health care, and increases in government services.
- Latino evangelicals are twice as likely as Latino Catholics to be Republicans. That is a far greater difference than exists among whites. The Democratic Party holds a nearly three-to-one advantage among Latino Catholics who are eligible to vote. Because the Latino electorate is mostly Catholic (63 percent), Catholics represent the core of Democratic support among Latinos. Party identification among Latino evangelicals is more narrowly divided and appears to slightly favor the Republican Party. Among Hispanic eligible voters who are evangelicals, 37 percent say they consider themselves Republicans and 32 percent say they are Democrats.

Source: “Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion,” a survey produced by the Pew Hispanic Center. See Pewforum.org/surveys/Hispanics.

LIKE A PRISONER OF SOFT WORDS (2)

By C. D. Wright

We walk under the wires and the birds resettle.
We know where we're going but have not made up our mind
which way we will take to get there.
If we pass by the palmist's she can read our wayward lines.
We may drop things along the way that substantiate our having been here.
We will not be able to transmit any of these feelings verbatim.
By the time we reach the restaurant one of us is angry.
Here a door gives in to a courtyard
overlooking a ruined pool.
We suspect someone has followed one or the other of us.
We touch the spot on our shirt where the ink has seeped.
The lonely outline of the host is discerned near an unlit sconce.
As guests we are authorized not to notice.
We drop some cash on the tablecloth.
We lack verisimilitude but we press on with intense resolve.
At the border, under a rim of rock, the footbridge.
Salt cedars have grown over the path.
The water table is down.
And we cannot see who is coming, the pollos and their pollero,
the migra, the mules, the Minutemen, the women
who wash for the other women al otro lado.
Or the murdered boy herding his goats after school. 6:27,
the fell of dark, not day.

Editor's Note:

This poem appears in Wright's new volume of poetry, *Rising, Falling, Hovering* (Copper Canyon Press). In an author's note, she explains her use of some words found in the poem. Pollo (Spanish for "chicken") is a term used for undocumented immigrants. Pollero ("chicken farmer") is a term for their smugglers or guides (also called coyotes). Migra is a term for border control agents. Al otro lado means "on the other side." In her note Wright also adds: "A gruesome description of the human body's stage-by-stage collapse in failed crossings is found in *Devil's Highway* (2004) by Luis Alberto Urrea."



No More Deaths:

An Interview with John Fife

The Rev. John Fife is a retired Presbyterian minister, human rights advocate and a founding patriarch of the Sanctuary Movement. Between 1982-92, some 15,000 Central Americans came through his church, Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Ariz., seeking safe harbor or assistance after fleeing civil war and death squads in their home countries.

His church's action helped spawn a movement of 560 congregations that aided Central American refugees and immigrants with immediate support, moving them to safer places, in some cases Canada. By the mid-1980s, the federal government sent spies into his church to gather evidence against Fife's efforts, and in 1986 he was convicted with seven others on alien-smuggling charges. He served a five-year probation sentence, a turn of events that never interrupted his work as Southside pastor or as activist churchman.

In a new century of immigration controversy, Fife helped start the Samaritan Patrol along the Mexico-Arizona border in 2002. It aims to relieve the suffering of migrants by offering them food and water and advocating for a more humane border policy. Samaritan Patrol is now part of a larger border-monitoring organization, No More Deaths. Fife is also an honorary board member of BorderLinks, which focuses on border education and globalization issues. He voices support for the New Sanctuary Movement, which emerged in 2006 when Catholic Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles said he would instruct priests and others in his archdiocese to disregard the law if Congress makes it a crime to help illegal immigrants.

Now 68, Fife was raised in Western Pennsylvania and studied at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The son of a Presbyterian minister, he was inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and took part in the civil rights movement. In 1992 he was elected moderator of the 204th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

He retired in 2005 after 35 years at Southside church and still lives in the Tucson area. He spoke with Reflections editor Ray Waddle in September 2008.

REFLECTIONS: Where does your work with Samaritan Patrol take you now?

FIFE: We take volunteers to the deadly critical areas along the Mexican border, about 15 miles north of there, where immigrants are running out of water and are in distress. We take the volunteers on patrol, walking the migrant trails, sometimes in 110-degree heat, putting down food and water along the trails. The migrants know we are out there. We label the jugs and date them, and later we find the empties. The migrants just hope to make it somehow by the grace of God. We've done helicopter medical evacuations. We find migrants along the border in every condition you can imagine – dehydration, kidney and organ damage, people whose feet have turned to hamburger after a two-days' walk in the desert heat.

This is a humanitarian aid effort, with direct aid to the victims, but it is also a form of resistance to violations of human rights that government policy promotes. Because of militarization of the borders, migrants are now funneled into dangerous, life-threatening regions where they try to cross. It's a kind of free market system. They risk their lives, and if they survive and find work, they stay. Or they die. Or don't find work and go home. It's Darwinian: only the fittest survive to work in our economy.

This is why we have to speak out and try to get border enforcement policy changed and put an end to all this suffering. We need a policy that legally documents the work force we need.

REFLECTIONS: What shapes our policies today? How has the political climate changed since the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s?

FIFE: Remember, the Reagan Administration declared an amnesty in 1986. Compare that to now – the climate has shifted 180 degrees. I haven't seen anything like this before: political leaders who talk about immigration are using bigotry and fear and hate speech in ways we haven't seen since the 1950s in the segregated South. Back then, politicians had to "out-seg" (as in, segregation) their opponents in order to get elected. It's that kind of thing now – a race to the bottom. On immigration, what politicians talk about – if they talk about immigration at all – is border security, more walls, more fences, more troops, more surveillance, more militarization of the borders to keep out the illegal aliens.

REFLECTIONS: During the 2008 presidential campaign neither candidate talked about it much.

FIFE: No one is touching it. What we do not confront is the fact that Americans are looking at immigration primarily through fear. We view it through the lens of 9/11 and homeland security, and that's the tragedy. We don't see immigration as the way to meet our economic needs and serve the labor force. We don't see the devastating effect of free trade on small and subsistence farmers in Mexico and Central America.

No one is talking about the fundamental cause of this whole issue – and that is the failure of the federal government to provide legal documental means for the work force we've needed to expand this U.S. economy over the last 30 years. The immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, have benefited our country. We've got to be able to document that. And we ought to document the undocumented workers who are here already and who are part of our communities, our churches, our schools.

REFLECTIONS: You mentioned fear. What makes fear a stubborn national force? It surely predates 9/11.

FIFE: I think fear is indigenous to empires. That's been the history of empires, and the American empire is susceptible too. We always need an enemy. Every empire needs a massive military machine and the expenditures to go with it, and those things need to be justified. A well-defined enemy helps to justify the trappings of empire. It doesn't matter who the enemy is as long as there is one. And so we move from one fear to another, one enemy to another. After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, we were in a desperate search for new enemies. What we came up with were illegal aliens and gay and lesbian folks. But they couldn't justify the military arsenal. Then after 9/11, we were off and running.

REFLECTIONS: Do you see any stirrings for change on immigration reform? Surely not everyone is silent.

FIFE: The thing people need to understand is: there is extraordinary consensus on immigration reform among the major religious communions in North America. Look at the "Interfaith Statement in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform." It calls on the government to give working immigrants a chance to become legal residents and protect the borders with policies that are consistent with humanitarian values. Supporters include Christian communions, Jewish and Muslim organizations – an amazing consensus. Immigration reform is also supported by major business, labor, and Hispanic organizations. They're all on the same page.

But there's a problem. The problem that faith communities have is that such statements and policies face a major roadblock – the clergyperson at the congregational level. Fearing division in the flock, they don't tell their congregations about the social policy witness that is being recommended by the leadership. This was dramatized by the run-up to the war in Iraq. The leadership of nearly every Christian denomination said the war is immoral and illegal and we must not support it. But the congregations didn't hear that.

So that's a major challenge in our denominations and seminaries: How can we go about aiding young ministers and local priests, pastors, and rabbis so they are able to preach the faith and also help people understand what the faith requires in its social witness?

REFLECTIONS: What advice would you give a young pastor who is trying to take up this touchy issue with the congregation?

FIFE: I would tell them: pay attention to how passionate people are about this on all sides and try to understand the emotions. And the advice I have is the same as it would be for any controversy: stick with the Biblical texts and make it clear what the Biblical witness is. The whole of the Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament texts are clear and unanimous. They don't leave a lot of wiggle room. As a rabbi friend once told me, God says only once in the Hebrew Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," because God figured we could understand that one. But God says thirty-six times that you have to love the alien in your midst; remember that the Israelites were once aliens in Egypt. Love the alien as one of your own – God knew people would have trouble with that one.

Then you get to Jesus, who in Matthew 25 lays out the criteria by which we will be judged, and it includes, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...” And in the Letter to the Hebrews (13:2), it says, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Most translations prefer stranger, but the Greek lexicon clearly suggests that the word refers to someone who is not a citizen of the country. Alien is the better word.

So, I would say to a minister: ask questions, read the texts, make the congregation look at what the texts say.

REFLECTIONS: How did you come to embrace this cause years ago?

FIFE: I was pastor in a borderlands community in Tucson. The context was clear. This was when Central American refugees were escaping the death squads, yet our government was deporting them back to those countries and back to those death squads. Personally it took some prodding from a Quaker friend before I could really see the situation. My friend reminded me of the churches’ failure to protect Jewish refugees in the 1930s, and he said we can’t let that kind of human rights failure to happen on the border in our time. I realized it meant I had to accept responsibility as a pastor to talk about the ethics of sanctuary to my congregation.

And after we declared sanctuary, I felt we needed to go to Guatemala and El Salvador to establish contacts with churches and leaders there. I spent six weeks there. I came back and told my church, “I know I’ve been your pastor 12 years, but I think I’ve just been converted to the Christian faith. Let me try to explain that as we go along.”

REFLECTIONS: For years, immigration never rose to a national level of anxiety. Then suddenly, it seems, we were told there is a crisis. Was there a pivotal moment in recent history when the nation changed its attitude toward immigration?

FIFE: There was a huge shift in the nation starting in the early 1990s. That’s when border enforcement strategy changed – more fences, more patrol agents, more enforcement technology. Politicians – Gov. Pete Wilson in California, President Clinton – decided they needed to look tough on “illegal aliens.” It’s no accident – none whatsoever – that these tougher measures were adopted at the same time NAFTA got started. So that’s one benchmark of change. The

other benchmark was 9/11 and a new climate of fear and border security.

REFLECTIONS: There are always unspoken ethical and theological assumptions behind our political debates and policies. Do you see any at work in immigration?

FIFE: I think a certain image of God is feeding our politics – the god of empire, the god who blesses violence and vengeance and wealth, the god who is partial to empire. It’s easy for people to fall back on that kind of god. But if you take Jesus’ life and death and resurrection, you have the witness of the early church, the witness that says this is the God who blesses the poor, the peacemakers, their struggle – the God who does not take vengeance but who allows the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

REFLECTIONS: What will it take to see change? Is amnesty a solution for twelve million undocumented workers? Is deportation? Is citizenship?

FIFE: We need to reframe the debate so the goal is to allow people to work legally and support their families. Americans don’t seem to realize that most migrant workers do not want to be U.S. citizens. They want a document that says they have a right to work here without fear or exploitation. There’s a University of California study that says only 20-30 percent of migrant workers put down roots and need a path to legalization. Most just want to return to their families in their home countries. But the idea that all these immigrants want to be U.S. citizens – that’s what scared the hell out of people here.

REFLECTIONS: Are there connections between the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s and the New Sanctuary Movement?

FIFE: The link is clear. When government violates human rights, the church needs to be a safe place. In the 1980s, people were fleeing death squads and massacres in Guatemala and El Salvador, and our government was refusing to acknowledge them as refugees and deporting them back to those same death squads – because those countries were allies of the U.S. Now the government is threatening human rights and family integrity, and parents are the disappeared from the workplace. U.S. policy is to use death in the desert as a deterrent to coming here, and that is a violation of international law and human rights. Churches ought to stand up for the right of people to work and feed their families.

REFLECTIONS: Do you ever make converts?

FIFE: One thing we learned in the Sanctuary Movement was we never got far just talking about policy. But encountering refugees personally and hearing their stories was the way to conversion. It's the same now – seeing people at the border, understanding their situations, hearing their stories.

REFLECTIONS: What happens after this election?

FIFE: I have assurances from Democrats and Republicans that immigration will be on the agenda again. Too many people will be demanding it. Farmers and growers, hotels, and service industries are being devastated by current ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) policies and the fear that their employees will be harassed or detained or deported. So we will keep working at it. It's impossible to quantify the number, but we have saved many people in the desert. It's what keeps us going.

MOVING THE DEBATE FORWARD: AN INTERFAITH VOICE

The Interfaith Comprehensive Immigration Reform Statement began circulating in 2005. More than 150 denominational bodies have signed it. It calls on the federal government to establish “a safe and humane immigration system consistent with our values. Our diverse faith traditions teach us to welcome our brothers and sisters with love and compassion.”

It further declares:

We call for immigration reform because each day in our congregations, service programs, health-care facilities, and schools we witness the human consequences of an outmoded system. We see and hear the suffering of immigrant families who have lost loved ones to death in the desert or immigrants themselves who have experienced exploitation in the workplace or abuse at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers and others. In our view, changes to the U.S. legal immigration system would help put an end to this suffering, which offends the dignity of all human beings.

We call upon our elected officials to enact legislation that includes the following:

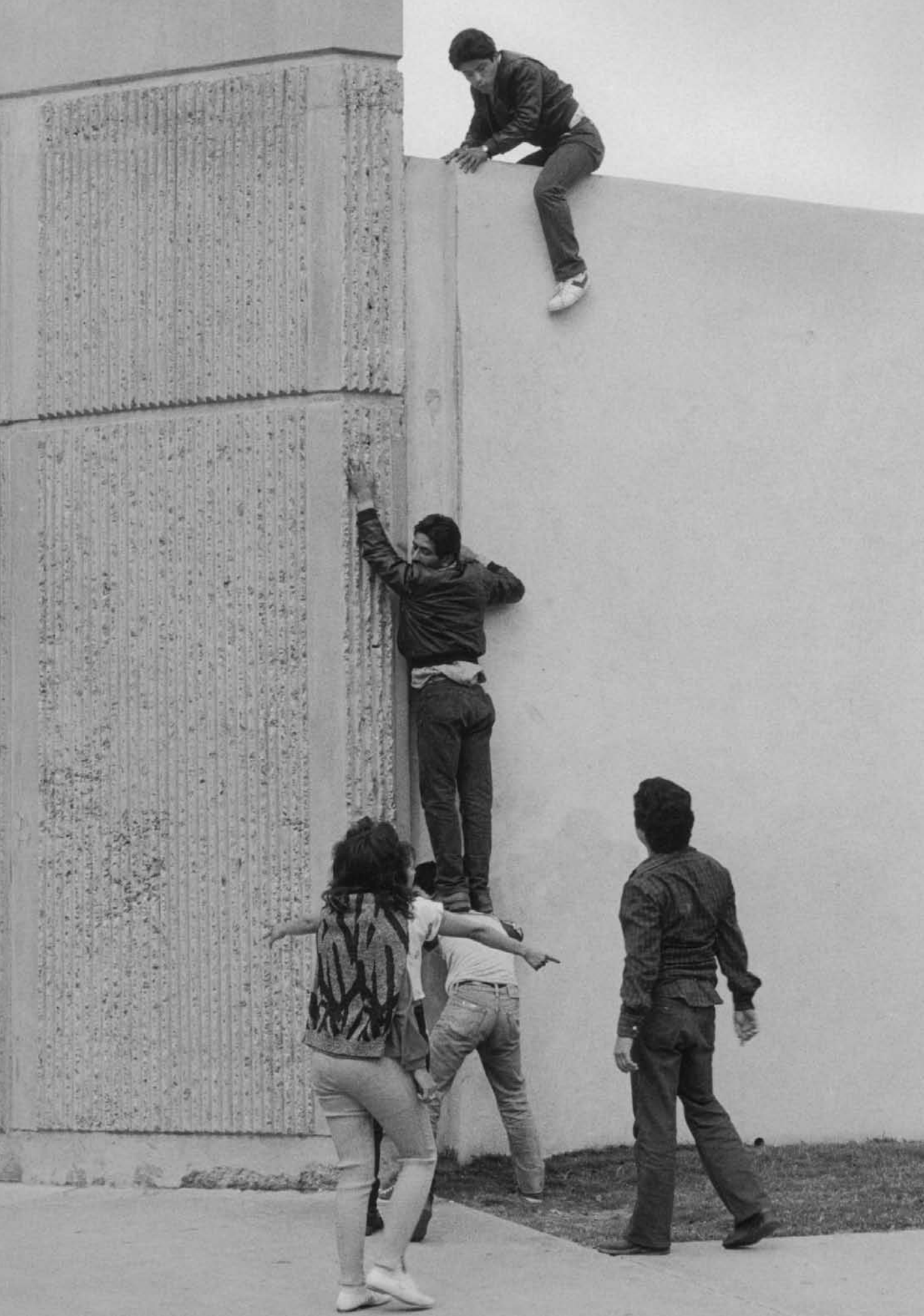
- 1. An opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to this country to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria and, over time, pursue an option to become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;*
- 2. Reforms in the immigration system to reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;*
- 3. The creation of legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected; and*

- 4. Border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of identifying and preventing entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals, as well as pursuing the legitimate task of implementing American immigration policy.*

While we support the right of the government to enforce the law and protect the national security interests of the U.S., we recognize that our existing complex and unworkable immigration system has made it nearly impossible for many immigrants – who seek to support their families or reunite with loved ones – to achieve legal status. Reforming the immigration system would allow the U.S. government to focus its enforcement efforts on real threats that face all Americans – citizens and immigrants alike.

We urge our elected officials to conduct the immigration reform debate in a civil and respectful manner, mindful not to blame immigrants for our social and economic ills or for the atrocities committed by the few who have carried out acts of terrorism.

As faith-based leaders and organizations, we call attention to the moral dimensions of public policy and pursue policies that uphold the human dignity of each person, all of whom are made in the image of God. ... It is our collective prayer that the legislative process will produce a just immigration system of which our nation of immigrants can be proud.



Fixing Immigration Policy

by Bill Ong Hing

The U.S. is caught up in hysteria over undocumented immigration – media-induced fear, backlash, and misinformation.

We have militarized the border through Operation Gatekeeper, pushing border crossers into treacherous terrain, resulting in hundreds of deaths since the 1990s. We have raided businesses, homes, and neighborhoods, often separating children from their parents for days or weeks. We have prosecuted human rights volunteers in the Arizona desert who provided food, water, and emergency medical care to the undocumented. We have encouraged private vigilantes to enforce a twisted sense of national security that results in armed ranchers pointing loaded assault weapons at teenage girls. In the words of the *New York Times*, we live in the era of “The Great Immigration Panic,” where we have “harmed countless lives, wasted billions of dollars and mocked the nation’s most deeply held values.”¹

A State of Denial

Anti-immigrant advocates are in a state of denial. Their complaints continue to stand on a shaky foundation – namely, that immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, take jobs from native workers. In fact, for the past two decades, economists have concluded that immigrants fill jobs that go unfilled. Perhaps more importantly, the presence of immigrants actually helps to create jobs. Immigrants are consumers, and their demand for services and products creates the need for more workers to provide those services and produce the goods. Time and again, studies demonstrate that regions of the country with the most immigrants actually have the lowest unemployment rates, and those regions with the fewest immigrants have the highest unemployment rates.²

The U.S. also faces a new demographic reality that contradicts the immigration naysayers: the

retirement of the baby boom generation. Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke has concluded that the U.S. economy will need 3.5 million additional laborers each year to replace the 78 million baby boomers who began to retire in 2008.

Without an adequate national visa system to accommodate the flow of needed immigrant workers, market forces have made adjustments through the employment of undocumented workers. Undocumented immigrants account for about 4.3 percent of the civilian labor force – approximately 6.3 million workers out of a labor force of 146 million.³ Although they can be found in many sectors of the economy, undocumented workers tend to be over-represented in certain occupations and industries. Three times as many undocumented immigrants work in agriculture, construction, and extraction as do U.S. citizens.⁴ Though management, business, professions, sales, and administrative support account for half of native citizen workers (52 percent), almost one-quarter of the undocumented workers are in these areas (23 percent).⁵ The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the United Nations offer data supportive of Bernanke’s observations and explain why the market for undocumented workers has burgeoned as it has. The BLS estimates that the number of people in the labor force who are 55 and older is increasing at six times the rate of those who are 25 to 34. According to estimates by the UN, the fertility rate in the U.S. is projected to fall below replacement level by 2015 to 2020, declining to 1.91 children per woman. Given the baby boomer retirement rate, by 2030, one in every five Americans is projected to be a senior citizen.

Even as the U.S. population ages and retires, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the

country will continue to experience job growth. Close to 40 percent of all jobs require only short-term on-the-job training. In fact, of the top ten largest job-growth occupations, only two require a college degree. Indeed, six of the top ten occupations only require short-term on-the-job training.⁶

Shortages of essential workers are not limited to the largest growth occupations. Without immigrants, a net deficit of 70,000 workers could accrue

U.S. policy undermines the very ideals and values our country was built on, and serves neither business nor workers.

in the roofing industry by 2012. The restaurant industry foresees the addition of almost two million jobs to the next ten years, an increase of 15 percent. However, the 16-to-24-year-old labor force – the demographic that makes up more than half of the restaurant industry workforce – is only projected to increase 9 percent during the next decade.

Without a doubt, we need immigrant workers of all stripes.

Heading North After NAFTA

We were told that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) involving the U.S., Canada, and Mexico would fix the undocumented Mexican migration problem. NAFTA would promote economic development in Mexico, creating jobs that would keep Mexicans home. In a non-protectionist, free trade environment, each country would specialize in areas and products where each had a comparative advantage. Middle-class jobs would flourish in every region, and poor countries would prosper. Opponents of NAFTA warned that U.S. jobs would be lost to Mexico, where the low-wage workforce would undercut higher-paid U.S. workers. Harsh, but a good sign for Mexico, right?

Somehow, things did not turn out that way. Mexico has lost far more jobs than it has gained under NAFTA. Incredibly, because of the way NAFTA operates and U.S. farm subsidies work, for example, Mexico, where corn is the staff of life, is now importing most of its corn from the U.S. Mexican corn farmers have gone out of business, undercut by U.S. prices. Those farm workers have lost their jobs, and where do they look for work? That's right – to *El Norte*.

Instead of reducing undocumented migration, half a million Mexican migrants continue to flow across the border annually. NAFTA was a half-baked idea that left out the ingredients needed to bolster

the Mexican economy – a true partnership including serious support for infrastructure and development and labor visas, much like what the wealthy nations of the European Union have done for their poorer members.

Instead, we are left with a neighbor to the south that has a broken economy, losing more and more ground under NAFTA daily, while its undocumented workers continue to flow north. Undocumented migration has steadily increased, as the effects of NAFTA and the devaluation of the peso continue to be felt. As they enter, the migrants are greeted by a hostile environment fueled by xenophobes who fail to grasp or acknowledge the role that the U.S. has played in the forced migration of those who are essentially economic refugees.

Further militarization of the border and stepped up interior enforcement target the victims of a globalized economy. U.S. culpability and responsibility may be hard to admit. But it's time to own up.

Friend, Not Foe

Understanding the effects of NAFTA and other aspects of the globalized economy can give us the foundation for a better approach to reducing the flow of Mexican workers to the U.S. As we develop a new vision, we should remain cognizant of our historical as well as continuing economic and social relationship with Mexico. After all, Mexico is a friend, not an enemy.

A new vision of the border should embrace the following elements:

- Open labor migration akin to the policy in place in the European Union (EU) that allows free migration of citizens between member states – in essence an open border.
- Substantial investment in Mexico's economy and infrastructure to enable Mexico to create jobs and maintain its ability to compete on the global economic stage and thus aid its primary trading partners – the U.S. and Canada. This would also reduce migration pressures between the countries as evidenced in the EU.
- Broaden the permanent visa system to reflect the real visa demands for labor and family reunification.

In contrast to the failure of NAFTA to incorporate labor migration in its provisions, the evolution of the EU has proceeded with the mobility of workers in mind. The EU permits open labor and engages in development assistance to poorer nations to reduce migration pressures, yet maintains border control.⁷ This is done with a commitment to “harmonizing” labor standards among member

nations in terms of wages, work week, and other labor cost factors.⁸ Economic development aid has been provided to poorer countries like Spain and Portugal, to strengthen economic opportunities throughout the region (and lessen the pressure to migrate). Other labor needs were anticipated.⁹ In order to ease mobility of workers, a European Social Fund provides vocational training and retraining. This is flexible enough to adopt to business needs in different member countries.¹⁰ The idea is that, if the EU truly wants to integrate its member nations' economies, the free movement of workers is necessary, and they should have the right to accept employment in any member nation.¹¹ And the workers' families have the right to follow and establish new residence with the workers.¹²

EU Solidarity

The EU approach to labor migration has been thoughtful and deliberate. Beginning with the EU's 1973 expansion to include Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, the British pushed for an approach to aid poorer regions as an antecedent to membership. When Greece (1981), and Portugal and Spain (1986) were added, all three nations as well as Ireland received infusions of capital and assistance with institutional planning. This shared-responsibility model was based on "a commitment to the values of internal solidarity and mutual support."¹³

This approach worked. The gap between the poorer and richer nations narrowed. By the beginning of the new millennium, Ireland's economy had been transformed, and its per capita GDP was above the EU average. Incredibly, Ireland – a nation that for generations had been a place of steady outward emigration – began attracting immigrants. Across Europe, the feared "mass migration of the unemployed" fizzled. People stayed in their own countries because work opportunities were created.¹⁴

The EU example is one we should carefully consider. North America is not the same type of union. However, the underlying values of mutual assistance for all trading partners are worthy of emulation. Countries of North America would be smart to develop a new approach in view of the mounting economic prowess of the EU as well as countries like China.

Mexico's infrastructure – roads, schools, telecommunications – needs attention. A national plan for infrastructure and transportation has not been developed.¹⁵ Reducing geographical disparities within Mexico would likely decrease pressures to emigrate, and a first priority should be improving the road system from the U.S. border to the central

and southern parts of Mexico.¹⁶ Better roads improve conditions for travelers, but better roads are also necessary for greater trade and the economy. If that were done, foreign as well as domestic investment could be attracted. The states of Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Michoacan, and Guanajuato, in the central and southern parts of the country, have the highest

We need to understand that we actually need more immigrant workers of all kinds. We need to understand that NAFTA and similar agreements have placed tremendous new migration pressures upon countries like Mexico.

unemployment rates and are the primary sources of migrants to the border and to the U.S.¹⁷ Yet, in spite of the growth in trade under NAFTA that has benefited some multinational corporations, significant investment in transportation and infrastructure has not followed.

The three NAFTA countries – the U.S., Mexico, and Canada – should establish an investment fund to improve roads, telecommunications, and post-secondary education in Mexico.¹⁸ Mexico lacks the capital to build the infrastructure necessary to help narrow the gap with Canada and the U.S.¹⁹ If its northern neighbors contributed 10 percent of what the EU spends on aid and provided wise investments in infrastructure and education, Mexico could experience growth at a rate twice that of Canada and the U.S.

Immigration Psychology

"The psychology of North America would change quickly, and the problems of immigration, corruption, and drugs would look different. North America would have found the magic formula to lift developing countries to the industrial world, and that would be the twenty-first-century equivalent of the shot heard round the world," writes economist Jeff Faux.²⁰ By building up the central part of the country, border congestion could be relieved, and the whole system could be better managed.²¹

Further, significant investment in new technologies in small- and medium-sized industries is a must. Some of this can be achieved through tax incentives to spur economic growth in Mexico's interior. Fruit and vegetable production development can absorb some of the rural workers that have been displaced.

Focusing on the educational system in Mexico is especially key. Mexican students fall near the bot-

tom in cross-country comparisons on basic literacy, math, and science.²² In the U.S., the adult education level is almost thirteen years of school; in Mexico, about seven.²³ This low education level has severe implications for competitiveness and standard of living for Mexicans, whether they remain in Mexico or migrate to the U.S.²⁴

Mexican migrants are among the country's most able workers. They leave for better wages – not necessarily because they were unemployed. Their income in the U.S. is better than what they were making in Mexico, but it's unclear if the productivity – measured in part by their remittances – is higher than what it would have been if they remained in

Immigration policy does not have to be hard-hearted or evil. We can be generous, gain control of the border, and benefit from the immigrant spirit that has lifted the U.S. since its founding.

Mexico.²⁵ By concentrating on investments in Mexico to create more jobs, even if labor movement is opened up, fewer Mexicans would migrate, because incentives for able Mexican workers to remain home would be created.

A Reality-based Policy

The immigration system in the U.S. requires comprehensive reform that serves everyone who lives and works here. Our country's outdated immigration policy is incapable of dealing with the new century's immigration patterns or economic realities. In effect, U.S. policy undermines the very ideals and values our country was built on, and serves neither business nor workers.

The number of available employment visas must be increased substantially. Instead of relying on short-term "guest worker" visas, labor shortages should be filled with workers with full rights, a path to permanent residence, and, if they choose, citizenship. Congress has arbitrarily set the number of employment-based admissions for permanent visas at 140,000 visas annually. This number falls far short of satisfying the actual number for visas needed to meet the U.S. demand for labor and make family reunification possible. Such a liberal expansion would prevent the creation of an underclass of workers, since immigrants would have full employment rights and access to a permanent future in the U.S. community, economy, and democracy.

The number of visas available should be adjusted to reflect actual, demonstrated labor shortages. A new visa program must ensure that U.S. workers are the first ones to be considered for available jobs and that the economic incentives are in place for U.S. employers to hire U.S. workers first. Access to the program should be frozen in areas with high unemployment, and the employer application fees for hiring new foreign workers under the program should be significant.

Under the current visa program, families often have to wait five to twenty years to be reunited with their family members. The visa limits and structural delays must be revamped to end the separation of families that currently contributes to the number of undocumented immigrants entering the country. Family reunification must remain a high priority to be fair to the workers whom we have recruited and to families that are already here.

With an open mind, we can fix U.S. immigration policy. We need to understand that we actually need more immigrant workers of all kinds. We need to understand that NAFTA and similar agreements have placed tremendous new migration pressures upon countries like Mexico. We need to understand that Mexico needs substantial infrastructure and economic assistance if migration pressures are to ease. We need to be open to a new vision of the border and labor migration. We need to remember that family immigration brings benefits to our society economically as well as psychologically.

Immigration policy does not have to be hard-hearted or evil. We can be generous, gain control of the border, and benefit from the immigrant spirit that has lifted the U.S. since its founding. We can end the great immigration panic with calm, thoughtful responses.

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THE BUSINESS OF DETENTION

On any given day, about 32,000 people are held in immigration detention in this country – about 280,000 a year. That daily number has increased nearly 500 percent since 1994, when the daily average was 6,785 people, according to Detention Watch Network.

Detained immigrants include families, workers (both documented and undocumented), and asylum-seekers. They are being held pending proceedings to decide whether they have a right to stay in the U.S.

The average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person per day. Although the Department of Homeland Security owns and operates its own detention centers, it also "buys" bed space from more than 300 county and city prisons nationwide to hold most of those who are detained, according to Detention Watch Network. Immigrants detained in these local jails are mixed in with the local prison population that is serving time for crimes.

"As a result of this surge in detention and deportation, immigrants are suffering poor conditions and abuse in detention facilities across the country, and families are being separated often for life while the private prison industry and county jailers are reaping huge profits," says a Detention Watch Network report.

More than 186,600 immigrants were deported in 2006, a ten percent increase over the year before.

Source: Detention Watch Network



THE EYES OF THE IMMIGRANT, THE IMAGE OF GOD

Alejandro Siller was a successful businessman in Mexico when he encountered real-life suffering that redefined his destiny.

During a sabbatical in California, he came face-to-face with the living conditions of Mexican farm workers.

What he saw startled him. He met migrant workers living in shacks with no plumbing. Many washed in irrigation canal water. Families worked, and their children worked, in extreme heat. They faced depression, loneliness, low wages, no community support. They were trying to make a living a long way from home. Siller listened to their stories, and it changed his life.

"I never imagined the conditions they work in," he recalls. "This was the USA. How could this be happening? They knew they were being abused, but they were vulnerable. I decided on a new goal in life – to be present to them and study the question: why must they live like that?"

That was twenty years ago. He returned to Mexico, but his heart was moving now in new directions. It took another ten years, but Siller and his wife made a decision. After their four children grew up, he sold the businesses and the house. The couple studied, obtaining applied spirituality degrees.

And they turned their faces north: They wanted to be of service to Latino migrant workers and other immigrants in the U.S., unsung people trying to cope and contend with a globalized economy and a self-conflicted host nation.

"To do something like this you have to trust God 100 percent," Siller says. "We wanted to see if our expertise could help their situation."

Siller is now a member of the pastoral team at the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) in San Antonio, Texas. The organization was started by Roman Catholic officials in 1972 to help parishes and other communities improve their Hispanic ministries. In a nation convulsed by immigration debate and resentments, MACC has emerged as a peace broker to improve multicultural relations, empathy, and self-respect on all sides.

Siller conducts leadership workshops all over the country. One goal is to enable empowerment of Latino newcomers, help them manage the complex emotions of their immigration, and also ease tensions or confusions inside the receiving communities, whether the community is a town, local parish, or neighborhood.

"I visit parishes and other groups who want to make changes in their situation," he says. "I visit immigrants who are willing to face the loneliness and trauma they have known. They hide it. They try to smile. But they've known the trauma of having left a piece of land they've loved for generations. They know the trauma of the harsh desert crossing, or the trauma of being abused by authorities in Mexico along the way, or of being abducted and held for ransom."

"Why do they leave their country? They feel they must in order to be responsible parents. They are saying, 'I cannot continue to sustain my family in this place where I am; I want something better for my children.' They want to be responsible for their families, just as any parents in the world would want to be."

The trauma they carry sometimes continues in unmanageable ways, he says – in drug abuse or domestic abuse.

"You can't do away with trauma until you face it and bring it out. When you do, you will be liberated, and it will be easier to achieve integration in the new culture."

The workshops have stirred immigrants to identify and meet their own needs in their new setting.

"I see them organizing themselves to pay emergency bills and learn English skills and create soccer leagues. They become responsible for their needs. They connect with church. They learn to visit state government offices, for instance, in order to stand against hostile legislation."

But Siller sees that both sides – the receiving town or church, and the newcomers – need educating. Both must somehow form a new community.

"They need to move to a new stage of commitment. They have to work it out."

In Christian language, the question is always, Who is our neighbor? Who is the Good Samaritan? Siller says:

"Perhaps the immigrants are the Good Samaritans after all. They come here as hard workers. So maybe they come to help us. They are energizing our churches. They believe in family and sacrifice. We are in need of them. They are Good Samaritans."

At church-hosted workshops, people on all sides get to know each other, learn about their daily living conditions, and celebrate Eucharist together. The hope is they find a new level of trust and truth going forward together.

"As baptized Christians we are all called to become prophets and tell the truth about the reality we are living right now," Siller says. "One truth is this: we are created in the image of God, and that means we should all be capable of reconciliation and forgiving and showing love to ourselves and others."

Siller's dream is to see these workshop exercises in empathy break through to a national level – where ranchers, Minutemen, border patrol and immigrants all find a way to come to the table to hear each other.

"My goal is to take all the different groups in the immigration debate and bring them to the U.S. capital and tell the government: 'You are not doing your job. This is what I need, and you are not providing it. We need good laws that allow us to pursue liberty and happiness.' "

—Ray Waddle

A Foreigner's Thoughts at the Great Wall

By Emilie M. Townes

The invitation was winsomely simple. Guo Changgang, dean of the graduate school at Shanghai University, was putting together an international conference on Globalization, Values, and Pluralism.

He did not have funds to contribute to the Academy Fund financial appeal that the American Academy of Religion (AAR) makes each year. However, would I, as president of AAR, come as its representative to do a lecture and lead two workshops as his guest in Shanghai? He would take care of housing and meals; the AAR would be responsible for my airfare. My only condition was that I must visit the Great Wall.

An extremely busy spring semester meant that I did not do my normal research for a trip to a new and unknown country. I did manage to catch a few History Channel documentaries on the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, and the Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses that guard his tomb. What I did not realize was that I took with me on this three-week, four-city journey, along with my excitement, a whole host of misperceptions of China – the land and its peoples. The trip was an occasion for pondering yet again how we misapprehend the stranger.

A Bag of Stereotypes

The moment we stood in the vastness of Tiananmen Square in Beijing that first morning was the moment I realized the baggage of stereotypes I was carrying in my head: I was surprised at how modern China is. My images of China had been filled with the rural countryside of rice fields, peasants, and water buffaloes. This is, to be sure, a part of China too, and I saw it outside of Guilin and Shanghai. But it is decidedly not what one finds in urban areas. Western clothing is the norm – I might have been standing in Manhattan or Chicago. The young people there dress like the young folk here – complete with earphones and

bopping to their own concerts on their MP3 players or iPods. People go about their daily lives just as we do here in the U.S.

Luxury automobiles abound on city streets and highways. This contradicted my stuck-in-time image of Chairman Mao's China. Instead I found a country in a hurry to be a modern globalized nation, not a classless state. There is abject poverty and ostentatious wealth. Day workers mingle easily with business people as the cars, bicycles, motorcycles, motorized bikes, and pedestrians do a most intricate dance of moving people and machines to their destinations.

Construction dominates the urban landscapes I visited. In Shanghai, the number of skyscrapers going up was striking; the visitor sees few single-family houses. With a population of more than twenty million in the metropolitan area, people buy apartments. Although there is a one-child limit for families, the city (and the country) continues to grow. It is an awesome thing to know that I was living, for three weeks, in a country of 1.3 billion people.

Standing in enormous Tiananmen Square that hot summer morning in Beijing, I was left speechless at the astonishing blend of ancient and modern. I recalled the student protests for democracy in 1989 and the image of a lone male student staring down four tanks just outside the Square; now I could see why the tanks and the man looked so small. To my left was Mao's tomb and the long lines to view his embalmed body that lies in state. In front of us was the People's Hall, where the general assembly meets. Far away to my right was the entrance gate to the Forbidden City, with Mao's massive portrait

hanging over the entrance. For nearly five centuries, the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace) served as the home of the emperors. Something else astonished me: this place combines grand scale with a beauty unlike any I've ever visited. And so I realized: In order to experience the real China, I would have to acknowledge as honestly as possible the baggage I was carrying about it, and lay it down, and let China teach me about itself, and perhaps I'd also learn some things about me.

Religion at the Wall

The next day, after an hour's drive from Beijing, I stood on the Great Wall. Pondering the immensity of that undertaking – the tremendous toll its construction took on people's lives and families, its testament to the immemorial human search for security – I was struck with how old China is and how young the U.S. is. Here, a person encounters a vast sense of time, a sense of tradition, a sense of beauty, a sense of the religious. I had not expected this reaction to the Great Wall. I knew I would be wowed by its age (it was built, rebuilt, and maintained between the sixth century BCE and sixteenth century CE) and its scale (where I stood was merely one segment of

Who or what, I wondered, are we “protecting” ourselves from when erecting modern-day versions of the Great Wall in the U.S.?

a 4,000-mile-long edifice). But it was the sense of the religious and then the spiritual that made its deepest impression on me. I found myself doing what Howard Thurman, a noted Black mystic of the twentieth century, calls centering down. I moved to a quiet and reflective space internally, where I felt the awesomeness of God's creation wash over me. Instead of a wall of protection to keep invaders out, I experienced the Wall as an entry point not only to the history of China, but also my history as a citizen of the U.S. I thought of the debates we have in the U.S. about building border fences to keep foreigners from the south out, but we do not have these same debates about our northern border. Who or what, I wondered, are we “protecting” ourselves from when erecting modern-day versions of the Great Wall in the U.S.?

Pondering the scene, I felt also a tugging on my faith. What walls have I erected in my life to keep invaders out? How is my faith and my active witness a welcoming of the stranger? How are walls

erected in our daily lives in the U.S. to keep others out? Is erecting walls a sign of faithful witness or human fears?

The broader issue of religion in China turned out to be perhaps my greatest misconception. I arrived believing that religion is totally suppressed and no freedom of expression exists. There is, to be sure, repression of religion, but it is selective and strategic. There are five official religions in China: Buddhism, Taoism, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Islam. The first two are considered indigenous to China, the latter three are seen as religions that accompanied various foreign invasions. As several Chinese scholars and tour guides noted, in China one can say many things to the government about politics and religion, but one must be careful how one says it. One cannot advocate any hint of revolution or revolt.

Thus no foreigners can preach or pastor officially in the churches and mosques. The Protestant Three-Self Church (TSPM) is the only state-sanctioned or registered church in China. The three “self” principles – self-governance, self-support (financial independence from foreigners), and self-propagation (indigenous missionary work) – continue to hold after surviving the ban on religious expression during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Although the TSPM is not a denomination, pastors are trained at one of thirteen officially sanctioned, Marxist-oriented seminaries, which teach liberal theology. The house church movement is also strong, though it is impossible to know the number of Christians in China in the registered and unregistered churches because congregations do not keep official membership lists. Estimates are 18 million for Protestants alone.

Conference Epiphanies

I was surprised to learn that only five universities in China have what we would call a department of religion or religious studies. However, there are numerous initiatives and centers, often linked with the social sciences, where religion is studied as a social phenomenon. Only recently has theology, as we think of it here, begun to be studied as widely as are the sociological dimensions of religion.

As I learned more about the status of religion in China, the conference neared. I read over my open keynote lecture – written well in advance of the conference – with great bemusement. It was based on my work on the role and influence of Black stereotypes here in the U.S. The phrase I had coined for the ways in which stereotypes are entrenched in our

imaginations and perceptions of each other – the fantastic hegemonic imagination – was more apt than I knew. I've often argued that this hegemonic imagination infects all of us, and part of what we must do as people of faith is develop strategies to recognize this in ourselves and lean more firmly into the Gospel mandate to live as brothers and sisters. Here I was in China, learning how this infected imagination plays out globally – in me.

The lecture went well enough and the respondents, two Chinese scholars, found it helpful to think about in their own lives and work. However, things did not come fully into focus until the last day of the conference and workshop, when I led a session with seventy students that featured images of stereotypes of American slaves and real pictures of slaves. I stressed the ways in which Blacks in the U.S. are equated with apes in these stereotypes, and the students began to realize that this was the image they carried in their heads about U.S. Blacks. I exhibited the April 2008 *Vogue* magazine cover, which displayed NBA basketball star LeBron James and Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bündchen in the same pose as King Kong and Fay Wray, and the Obama-as-Curious-George T-shirts that made a brief appearance in early summer of 2008. Quite unintentionally, I had tapped into two obsessions of these Chinese graduate students – professional basketball players and Barack Obama. It clicked for all of us as we talked about the spoken, hidden, and destructive stereotypes we have about each other from nation to nation. When a student asked me if people in the U.S. have stereotypes about Asians, I told them that immigrant Chinese laborers in the late 1800s were called the “yellow peril.” The session was, for me, an incredible experience of grace and forgiveness as we talked candidly during question-and-answer time.

Pilgrims, Not Tourists

It will take me a good long while to sort through all that I learned on my China trip and the impact it must have for my teaching and my daily attempts to be faithful to God's call in my life. But there are a few things that I “know” now as I write this reflection on the eve of a new academic year at YDS.

Perhaps most humbling but also freeing is the recognition that I should never allow someone else's worldview – whether the media or some of the teachings in our churches – be the final arbiter of another people. This is particularly important as the church debates its stance and role in the immigration debates swirling around us. We must come to know folks through their lives and not from books

or images that caricature the very is-ness of people and cannot capture the incredible emotions one can have by standing in another country and opening one's head and heart to another people.

The second thing I've learned is that we must meet each other as pilgrims rather than as tourists. My time in China shifted radically at the moment I decided I didn't want to experience the country merely as a tourist, but began to listen to the histories people gave about their country. It was not a monolithic history that emerged. Some folks contra-

I am even more aware now how much I do not like the word “foreigner” anymore. The ordeal of the modern border experience makes sure that foreignness is the only identity we are allowed to bring.

dicted each other, at times quite severely. I began to see the country and its people on a deeper level and could appreciate that I was in a complex society, and that twenty-one days would only be a faint scratch on the surface. If we take ourselves off the tourist track, we begin to dwell with folks as we make our way in creation.

A third thing I've learned is more an affirmation of what I've experienced from my yearly trips to teach in Salvador da Bahia in Brazil. People are gracious, and they greatly appreciate those of us who come to them to learn about them in their own context, especially when we do so admitting our faults and maintaining open hearts and minds. We live in an incredibly rich and diverse world. God's creation is just beyond our fingertips each and every day. To live into this creation is, in part, to live into each other's lives – perfectly and imperfectly.

I am even more aware now how much I do not like the word “foreigner” anymore. The ordeal of the modern border experience makes sure that foreignness is the only identity we are allowed to bring. Standing in line as we enter a country, there is the slight holding of the breath, hoping that one's visa, passport, and declaration paper are in order. We become a complete and vulnerable other reduced to a document with a usually dated picture. Imagine the person who has braved this gauntlet – or the more dangerous journey of the undocumented worker – to enter the U.S. and make it to the doors of our sanctuaries.

This is why, with the help of the Initiative on Religion and Politics at Yale, the academic office of YDS

has begun a three-year pilot project to give all new entering students a book that stirs their awareness and helps equip them to incorporate social justice issues in their ministries. This project, sponsored by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, includes programming around the issues raised in the book and, when possible, bringing the author to campus to do a public lecture and meet with interested students and faculty members. This fall, Peggy Levitt's *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* is the selected book. Her book reveals how recent immigrants are transforming religion in the U.S. and globally. As our students prepare to enter into various forms of ministry, it is important that they be able to speak expansively about the social issues of the day; certainly the immigration debate presses upon every religious and social landscape of the U.S. today. In *God Needs No Passport*, Levitt writes that today's immigrants "are remaking the religious landscape by introducing new faith traditions, and Asianizing and Latinoizing old ones. By doing so, they are transforming what it means to be American."

Perhaps we could find a new capacity to greet the newly arriving person in genuine welcome if we take our cue from the only undergraduate attending the workshop at Shanghai University. Mai, a college sophomore in a room of graduate students, listened intently to my workshop lecture and stared long and hard at the stereotyped images I presented. During the question-and-answer time, another student asked me, How do we stop sanctioning these stereotypes that separate us from each other?

As I was weighing how to communicate a long and complex answer, Mai's hand shot up with all the confidence of youth. I acknowledged her and asked her to speak. She said, "We begin."

Emilie M. Townes is associate dean of academic affairs and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology at Yale Divinity School. Her books include Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil (Palgrave MacMillan, 2006) and Breaking the Fine Rain of Death: African American Health and a Womanist Ethic of Care (Continuum, 1998; Wipf & Stock, 2006). An ordained American Baptist clergywoman, she is the 2008 president of the American Academy of Religion.

DEATH IN THE DESERT

In fiscal 2007, 400 people died while entering the U.S. from Mexico. That figure is down 12 percent from the 453 deaths that occurred the year before. A record 494 deaths were reported in fiscal 2005, according to U.S. Border Patrol statistics.

The lower numbers were the result of better enforcement and more agents in the field, leading to fewer illegal crossings, a Border Patrol report said.

The primary cause of death was exposure to heat. Other causes include hypothermia, drownings, vehicle accidents, and robbery.

Border Patrol reports say 1,954 people died crossing the U.S.-Mexican border between the years 1998-2004.

Source: U.S. Government

A BISHOP'S PLEA: REMEMBER

"Zahor!" declared Bishop Peter Rosazza, loud enough that everyone in Marquand Chapel (and down the hallways too) could hear him.

Zahor – Hebrew for "remember." Remember the immigrant is a human being, the bishop said. Remember the Bible says embrace the foreigner. Remember to embrace the Christ in other people, including undocumented workers.

"Remember that the fruits and vegetables we enjoy are often planted and harvested by undocumented workers, who also get meat and poultry to our tables – and this is true of the bread and wine we use for the Eucharist," said Rosazza, an auxiliary bishop in the Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford, where he is also Vicar General for the Hispanic Apostolate.

He spoke as a panelist during the YDS-sponsored conference in May 2008 called "The Challenge of Immigration: Framing a New American Conversation."

Rosazza is a churchman with deep local roots and a global reach, a prelate known as a gifted "pastor to the pastors." At the May conference he brought news of extensive Catholic efforts to help congregations manage and nurture the rising immigrant demographics of their neighborhoods – and encourage parishioners to understand the struggle of many newcomers to overcome poverty and rejection.

"For my own life I've always used the words of Irenaeus, 'The Glory of God is the human being fully alive,' " he said. "What can we do to facilitate that in our world?"

The grandson of Italian immigrants, Rosazza, born in New Haven in 1935, has worked with Hispanic immigrant churchgoers since 1970, early in his ministry. (Early on, he also taught Spanish, French, and Italian in seminary.) In 1978 he was named auxiliary bishop in the archdiocese, which today includes 700,000 church members in 216 parishes in three Connecticut counties.

He described how the local immigration scene has evolved in four decades. When he got started, the Hispanics were mostly Puerto Ricans. Now, in New Haven, Bridgeport, and other Connecticut towns, Mexicans are the biggest group. One parish, meanwhile, is 40 percent Mexican, 40 percent Colombian, 10 percent Ecuadorian. Another congregation has immigrants from eighteen Latin American nations. Today, twenty-four parishes in the archdiocese serve Spanish-speaking people. Hispanics aren't the only immigrants, though prejudice seems to follow them.

"In New Britain there are two large Polish parishes that serve a good number of undocumented people. One rarely hears complaints about them. Is it because they are from Europe?"

The bishop stressed the importance of coordination between national church efforts and the needs of local parishes, and the necessity of wedding daily practice to a theological vision of welcoming the stranger.

The archdiocesan social justice office, for instance, has engaged seven parishes to implement the denomination's Justice for Immigrants program. Under the plan, a parish team that includes the pastor invites immigrants, documented or not, to speak of their experiences and enlighten parishioners about their ordeals and thereby gain greater communal support. Also available are videos to stimulate discussion, including *Dying*

to Live: A Migrant's Journey and *Strangers No Longer* (both produced by Daniel Groody, who writes in this *Reflections* issue). The participating parishes also get information and advice prepared by CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network – see www.cliniclegal.org) and are urged to visit members of the state's congressional delegation and other forms of advocacy for immigration reform.

Rosazza's experience with immigrant poverty has long fueled a passion for speaking out: he has had a hand in the creation of important social teaching documents of the Roman Catholic leadership. He was one of five bishops who, in 1986, drafted the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on the national economy called "Economic Justice for All."

And he helped produce a statement by the bishops of Connecticut that was released the day before the May 2 panel, "To See the Immigrant Through the Eyes of Faith."

The bishops felt compelled to address the climate of anxiety about immigration in the wake of the failure of Congress year after year to enact immigration reform.

Among other points, the document declares:

- "Most immigrants to our nation, especially those who are undocumented, flee their homeland because of extreme poverty, violence, persecution, or natural disaster. This movement of people from one place to another has remained a constant feature of human history. From a person's human dignity flow basic human rights, including the right to leave one's country and find a new place to live and work. In Catholic social teaching, these rights are not given by a government; they are inherent in the human person."

- "The notion that undocumented immigrants are as human beings inferior to legal citizens can have no justification in Christian life. Consideration of human dignity should also prevent a person from being crudely reduced to the anxious status of 'illegal alien' or being treated only as an economic object or a unit of labor, with no regard for family unity or the person's social, cultural, and religious needs."

- "As Bishops of Connecticut, our main task is to help our people follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. There is no place in the Catholic family for racism, hatred of foreigners, exaggerated nationalism, or discrimination against immigrants. In the name of Jesus Christ, we must welcome the stranger at our door. He or she is a reflection of Jesus himself."

- "In the United States, such immigration has shaped and will continue to shape significantly our economic, political, and cultural development. We are all well aware that our own nation is one built by immigrants fleeing poverty and searching for new opportunities."

—Ray Waddle

PRAYER

By Carolyn Forché

Begin again among the poorest, moments off, in another time and place.

Belongings gathered in the last hour, visible invisible:

Tin spoon, teacup, tremble of tray, carpet hanging from sorrow's balcony.

Say goodbye to everything. With a wave of your hand, gesture to all you
have known.

Begin with bread torn from bread, beans given to the hungriest, a carcass
of flies.

Take the polished stillness from a locked church, prayer notes left
between stones.

Answer them and hoist in your net voices from the troubled hours.

Sleep only when the least among them sleeps, and then only until the
birds.

Make the flatbed truck your time and place. Make the least daily wage
your value.

Language will rise then like language from the mouth of a still river. No
one's mouth.

Bring night to your imaginings. Bring the darkest passage of your holy
book.



Crossing Boundaries of Religious Tradition

By Peggy Levitt

Most migration scholars now acknowledge that the people we study often maintain ties to their countries of origin at the same time that they become integrated into the countries that receive them. They don't simply trade in their home-country membership card for a new one but continue to belong to two communities at once.

Immigrant assimilation and enduring transnational practices are not antithetical to one another. It's possible to be an upstanding member of two or even more communities at once. In fact, many people build homes, contribute to charity, or invest in the places that they come from while they register to vote and sign up for the P.T.A. in their adopted U.S.A.

Not so for their children. The prevailing wisdom is that transnational parents do not necessarily produce transnational children. Most researchers predict that while the first generation maintains strong social and economic ties to their countries of origin, their children will not.

I want to challenge this view. Though I do not expect the second generation to participate in their ancestral homelands in the same ways and with the same intensity as their parents, dismissing the potential importance of ancestral-country participation among the children of immigrants outright misses the boat. When children grow up in households and participate in organizations where people, goods, money, and ideas from both near and far circulate on a regular basis, they are not only socialized into the rules and institutions of the countries where they live, but also into the rules and institutions of the countries from whence their families come. They acquire social contacts and social skills that are useful in both settings. They master several cultural repertoires they can selectively deploy in response to the opportunities and challenges they face.

In addition, the norms that govern family and community life are constantly renegotiated across global space. The lines between the home and host country and between the first and second generations can blur, making them one interconnected social experience. The children of immigrants are at least witnesses, if not active protagonists, in this drama. The thicker and deeper these social ties become, the more they are institutionalized. The social and political groups in which the second generation participate reflect this reality and therefore perpetuate it.

Transnational Transcendence

What does all this have to do with religion? Immigrants and their children make up nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population. These newcomers introduce new faith traditions and "Asianize" and "Latinoize" long-standing ones. But it is their children who will ultimately be the face of an American Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. They are doing the hard work of taking their inherited faith traditions and reshaping them so that they make sense in the context of their families' daily lives now.

Seeing this as a process shaped only by forces at work within the U.S. is dangerously shortsighted. My conversations with young people of Brazilian, Indian, Pakistani, and Irish descent over the last ten years have convinced me that the new face of American religion is shaped as much by what goes on in the mosque or temple across the globe as by

what goes on in the church down the street. Young people today construct religious selves in conversation with people, places, and institutions all over the world.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 74 percent of today's immigrants in the U.S. are Christian, 3 percent are Hindu, and 1.7 percent are Muslim. Because they are still relatively young, we don't have a lot of data on the religious lives of the "new" second generation or the children of

What it means to be a good American, ethnic-American, Hindu, Christian or Muslim is being re-written across oceans and continents.

these newcomers. What we do know suggests a varied picture. Some young people reject ties to organized faith. Others become even more observant than their parents, reclaiming an orthodoxy they feel the first generation has lost. Still others create their own brand of faith that combines ancestral and new traditions. In their major survey of the children of Dominican, South American, West Indian, Chinese, and Russian Jewish immigrants in New York City, Kasinitz and his colleagues found that, on the whole, their respondents were less religious than their native-born counterparts. Instead, many described themselves as "spiritual" and, like every good American, believed they should be able to choose the religion that was right for them. The young people who did participate in organized religion worshipped in places that brought them into frequent contact with other ethnic groups. Thus, religion was an assimilation catalyst rather than a cultural reinforcer. The second generation, particularly their Russian and Chinese respondents, also tended to be more religious than their parents (See Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, Mary Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway, *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*, published this year by Harvard University Press and Russell Sage Foundation).

Borders and Beliefs

But looking at other foreign-born communities, non-Christian experiences, or outside the doors of the church to the informal settings where religion is expressed every day might tell us a different story. Even the Catholic Church, immigrant integrator *par excellence*, firmly ties its members to other Catholics around the globe. It often provides them with built-in networks, such as those between priests or char-

ismatic Catholic group members, which connect them to co-religionists in their homeland and across the world. It was through these very networks that some of the Brazilian American youth I met raised money and traveled back to Brazil to build schools and churches. Many Hindu and Muslim communities are also creating thick, dense networks that connect their members and through which goods, ideas, and practices regularly travel. If the children of immigrants grow up in transnational households and belong to religious communities that are in regular touch with fellow believers around the world, then what they believe in and how they put it into practice is not just made in the U.S.A. but across the globe. Though most of the examples I draw upon here highlight the Hindu or Muslim experience, my own work, and the work done by other colleagues (such as Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Caglar, Prema Kurien, and Carolyn Chen, to name a few) suggests that some aspects of young Catholics' and evangelical Christians' religious lives also cross borders.

Let me give you an example from the Indian-American experience. During the course of my many interviews with second-generation Indian-Americans, I met twenty-three-year-old Bindi and her friend Sonali. They recalled the many Saturday nights they spent growing up together. "It was like you had your school friends," Sonali said, "but the message was clear that your real friends were the Indian families we got together with every weekend."

Sorting Out Identities

Bindi and Sonali live in middle-class towns in north-eastern Massachusetts where few other Indians reside. In a way, it was a relief to get together on Saturdays and Sundays with kids who looked, ate, and had parents just like them. They didn't have to do any explaining or worry that their friends wouldn't like the way their house smelled or the food their mother served for dinner.

Growing up, Bindi said, you knew that all the Indian parents were watching you. If another family happened to live in your town, you were always looking over your shoulder to make sure they weren't there if you were with someone or going somewhere you weren't supposed to go. "It was like the parents joined forces," Bindi explained. "The 'uncles' and 'aunties' were so worried about us growing up right, they had no problem telling other people's children what to do."

In many ways, kids like Sonali and Bindi live between a rock and a hard place. Their parents are ambivalent about their assimilation into the U.S.,

and they communicate these mixed feelings to their children. They want their kids to fit in but not too much. The line between being ‘too American’ and ‘too Indian’ is never clear. The line between being Hindu enough and too Hindu is also blurry. Where it falls is determined by what their parents remember as good Hinduism back home and what they think it should be in America. Kids often feel that if they excel at one standard, they fail at another.

When they leave for college, these same young adults have to decide who they are outside the context of their families. Their new South Asian classmates automatically expect them to join the Asian Students Association. Their roommates ask them questions about Hinduism or Islam they cannot answer. The world makes assumptions about who they are, and they feel that they somehow come up short. This propels the Gujarati young man to seek out the Hindu Student Advisor, or the Muslim young woman to experiment with wearing a headscarf. These organizations often form part of national and international groups that link young people to their religious peers around the world. It’s a combination of things, Sonali and Bindi explained – finally being interested in learning about your traditions, rather than being forced to by your parents; being thrilled at finding a like-minded community that welcomes you with open arms, and feeling responsible for representing your group to the rest of the world. “It was such a relief,” Bindi said, “to talk about your parents and not have to explain anything to anyone because all your friends were going through the exact same thing. I couldn’t believe there were twenty-five other girls who had families just like mine.”

Being Watched, Being Tested

While these kids grapple with being ethnic in America, they also struggle with how to be second-generation American in their ancestral homeland. This is another test with multiple examiners. Most of the families I have spoken with over the years take their children back fairly regularly to their homelands. Some go back every year, staying for three or four months at a time. These trips were generally remembered in glowing terms, although they presented challenges (the bugs and the lack of air conditioning or running water took some getting used to). Perhaps the greatest challenge was knowing that everyone was watching you. Just as Sonali and Bindi felt they were given a “‘well-brought-up’ test” every Saturday night in America, homeland vacations felt like extended report cards for parents and children.

Anika, a thirty-year-old second-generation Gujarati, lives with her parents in a small Massachusetts town near the New Hampshire border. Her parents are pillars of the local Swadhyaya Hindu community. She attended Swadhyaya meetings even after she went to college, coming home on the weekends to teach religious school. Swadhyaya, a contemporary Hindu-oriented social and spiritual movement based in India, helped her gain confidence in who she is and to do the right thing even when others were making the wrong choices, she said. If anyone has been well trained in Hinduism and Gujarati culture, it is Anika.

Four years ago, Anika went back to India with her father. Though it was officially a trip to see her grandparents, everyone knew it was really about finding a potential mate for her. Her father told her to be herself, but she could tell that she was being carefully scrutinized by her Indian relatives. If she didn’t show enough respect, if she wasn’t suitably

Many described themselves as “spiritual” and, like every good American, believed they should be able to choose the religion that was right for them.

humble, or if her compliments to the chef were not sufficiently effusive, she could sense the disapproval. She wasn’t sure how to make things right. “It felt like I was somewhere where all the things we learned at Swadhyaya were being lived everyday, but that the rules were slightly different. I couldn’t quite get it right.”

Yet, when I visited her family in Gujarat two years later, her relatives could not sing her praises loudly enough. She was right in assuming that they were watching her carefully, but they were satisfied by what they saw. They were also willing to give her the benefit of the doubt because they could see she was trying. As her uncle in Gujarat described, “My brother visited with his daughter Anika in 1999. We hadn’t seen them in more than five years. We were wondering what she would be like. Some kids come back here and it’s like they are allergic to India. They don’t like the food, the dust, and the heat. She was very different. She was very interested in everything. She was very respectful. She didn’t wait to be waited on. I told my brother he had done a good job raising her. It is possible to bring up good Indian children in America.”

What it means to be a good American, ethnic-American, Hindu, Christian, or Muslim is being rewritten across oceans and continents. People like Sonali, Bindi, and Anika define their religious selves in relation to several reference groups at once, using elements and narratives from several settings. They do so in conversation not only with their young co-religionist peers but with their native-born U.S. counterparts and with their relatives and friends back home. They articulate their Hindu faith in relation to their understanding of Christianity, based

Religion may enable the children of immigrants to build bridges across the same ethnic and racial divides that their parents have been unable to cross.

on the stories of Sunday school classes, first communions, and church dances their friends tell them about. They compare it to the Middle Eastern version of Islam their college friends tell them about that seems so different from the Hindu-inflected version of Islam they observe when they visit India each year. They incorporate practices they learn while attending a summer institute for Hindu youth from around the world.

Moreover, young people around the world also have opinions about what their faith traditions look like in the West. In addition to the stories about headscarf controversies they hear in the news, they also have ideas about what it's like to pray in an American mosque or temple based on the stories their visiting cousins tell them or on their internet conversations over Skype. The version of faith they embrace is also produced globally, resulting from their interactions with parents, teachers, and friends from near and far.

Religious Redefinitions

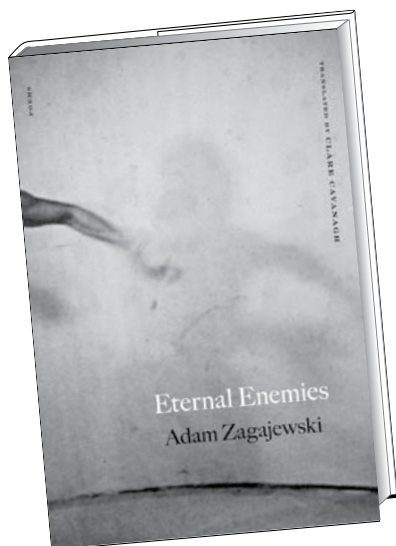
The second generation and beyond hold the key to the religious future in the United States and in Europe. They will ultimately determine what it means to be Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim in the West and, at the same time, challenge long-standing Christian practice. How the children of immigrants embrace religion strongly influences how they participate socially and politically. Faith traditions contain strong messages about our collective responsibility to each other. They offer a door for entering national political and civic life as well as tools with which to assert global citizenship. Religion may enable the children of immigrants to build bridges across the same ethnic and racial divides that their parents have been

unable to cross. It may also provide them with the resources to promote conservative or progressive causes around the world.

We miss the opportunities and challenges posed by these developments by continuing to insist that national religious life is nationally produced. We need to acknowledge that at least some of the children of immigrants, although socialized primarily in the countries where they are born, are still continually influenced by ideas and practices from their ancestral homes and beyond. This constant exposure means they acquire the skills and know-how to participate easily in many settings. Not all will choose to do so, but the potential power of this skill set and the access to different cultural repertoires it makes possible should not be overlooked. In his new book, *The Way We'll Be*, pollster John Zogby proclaimed that the 18-29-year-old Americans he surveyed will be the first global generation whose lives will be public and interconnected in ways not possible in pre-internet times and who will usher in a new age of sanity, substance and citizenship. I take that to mean both global and national citizenship.

I'll close with two stories. In a recent interview with two Indian-American Muslim college freshmen, the conversation turned to what they wanted to do when they grew up. The first, a boy who described himself as an observant Muslim, said he planned to study engineering so he could help build roads and bridges in Muslim countries around the world. His faith taught him, he said, to choose a career that would allow him to spend his life helping the global Muslim community. The young woman, who also described herself as observant, though less so, also said her choices were inspired by her faith. She said she wanted to become a lawyer so she could make a lot of money and help expand the Indian middle class in her ancestral home; her faith told her to work for poor people. These experiences suggest that religion inspires both national and world citizenship and that young people are likely to exercise their rights and responsibilities across the street and across the globe.

Peggy Levitt is associate professor in the Department of Sociology at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. She is also a research fellow at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, where she codirects the Transnational Studies Initiative. Her latest book is God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing Religious Landscape (The New Press, 2007).



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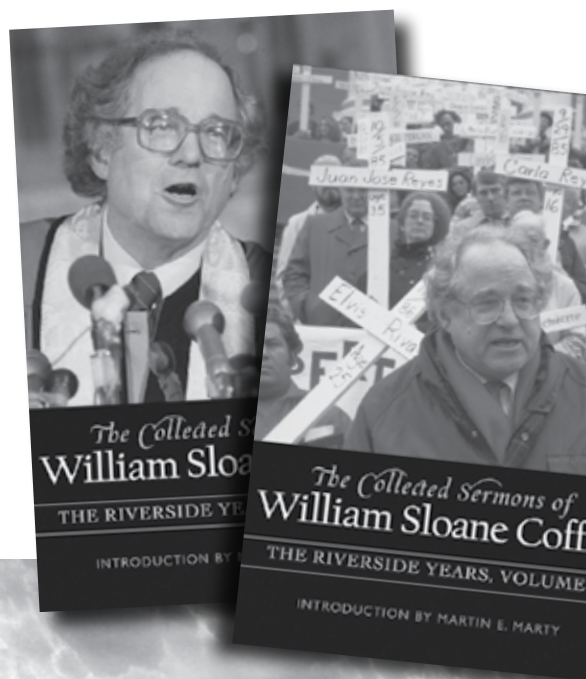
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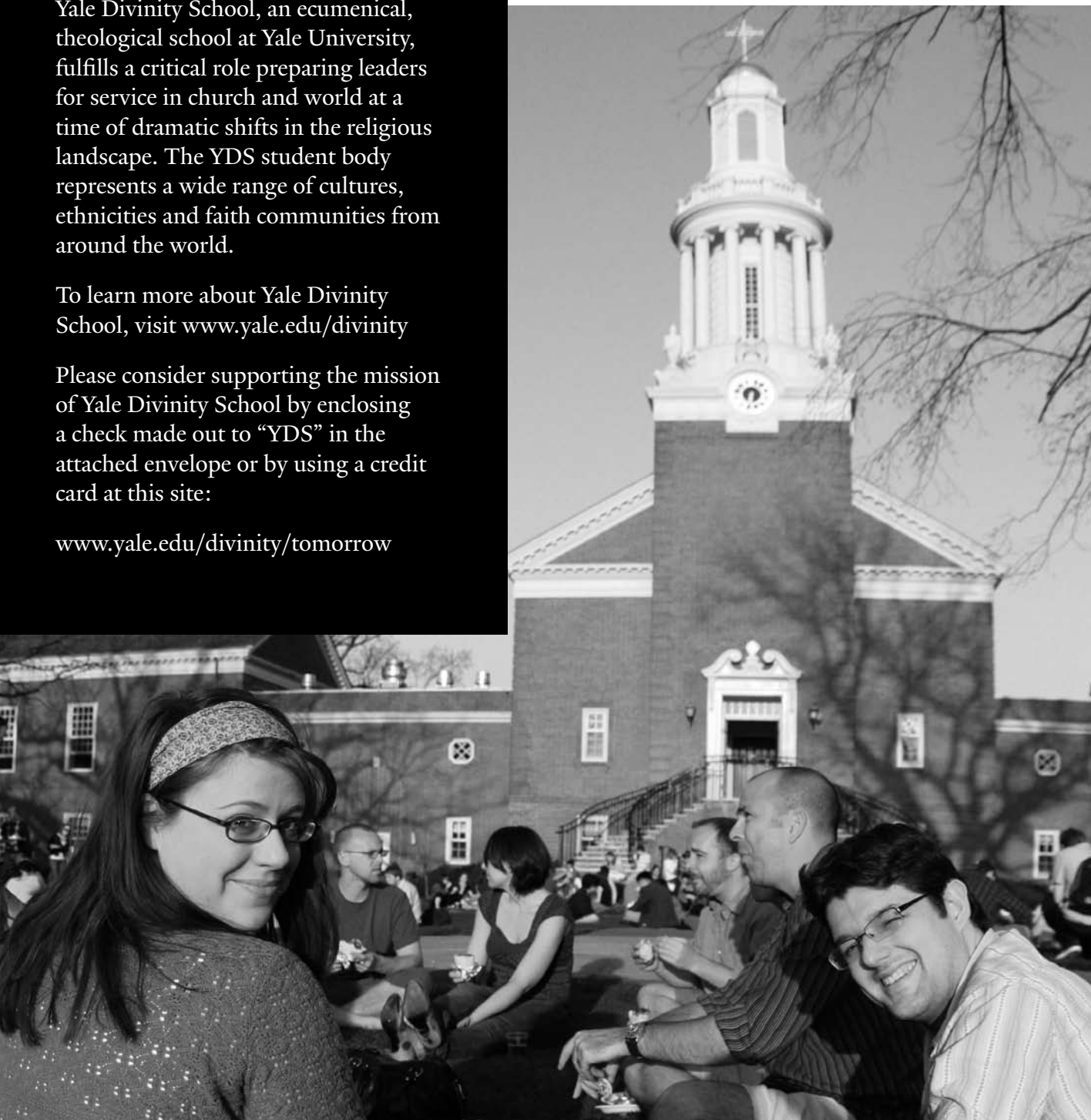
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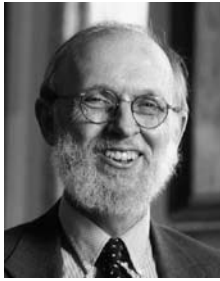


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From the Editor: Geography Lessons

By Ray Waddle



Let's be honest: immigration isn't easy to talk about. Only the ideologues are content with cartoonish solutions – “send 'em all back,” “let 'em all in,” “jail all the illegals,” “American jobs for Americans only.”

The rest of us must live in the real world of stubborn contradiction and self-conflict that complicate every attempt to sort out the issue – the jostle of compassion, prudence, fear, impatience, generosity, economic necessity, hypocrisy.

The latter – old-fashioned hypocrisy – is especially hard to face. Our national wealth of the last three decades – the relatively low prices of fresh produce and poultry, construction costs, and countless other amenities – was achieved on the backs of cheap labor, much of it done by undocumented workers, the “illegal aliens” of cable TV indignation.

We want it both ways – we love our bargain prices, yet we also insist on the moral rectitude to proclaim we are a “nation of laws.” This habitual national contradiction makes it impossible to speak plainly about immigration realities at all. From government we get toughened enforcement and clumsy, high-profile roundups of unauthorized workers. But otherwise, in an election year, our leaders provide nothing but surreal silence on the subject of reforming, improving, or humanizing the complex tangle of immigration law. This silence only builds resentment, distrust, and yet more denial – damaging the national capacity to face facts, doing great harm to the national soul.

Even as official stalemate presides, artists keep their eyes open, their hearts open, their paint boxes and camera shutters open to the persistence of dignity and outrage. This *Reflections* features the visual work of two witnesses to the immigration drama, both of whom keep sight of the human-scale ordeals of real people who don't get quoted in the news.

Malaquias Montoya and Alan Pogue have been at it a long time, keeping an eye of the geography of suffering and hope.

California artist Montoya, whose work appears on the front and back covers of this issue, calls his an art of protest. He creates silk screens, paintings, posters, murals – all infused with an urgency to protest human dispossession and intolerable politics. He worries that a passion for protest

is gravely threatened today by the false allure of consumerism.

Now 70, he grew up in New Mexico and California in a family of migrant workers. He saw first-hand the brutal economics of migrant labor, the ill treatment and low pay handed to the laborers. He never forgot it.

With art, he says, he tries to speak “especially to that silent and often ignored populace of Chicano, Mexican and Central American working class, along with other disenfranchised people of the world.”

“Through our images we are the creators of culture,” he declares, “and it is our responsibility that our images are of our times – and that they be depicted honestly and promote an attitude towards existing reality, a confrontational attitude, one of change rather than adaptability. ... We must not fall into the age-old cliché that the artist is always ahead of his or her time. No, it is most urgent that we be on time.”

Texas photojournalist Pogue, whose photographs appear in this issue, has taken pictures all over the world. His eye gravitates to human beings trying to bear up against economic and political forces beyond their control, whether in a Texas prison, or in Iraq under the 1990s embargo, or on the Mexican border today. He has been chronicling the dynamics of U.S. immigration for decades, and his sympathies are clear.

“What makes the news is images of immigrants getting arrested. What you don't see is the work they do, people plucking chickens eight hours a day and working in slaughterhouses in the Midwest, dangerous work. If the media focused on the labor they do, there'd be more sympathy. What they are paid is not as much as what they are giving. They pay taxes, and society is making money off them in every possible way. So I want to create sympathy for people who are working hard and struggling to have a better life. They don't have evil intent. They want to make a living, and they're willing to work very hard. Where is the crime in that?”

This *Reflections* was inspired by a May conference at YDS, “The Challenge of Immigration: Framing a New American Conversation.” The participants – ministers, lawyers, frontline refugee advocates, most of whom contribute to the pages of this issue – endeavor in their work to press beyond conventional wisdom and sloganeering to get at the undercurrents of modern immigration and how people of faith might confront this historic moment. They

know what artists know: there is a way forward, beyond paralysis, beyond hypocrisy, to catch new stirrings of courage and resolve.

*Special thanks go to Gilberto Cárdenas, a national pioneer in immigration studies and Latino art collecting. His influential collection includes nearly 10,000 paintings, photographs, videos, and other works. Professor Cárdenas is assistant provost and director of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. A selection from his collection – called *Caras Vemos Corazones No Sabemos: Faces Seen, Hearts Unknown, the Human Landscape of Mexican Migration* – tours nationally as an exhibit in museums and galleries, focusing on themes of journeying, identity, barriers, and visionary spirituality. He generously shared advice regarding his collection for this Reflections issue, providing contact with artists Malaquias Montoya and Alan Pogue, whose work is found in the Cárdenas collection.*

ARTWORK

Copyright Malaquias Montoya, used by permission of the artist (www.malaquiasmontoya.com)

Copyright Alan Pogue, used by permission of the artist (www.documentaryphotographs.com)

POETRY

Richard Blanco says he “was made in Cuba, assembled in Spain, and imported to the United States” – his pregnant mother and family arrived as exiles from Cuba to Madrid, where he was born. A few weeks later, the family emigrated again, eventually settling in Miami, where he was raised and educated. He earned degrees in both civil engineering and creative writing; his poetry has won awards and been anthologized.

“Mother Picking Produce,” from *City of a Hundred Fires* by Richard Blanco (c) 1998. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Mary Crescenzo is a poet, playwright, and artistic director of the Peekskill Performing Arts Collective, located in New York’s Hudson Valley. Her most recently staged poetry theatre works are *Piece of Mind*, a drama about Alzheimer’s, and *The Old Woman Who Slew a Dragon-Fox*, a fable about the dangers of nuclear energy. She is also the chanteuse with the band Jazz’d.

“Return to Mankiller Flats, Oklahoma” is reprinted by permission of the poet.

Carolyn Forché is a poet, translator, editor, and human rights advocate whose work *Gathering the Tribes* (1976) was selected for the Yale Series of Younger Poets. She also edited the anthology *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness* (1993). She is now the visiting professor of poetics at Georgetown University.

“Prayer,” from *Blue Hour* by Carolyn Forché (c) 2003. By permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

C.D. Wright, poet, editor, and English professor, was born and raised in Arkansas’s Ozark Mountains. The author of a dozen volumes of poetry, she has taught at Brown University since 1983. Her books include *One Big Self*, a poetic meditation and report on Louisiana prisons. In 2004 she was named a MacArthur Fellow.

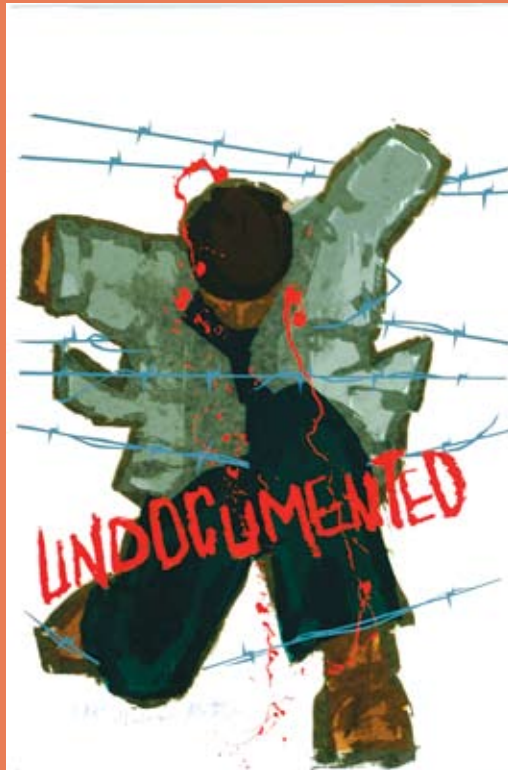
“Like a Prisoner of Soft Words (2)” from *Rising, Falling, Hovering* by C.D. Wright (c) 2008. By permission of Copper Canyon Press (www.coppercanyonpress.org).

Adam Zagajewski, born in Poland, is a poet and essayist. His books include *Mysticism for Beginners*, *Eternal Enemies*, and *Two Cities: On Exile, History and the Imagination*. He divides his time between Krakow and Chicago, where he is on the faculty at the University of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought.

“Refugees” translated by Clare Cavanagh from *Without End: New and Selected Poems* by Adam Zagajewski, translated by several translators. Copyright (c) 2002 by Adam Zagajewski. Translation copyright (c) 2002 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.



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