

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

A Study of Hispanic Ministries in the United States
and the Responsibility of Christians to Government

Moisés Pinedo



Apologetics Press, Inc.
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36117-2752

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ISBN: 978-1-60063-028-6

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Some research sources are in Spanish, and have been translated for the English edition of this book. In the list of references (beginning on page 81), a work's original Spanish title will appear in brackets immediately following the translation of the title.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication

Moisés Pinedo (1977 -)

Illegal Immigration: A Study of Hispanic Ministries in the United States and the Responsibility of Christians to Government

Includes bibliographic references

ISBN: 978-1-60063-028-6

1. International migration & colonization. 2. Religion 3. Constitutional & administrative law. I. Title

325—dc22

PCN number

DEDICATION

To my wife Kimberley—the woman who has been one of my greatest blessings during the years that I have been “a stranger...in a foreign land” (Exodus 2:22).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks to Rhonda Thompson for her valuable help in the translation of this book into English.

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1 ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Illegal immigration, especially in the United States, is a “caustic” subject. Many have raised their voices to enthusiastically condemn illegal immigration, while others defend it just as enthusiastically. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears have been shed on this battleground, since those on both sides are ready to use any available philosophical, psychological, and sometimes physical weapon to defend their viewpoints. The battle is further complicated by politicians, with their divided loyalties and policies. Even religion has been drawn into the fray, to the point that supporters of both sides of the issue seek to justify their positions based on their beliefs. The Lord’s church has also been affected. What should the church do? What is the biblical approach to the problem of illegal immigration?

This study does **not** pretend to propose a course of action that the government should take to minimize or eradicate the problem of illegal immigration. For that reason, you will not read possible “solutions” like stricter enforcement of immigration law, more border



control, or an amnesty period. [It is my judgment that the federal government is in the best position to judge the course of action that should be taken to find solutions to this problem, and obviously, it has the divine authority to do so (Romans 13:1).] The following solution is presented from a spiritual perspective, taking into account the negative effects that illegal immigration often has on the work of the church. The main purpose of this study is not to influence the government but the church.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before proceeding further, it is important to define certain terms.

Alien: A person living in one country who is a citizen of another country (see “Immigration,” 1988, 10:85).

Immigration: *Webster’s Dictionary* defines “immigration” as the act of “immigrating,” from “*immigrare*, to go or remove into:...to come into a new country, region, or environment, esp. in order to settle there” (Agnes and Guralnik, 1999, p. 713).

Immigrant: The person who completes the previously described action; an alien.

Illegal Immigration: The act of entering a country without having the necessary authorization to reside, temporarily or permanently, within its borders.



Illegal Immigrant: The person who completes the aforementioned action; frequently called “unauthorized alien.”

WAYS IN WHICH AN ALIEN BECOMES AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT

An alien can become an illegal immigrant in two ways (see Passel, 2006, pp. 1,16):

1. Entering a country without the required valid documentation

This applies to those aliens who intend to cross, or do cross, the border of a country in any manner (by land, sea, or air), without the required immigration inspection and/or authorization from the proper authorities (in the U.S., the Attorney General). It also applies to an alien who successfully enters a country with fraudulent documentation.

2. Remaining in a country without valid documentation

This applies to those aliens who enter a country legally, with a tourist or worker visa, but remain in the country after the expiration of their visas. It also applies to those aliens who enter a country with a resident visa (temporary or permanent), but, because of a lack of necessary documentation or other reasons, do not continue the appropriate process to guarantee their right to legally remain in that country. Addition-



ally, it applies to the alien who remains in a country with fraudulent documentation.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The United States has been called “a Nation of Immigrants.” This is not an exaggeration since the United States has accepted more immigrants than any other nation in history, from its beginnings until the present day (see Dublin, 1993, p. 3). Those who colonized North America in the 17th and 18th centuries came for the same reasons as modern-day immigrants: a more economically stable life for themselves and their families, religious freedom, freedom from persecution, etc. Although the colonizers were the main force behind the shaping of the nation, there can be no doubt that the plethora of immigrants during the decades that followed contributed to the economic, social, and cultural development of the nation. But because of the growing number of immigrants through the years, state and federal laws began to regulate immigration in the 19th century (see Hall, 1906, pp. 7-8; LeMay, 1999, pp. xxi, xxvii-xxviii; Barak, 2007, p. 361).

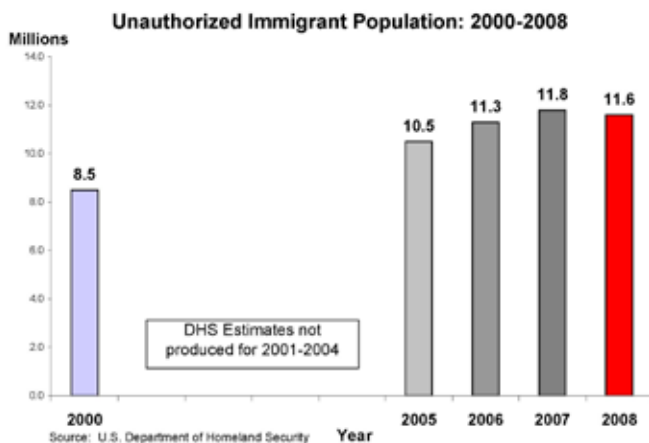
From the beginning of their enactment, immigration laws have changed in the same way that other laws have. Since the number of immigrants has experienced out-of-control growth, the number of immigration laws has also grown in order to regulate the different aspects of this problem. Although the United States still welcomes immigrants of different



nationalities, it does not do so in the same way as before. This situation has created a lot of confusion, resentment, even rebellion.

With the passing of time, the problem has intensified due to the increase of aliens who do not fulfill the legal requirements to enter or reside in the United States. The Federation for American Immigration Reform reports that “[e]ach year the Border Patrol makes more than a million apprehensions of aliens who flagrantly violate our nation’s laws by unlawfully crossing U.S. borders. Such entry is a misdemeanor, but, if repeated, becomes punishable as a felony” (“Illegal Immigration...,” 2005). The Federation also adds that illegal immigration negatively affects national interests by providing opportunities for covert terrorist threats (2005; cf. Ritter, 2009, p. 4B) and generating enormous economic losses as a result of the reinforcement of border security and provision of benefits to illegal immigrants (“The Estimated Cost...,” 2004; cf. “The High Cost...,” n.d.).

According to statistics presented in a report of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the number of illegal immigrants in the United States, through January 2008, was approximately 11.6 million (Hoefler, et al., 2009). This figure represents approximately 4% of the population of the country (see *The World Factbook*, 2008). The growth of the illegal population between 2000-2008 was 3.1 million—a 37% increase. In other words, the approximate growth of illegal immigrants during those eight years was 390,000 people per year (Hoefler, et al., 2009).



With the intention of controlling immigration (especially illegal immigration), the federal government has established organizations that make, regulate, and impose immigration laws. For example, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is one section of the Department of Homeland Security; its mission is to provide national security and immigration services (see “About Us,” n.d.). The Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is another section of the DHS; its mission is to enforce the laws of national security and immigration (see “About CBP,” n.d.).

THE IMMIGRATION LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES

Since Christians are subject to man-made laws (Romans 13)—as long as those laws are **not** in opposition to divine laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29)—it is appropriate to look at U.S. laws regarding alien immigration.



Immigration and Nationality Act

On its Web site, the USCIS provides the text of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the INA), also known as the McCarran-Walter Act. Created in 1952, it is still the basis of U.S. immigration law.

In several sections of Chapter 8 (“General Penalty Provisions”) the INA clearly indicates that it is illegal (i.e., it is a crime):

1. for an alien to cross the border of the United States evading the inspection of the immigration service, or to enter the U.S. without the required authorization of the immigration service, or to facilitate entry for someone else without such authorization;
2. for an alien to remain in the U.S. for any length of time without appropriate documentation;
3. for an alien to look for and accept employment without documentation or appropriate authorization, or for an employer to offer work to an alien without evidence of the legality of his/her presence in the U.S. and his/her suitability for said work. [NOTE: The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 became the first immigration law of the U.S. that authorized penalties for employers who hire illegal aliens (see “Immigration,” 1988, p. 85)]; and
4. for an alien to arrange a fraudulent marriage or illegal business for the purpose of receiving the benefits of residency or citizenship.

The U.S. Code

The U.S. Code is a compilation and codification by subjects of the general federal laws of the U.S., divided into 50 titles. It is published by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Title 18 of the Code classifies illegal immigration as a crime—whether it is perpetrated for personal benefit or for the benefit of another person. It prohibits any attempt to obtain citizenship except by means specified in U.S. immigration laws. In addition, falsification of documents for residence, citizenship, and naturalization purposes is punishable as a criminal act. [To read portions of Chapter 8 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and of the U.S. Code, see Appendix A.]

THE INDIRECT RELATIONSHIP OF OTHER LAWS TO THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Traffic Laws

Illegal immigration is not only a problem presented in the borders of the U.S., but also on the streets and highways of every state. The lack of appropriate documentation is the main problem of illegal immigrants. Because of this, they also fail to comply with standard traffic laws when using personal transportation to go from place to place. Take California traffic laws, for example.



According to the *Vehicular Code of California*, the state with the largest number of illegal immigrants (see Hoefler, et al., 2009), it is illegal to drive a vehicle without appropriate identification and documentation. “Californians who comply with the law are frequently victims of traffic accidents caused by unlicensed drivers. These innocent victims suffer considerable pain and property loss at the hands of people who flaunt the law.... The state has a critical interest in enforcing its traffic laws and in keeping unlicensed drivers from **illegally** driving” (“Legislative Findings,” 2009, emp. added).

The Employment Law

The Department of Labor (DOL) of the United States administers a variety of federal employment laws; its mission is to promote the well-being and rights of the employee and employer. In its *Employment Law Guide*, the DOL provides the conditions and requirements of employment, taking into account the established regulations of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and confirming that no alien has the right to work within the borders of the U.S. without the necessary documentation. [To read some portions of the *2009 California Vehicle Code* and the Employment Law of the U.S., see Appendix B.]

From a legal perspective, the unauthorized entrance of aliens should be considered by its proper definition: **illegal** immigration.



SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

“The law is not enforced”

Because of federal and state deficiencies in enforcing some aspects of immigration laws, some think that illegal immigration is somehow justified. However, to say that enforcement of these laws “doesn’t exist” is not completely accurate. In fact, enforcement **does** exist—although it may not be as adequate as some would like.

Peter King, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee (HHSC), addressed this matter in an interview in 2006. When asked regarding the lack of detention of those who are not illegal themselves but actively advocate illegal immigration, “You’re not going to go after them even if they do break the law?” King responded: “Because, Bill, that’s not the way the law has been interpreted for 50 years. There are more important people to go after here, and that’s the alien smuggling gangs” (see “The Catholic Church...,” 2006).

King’s point was clear: in reality, authorities are not pursuing those who actively advocate illegal immigration (although “they would be held accountable under the existing law”—“The Catholic Church...,” 2006) or illegal immigrants themselves—not because they have not broken any law, but because the authorities are employing most of their efforts to pursue those whose business is illegally bringing people into

a foreign country, in this case the United States. This course of legal action also applies to other national problems. For example, because of the “interpretation” of the law, authorities are not as interested in pursuing the addict who buys illegal drugs on a suburban street corner as they are in pursuing those who smuggle the drugs into the country (see “DEA Mission Statement,” n.d.). The logic is that if the authorities could stop the drug smuggling, then they could considerably reduce the number of addicts buying those drugs on street corners. But the law still specifies punishment for possession of illegal drugs (see “About,” n.d.). In the same way, if the authorities could stop the smuggling of aliens, then, in theory, the number of illegal immigrants would be considerably reduced.

Although one may question the suitability of this strategy, one cannot question the illegality of unauthorized immigration. It is, as King said repeatedly, “**illegal** immigration” (“The Catholic Church...,” 2006). The fact that the law may not deal effectively with every aspect of immigration does not mean that the law approves of the offense (illegal immigration) on a lesser scale.

Many state and federal laws are not effectively enforced (e.g., income tax laws), which would seem to indicate that a certain amount of permissiveness exists. That does not mean, however, that one is justified before the government in breaking such laws. From a legal perspective, what is legal or illegal cannot be measured by the **level** of law enforcement but by the **existence** of the law (see “Legal,” 2000, p. 1000).



“It Is Not Possible to Control Illegal Immigration”

Since it is obvious that the U.S. is confronting a battle that it still has not won and that perhaps it will not win in the near future, some have suggested that immigration laws and trying to control the border are not the course of action that should be taken. According to this line of thought, the U.S. simply should open its doors and allow any alien to enter freely. But as some writers have indicated,

most who argue that illegal immigration is not controllable, and hence that we should not try to control it, do not apply a similar test to other violations of the law. One would not argue that the existence of murder, robbery, and littering, in spite of attempts to enforce laws against such behavior, means that there is no public control over such acts (Cafferty, et al., 1983, p. 82).

Once again the issue is not the absence of immigration control but the inadequacy of such control. It is certain that if the United States decided to remove immigration laws, then illegal immigration would not exist. Nevertheless, other problems (e.g., overpopulation, unemployment, the arrival of terrorism, drug trafficking, and criminal organizations) would, beyond a shadow of a doubt, grow to uncontrollable proportions. The point is that immigration laws **do exist** and that the U.S. actually **does control** its borders, however inadequately. Therefore, the entrance of aliens into this country without appropriate autho-

rization will continue to be illegal unless the laws are changed or no longer binding.

“Illegal Immigrants Also Pay Taxes”

There is no doubt that illegal immigrants pay taxes. It is almost impossible to go through a single day in the U.S. without paying some kind of tax. There are taxes on things you buy and sell, property taxes, consumer taxes, utility taxes, etc. Even illegal immigrants can pay taxes to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by means of their Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) [see “Individual Taxpayer...,” 2009].

There can also be no doubt that some illegal immigrants pay taxes with the hope of receiving economic and/or legal benefits from the government. Some people even consider illegals paying taxes as an example of their “good citizenship” (Gaona, 2004). Although some could interpret the IRS’ action (allowing illegals to pay taxes) as being in opposition to immigration laws and/or giving consent to illegal immigration, the IRS says that the ITIN is given “because both resident and nonresident aliens may have U.S. tax return and payment responsibilities under the Internal Revenue Code” (“Individual Taxpayer...,” 2009).

Although all illegal immigrants can pay taxes by means of an ITIN, not all do so. Even those who pay taxes do not contribute enough to the U.S. economy to compensate for the benefits they receive (e.g., education, medical attention, and food stamps) [see Bruliard, 2006; Kouri, 2006]. In one sense, the IRS is con-



fronted with the dilemma of finding a way to collect taxes from a group of individuals (i.e., illegal immigrants) which generates an economic deficit.

The fact that illegal immigrants pay taxes does not in any way justify or change their civil status as far as the government is concerned. The IRS clearly indicates that the ITIN is only to report federal taxes and it is “not intended to serve any other purpose.... Getting an ITIN does not change your immigration status” (“Individual Taxpayer...,” 2009). The illegal immigrant may or may not pay taxes, but the government still considers him an unauthorized alien.

“Many Immigrate Illegally to Find Security and Refuge”

There are different reasons why people from other countries decide to enter the United States in violation of immigration laws. Among the most common are the search for work, education, health, and other social benefits. But perhaps none of these reasons impact the sensibilities more than the search for security and refuge.

The U.S. State Department provides help and solutions for refugees, victims of conflicts throughout the world, and people without a country, by means of repatriation, local integration or resettlement in the U.S. (see “Bureau of Population...,” n.d.). The Citizenship and Immigration Service even provides application forms to request temporary or permanent residency for refugees (“Immigration Forms,” 2009).

The mission of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is to provide help for refugees and to determine if the appropriate solution is resettlement in a third country—whether it be in the U.S. or another country (see “Refugee Admissions...” n.d.).

For those who have faced persecution or abuse in their homelands, but receive no help from international refugee aid organizations—or whose applications for assistance are denied—the agreements between neighboring countries provide a way of escape without violating the laws of those countries. According to the immigration agreements between certain countries, their citizens can immigrate, either temporarily or permanently (in a reciprocal way) with only a passport (without an entry visa) or a national identity document (see “Bilateral Accords,” n.d.; “Mercosur...” 2008).

“The World Belongs to Everyone”

Some have suggested that immigration laws, especially those of the United States, are in opposition to the “basic right” each person has to move from one country to another. The idea is that no nation has the sovereign right to control its borders (see McConnell, et al., 2001, p. 173).

This idea has several problems and inconsistencies. International Law requires that individual nations exercise certain rights and duties to guarantee the peaceful coexistence between nations. In peace time each nation has the right to its independence and the

obligation not to interfere with the independence of another. This includes a nation's right to form its own government and to control its own territory, establishing borders and laws to protect them (see Seelye, 1894, pp. 13-18).

The cry for a world “without borders” is not realistic. As the French philosopher Jacques Derrida stated, “every nation-state is constituted by the control of its borders, by the rejection of illegal immigration, and by the setting of strict limits to the right to immigrate and the right of asylum. This concept of the border constitutes, precisely as its very limit, the concept of the nation-state” (2002, p. 100).

Not only do nations have borders that restrict illegal immigration, but **states and provinces** within those nations also have borders to restrict individual rights. According to the perspective that “the world belongs to everyone,” all borders should be ignored or removed. Those who propose this idea have not considered that they themselves have put barriers on their own “little piece of the world.” They have houses with walls and fences that restrict the entrance of people without appropriate authorization. But since their homes are part of the world, and “the world belongs to everyone,” then they also should remove the barriers that are protecting their family and possessions, as well as any expectations of privacy. Clearly the idea of a world without borders is unrealistic and inconsistent.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN EMOTIONS

Fundamentally, the political battle is not whether illegal immigration is really **illegal**, but whether or not the laws governing it should be modified or removed (see “The Battle...,” 2006). Many, including some religious leaders, have approached the subject on the basis of their own personal feelings and experiences. Roger Mahony, cardinal of the largest Catholic diocese in the United States, told of a dramatic experience he had at the age of 12 when some government agents entered his father’s factory looking for illegal immigrants. He said: “I will never forget them bursting through the doors.... I was terrified by it. And I thought, ‘These poor people; they’re here making a living supporting their families’... It had a very deep impact on me throughout the years” (quoted in Pomfret, 2006).

Mahony’s bad experience put him on the front lines of the fight for the “rights” of illegal immigrants. However, Mahony’s emotions do not allow him to consider that his own statement could be used to approve of and allow almost **any** illegal activity. For example, in the middle of a police search for people engaging in prostitution, someone could suggest that some of those “poor women” are only trying to “make a living and support their families.” Someone could suggest the same thing about the members of an international mafia. In fact, the majority of people in the world are trying to “make a living and support their

families”—even some that, in one way or another, are breaking the law.

One could think of a lengthy list of experiences and personal feelings to tolerate illegal immigration. Some people may have heard or read news stories about illegal immigrants who have been victims of abuse and mistreatment at the hands of authorities, employers, and smugglers. Others may have had experiences similar to Roger Mahony's. Such tragic stories and personal experiences prompt strong emotional reactions, but those emotions are not reliable guides to define what is true and just—and legal (see “Legal,” 2000, p. 1000).



THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS TO GOVERNMENT

The Bible does not specifically deal with the modern problems of immigration, but it does provide some basic principles that Christians should take into account when determining their responsibility to government and to the God of all nations (2 Chronicles 20:6; Jeremiah 10:7).

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Paul wrote that “the things that were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Romans 15:4). So let us consider some of those ancient records and their relationship to our present dilemma.

At the beginning of human history, God commanded the first couple to multiply and “fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28). God also repeated this command to Noah after the Flood killed most of the human race (Genesis 9:1). When the inhabitants of Babel decided

to disobey this divine command, God confused their languages and “scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:8). It is clear that it was not the will of God for man to remain in one place but to spread out and populate the Earth. In fact, Abraham was an immigrant (Genesis 12:1; 13:12-18), as were Jacob and his family (Genesis 46-47), and the Israelites (Joshua 11:16-23). In time, God allowed government authorities to regulate immigration, as the following examples indicate.

National Security

Before the expected seven years of famine, Joseph worked hard to prepare the land of Egypt. When the famine came, its effects were felt beyond the borders of Egypt, so “all countries came to Joseph” to buy grain (Genesis 41:57). [Similarly, many immigrate to the U.S. today in search of what they do not have in their homeland.] Even Joseph’s brothers made the long journey from Canaan to buy food. Aside from Pharaoh, Joseph was the highest authority in all the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:40). God had placed Joseph in that position to preserve the remnant of the children of Israel and to save them by a great deliverance (Genesis 45:7).

It is interesting to note that apart from providing nourishment for the people of Egypt (and neighboring countries as well), one of the duties and rights of Joseph, as an authority of the Egyptian government, was to insure national security. Joseph used his authority when he accused his brothers of espionage



(Genesis 42:9,14). Although it is obvious that Joseph's accusation was false (Genesis 42:8-9), he still had the legal authority to require "documentation" or proof of identification to allow his brothers to do business in the country (cf. Genesis 42:15-20). When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, Jacob's family was welcomed to immigrate to Egypt **only** after they had received the necessary authorization from Joseph and Pharaoh (Genesis 45:9-21).

Border Control

Although some religious people have implied that no nation has the sovereign right to control its borders (see McConnell, et al., 2001, p. 173), it is interesting to note that border control is a common concept in the Old Testament.

Besides providing frequent notations of territorial borders of groups of people (e.g., Genesis 10:5,19,30; Exodus 23:31) and God's stipulations of border boundaries for the Israelite tribes (Numbers 33:50-34:29; Joshua 13:14-19:51; 2 Kings 14:25), the Old Testament also provides some information about accepted ancient standards regarding border control. During their journey to the Promised Land, the Israelites had to cross the borders of several nations. Numbers 20 records the course of action that they took when they approached the borders of Edom: "Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. 'Thus says your brother Israel:... Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will

go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.... We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more” (vss. 14-19; cf. Numbers 21:21-22).

Moses and the Israelites recognized Edom's right to control its borders. So they sent ambassadors to inform the King of Edom that they were ready to submit to certain conditions in order to receive the necessary authorization. Although these were “good faith” conditions between nations (cf. Deuteronomy 2:26-28), Edom refused to grant the Israelites passage through their territory and confronted them “with a strong hand” (Numbers 20:18,20). Rather than respond to Edom's unjust and belligerent actions with force, the Israelites decided to take another route (vs. 21).

[NOTE: Under God's direction, the Israelites were commanded to cross the borders of certain nations without waiting for civil authorization; they were even commanded to destroy those nations (Deuteronomy 7:1-5; Joshua 6:21). Nevertheless, these divine safe-conducts do **not** deny the rights of nations to control their borders and to establish laws that would protect them, nor do they mean that God's people are not called to respect such laws. The Old Testament clarifies that God commanded His people to enter and destroy such nations when their iniquity was “complete” (Genesis 15:16). Since God is sovereign, and since He establishes national powers (Romans 13:1; cf. Ezra 1:2; Isaiah 45:1; Jeremiah 27:4-7), He also has

the sovereign authority to dismiss the national powers whose wickedness has crossed the boundaries of divine patience (cf. Leviticus 18:25-30; Deuteronomy 9:4-5; Miller, 2005).

Deportation

“Deportation” is expelling someone from their country of birth or from a foreign country. The definition of “deportation” does not inherently imply the kind or level of culpability for which someone could be deported; it simply indicates the action of expelling someone from a place or country (see Agnes and Guralnik, 1999, p. 388). With that in mind, some examples of “deportation” can be found in the Old Testament.

One could say that the patriarch Isaac received orders of “deportation” when Abimelech commanded him to leave Gerar (Genesis 26:16,27). Although the reasons of his expulsion were unjust (since Gerar had opened its doors to Isaac and his household to live and do business—cf. 26:6-12), he decided to submit to the authority of Abimelech and move away from the borders of Gerar (26:17-23).

Nebuchadnezzar is known in the Bible and in history for deporting the Jews to Babylon. Some prophets of God were even taken as captives during the deportations (e.g., Daniel and Ezekiel). Even living in exile, the Jews recognized the authority of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:37-38) and submitted themselves to the laws of the Empire—except when those laws were in opposition to the laws of God (Daniel 3:16-18). God



Himself made repeated references to Nebuchadnezzar as “His servant” who ordered such deportations (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10).

After returning from Babylonian captivity to restore the Law, Ezra cried to God on behalf of the people he led back to Jerusalem—Jews who had ignored the commandments of God, taking wives from among the idol-worshipping nations around them. When the Jews realized the gravity of their sin, they decided to “deport” the foreign women—and the children born to them (Ezra 10:3,11,19,44; cf. Nehemiah 13:3,25-30). Such a deportation was a harsh but necessary action for the Jews to take because they had violated God’s Law.

Deportation is just as painful and difficult today as it was then. At times it seems unfair, but it can be necessary because of violations of the law.

Immigration

The people of God under the Old Law, the Israelites, were taken into captivity because they rejected Him. The Northern Kingdom was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in c. 722 B.C. and gradually disappeared. The people of the Southern Kingdom were deported to Babylonia (c. 605-586 B.C.—cf. Halley, 2000, pp. 266-267). During their times of bondage, the Jews were subject to the laws of the nations that dominated them—as long as those laws did not violate the laws of God (e.g., Daniel’s refusal to stop praying—Daniel 6; his three friends’ refusal to bow down

to Nebuchadnezzar's image—Daniel 3). Divinely inspired prophets (e.g., Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) recognized the captivities as divine punishments that had the purpose of producing repentance.

Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews of the Southern Kingdom would only be in captivity for 70 years (25:1,11-12), but they had to wait for God to reveal the conditions for their freedom. In His own time, He did so through the prophet Isaiah (44:28-45:6). God chose the Persian king Cyrus to fulfill His plan and allow His people to “immigrate” to Jerusalem, beginning in 539 B.C. At that time, the Jews received both oral and written authorization to appropriately immigrate to Palestine (Ezra 1:1-4).

In the years to follow, more Jews took advantage of government decrees allowing them to return to their homeland, but many remained under Persian rule. During the time of the Persian king Ahasuerus (c. 486-464 B.C.), Haman plotted the annihilation of the Jewish people. The Jews were submissive to the government but were eager to demonstrate their opposition to the king's decree regarding their destruction. They defended themselves only after a royal edict was issued allowing them to do so. Although God, as the Sovereign of all nations, had the right and power to guide a national revolution that could have set His people free at any time, He commonly used royal edicts, from non-Jewish rulers, to make that happen (cf. Exodus 5:1; 12:31-32).

Summary

The Old Testament provides us with multiple examples of God's plan for government and His people's responsibilities toward it. With the exceptions of divine safe-conducts due to the total depravity of wicked nations, God has allowed and authorized each government in the ancient world to regulate national security, border control, deportation, and immigration.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

As Christians, "we should serve in the newness of the Spirit" (Romans 7:6), looking "intently into the perfect law, the law of liberty" (James 1:25), i.e., the New Testament, to learn the ways in which that law is related to human laws.

Acts 4:19; 5:29

These New Testament verses are the foundation on which the divine commandment regarding submission to civil authorities rest. They reveal the supreme principle by which each Christian should act toward those authorities.

After the apostles Peter and John healed the lame man (Acts 3:1-10) and talked boldly about Jesus in the temple (Acts 3:11-4:1), the leaders of the Jews came to pressure and intimidate them, prohibiting them to speak in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). The apostles then responded: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge"

(vs. 19; cf. 5:29). The principle is simple: God is the Supreme Authority, and His commandments are the rule by which a Christian should measure his obedience to any secondary authority. Since Christ specifically chose the apostles to be His witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:8), they could **not** stop telling others what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20), in spite of threats from the authorities. Civil authorities deserve obedience—**until** such obedience constitutes disobedience to God. A Christian should reject obedience to any civil law that is contrary to the nature, law, and will of God.

In keeping with the purpose of this study, civil laws can be divided into three groups. First: the laws that the government implements which are **in harmony** with the will of God. Routinely, governments make laws that penalize immoral activities like robbery, rape, murder, etc. A Christian should obey these laws not only because of their inherent benevolence and the social benefit which they produce, but also because such laws harmonize with the nature and will of the divine, supreme Authority (cf. Exodus 20:13,15; Deuteronomy 22:25-27; Revelation 1:8).

Second: the laws that the government implements **in opposition** to God's will. These are the laws whose purpose is directly or indirectly to oppose what God stipulates in His Word through explicit commandment, governing principle, and approved example. The Jewish leaders' warnings to Peter and John (Acts 4:18) fall into this category. And in this category one can find any current law that authorizes or legalizes

that which God condemns (e.g., homosexuality, divorce for any reason, abortion; cf., Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:27; Matthew 19:9; Proverbs 6:17), or that condemns or makes illegal that which God authorizes and orders (e.g., prayer, the spreading of the Gospel; cf. Acts 1:4; 2:42; Romans 12:2; Colossians 4:2; Acts 8:4; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2). In this case, Christians are called to subject themselves to the will of God by rejecting such laws.

Third: the laws that the government implements **with the will and approval** of God. Since government is “God’s minister...for good” to its citizenry (Romans 13:4), then it should routinely implement laws to provide social well-being. Laws that promote order, peace, liberty, and national security—but do so without breaking divine laws—fall into this category. Due to the massive growth of immigrants in the U.S. over many decades, current immigration laws have become an obvious example of this kind of law. Although one should recognize that current immigration laws cannot perfectly deal with every aspect of immigration, their purpose is still national well-being. Christians are called to obey these laws because (1) they have been implemented by the government—established by God (Romans 13:1-2); (2) they are designed to fulfill the purpose for which God established government (Romans 13:3-6; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; cf. the Preamble of the *U.S. Constitution* and the *Declaration of Independence* of the U.S.); and (3) they do not oppose what is established in His Word (Acts 4:19; 5:29). [To examine some examples on the legal thought presented in this section, see Appendix C.]

“Render to Caesar the Things that Are Caesar’s”

Jesus is the supreme example for all Christians; we should “walk as He walked” (1 John 2:6), even in relation to the government. In Matthew 22, the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians tried to tempt Jesus with the question, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?” (vs. 17). After exposing the dishonest intentions of the Jewish leaders, He borrowed a coin and asked, “Whose image and inscription is this?” (vs. 20). Then He concluded, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (vs. 21). Some important points in this passage should be considered.

First, Jesus recognized the authority of the Roman government to require tribute. As Barnes wrote, “Cæsar’s image and name on the coin proved that it was his. It was proper, therefore, to give it back to him when he called for it” (1847a, 1:234). By receiving coins from the Roman Emperor, they were “[p]lainly acknowledging...they were under his [i.e., Caesar’s—MP] government” (Wesley, n.d.).

Second, the Christian’s obligation to government is even more critical considering the second part of Jesus’ statement: “...and to God the things that are God’s.” In other words, just as there are things that are God’s (belong to Him), there were also things that were Caesar’s (belonged to him). These were not things that the government received through civil charity (just as the things that belong to God are not

the result of Christian charity), but through divinely established right. Since the government provides protection, order, and other benefits to its citizens, Christians **should** honor and obey it, and in this case, pay it tribute (see Clarke, n.d., 1:213).

Jesus not only taught by His words, but by His actions. From Peter's response on another occasion, one can conclude that it was a common practice for Jesus to pay taxes to authorities (Matthew 17:24-25). On that particular occasion, Jesus paid a tax that did not even apply to Him simply to avoid "offending" others (Matthew 17:27). As a Jew in Palestine, His life was governed by the Mosaical Law (Galatians 4:4) and the laws of the occupying Romans. Jesus was prepared not only to follow both law codes, but to do even more than they expected of Him, i.e., to "go the second mile" (Matthew 5:41).

"Unless It Had Been Given You from Above"

During His life on Earth, Jesus frequently suffered great injustices, but He suffered the greatest injustices during the farcical trials that resulted in His death on the cross. When He was taken to the Praetorium, Pilate quickly arrived at the conclusion that He had committed "no crime" (John 18:38; 19:4), that the Jews had "handed Him over because of envy" (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10), and that Jesus was "innocent" (Matthew 27:24). Jesus had every right to protest and defend Himself, but He chose to keep silent (Matthew 27:14).

When Pilate interrogated Him, saying, “Do You not know that I have power to crucify you, and power to release You?,” Jesus responded, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:10-11). One should be careful not to misinterpret Jesus’ words in this passage. He did not say, “You **do not** have any power (or authority),” but, “You **could have no** power.” Jesus was not denying the authority and power of Pilate; He was indicating that such authority was **conditional** to the supreme will and authority of Almighty God.

Pilate had authority and power over Jesus in two senses: (1) God had determined the verdict against His Son before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:18-20; Acts 3:18-21). If God had not delivered His Son, there would have been nothing that Pilate could have done to condemn Him (cf. Romans 8:32; Luke 18:31-32; 24:7). (2) Pilate arrogantly considered his own merits as the source of his authority; in reality, he had authority over Jesus because God had put him in that position (Romans 13:1). As a man, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to human authority, and every Christian should follow His example and demonstrate the same attitude.

**“If I Am an Offender, or Have Committed
Anything Deserving of Death,
I Do Not Object to Dying”**

Aside from Jesus, Paul confronted more social injustices than most of the people in the Bible. The list of attacks and inhumane abuses against him is a long one

(cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27,32-33). Without a doubt, he would have had every reason to rebel against the authorities, but he chose to submit to them.

In Acts 25, Paul declared, in his own defense, that he had not sinned “against the law of the Jews, or the temple, or against Caesar” (vs. 8); so every accusation and punishment against him was unjust. Writing about this event, Luke, the author of Acts, used the Greek word *hamartano* (translated “sin”) to refer to any offense against Jewish law (whether moral or legal), the temple (through desecration), or Caesar (the symbol of Roman government and law). The rest of the New Testament uses the same Greek word to refer to any offense against God Himself (e.g., Matthew 27:4; Luke 15:18,21; 1 Corinthians 8:12; Titus 3:11; Hebrews 3:17) [see Vine, 1966, 4:33-34]. In other words, in the same way that Paul could sin against God, he could also sin against human law.

Another important aspect of Paul’s story is his willingness to submit to punishment under the law if he had broken it in some way. Paul was not a hardened masochist that delighted in pain and suffering; on several occasions, he defended himself against accusations from his enemies or tried to avoid mistreatment (Acts 23:6-9; 24; 25:11; 26). But he was ready to suffer punishment if he had broken the law. He indicated that there were things “worthy of death” for which he would be willing to die (Acts 25:11). Paul was implying that, in harmony with divine law, the law of Caesar (i.e., human law) had the authority and power to apply corresponding punishment for

certain crimes that were “worthy” of punishment—even death.

Like Jesus, the apostle Paul had not done anything “deserving of death or chains” (Acts 26:31), yet he submitted to the verdicts of the authorities (Acts 24-28).

“Let Every Soul Be Subject to the Governing Authorities”

As a divinely inspired apostle, Paul wrote the following instructions to the Christians in Rome:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore, you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor (Romans 13:1-7; cf. 1 Peter 2:13-17).

The main point of Paul's exhortations in this passage is to submit to civil authorities because: (1) no authority is established without the consent of God; (2) he who opposes the authorities opposes that which God established; (3) the authorities have the right to punish evil—even to apply the death penalty (the sword, vs. 4); and (4) since the authorities provide protection and service for the benefit of the righteous, they deserve our submission and obedience.

Note that Paul was not admonishing Christians to be in subjection only to some kind of "Christian" or "inherently moral" civil authorities and the laws they implement (vss. 8-14). He instructed them to be in subjection to authorities and their laws, which would include laws by which the government can fulfill its responsibilities to provide protection, order, stability, and social benefits to its citizens (e.g., laws regarding transportation, immigration, employment, taxes). Although many of these laws are amoral (i.e., cannot be morally classified), Christians still must obey them—to the point that the laws do not conflict with divine law (Acts 4:19)—or suffer the consequences.

"I Wanted to Do Nothing Without Your Consent"

If there is a New Testament passage that tells us of a parallel situation to illegal immigration, it would be Paul's letter to Philemon. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus. For some unknown reason, Onesimus had run away from his master and had arrived where Paul

was. Paul taught him the Gospel, and Onesimus became a Christian (vs. 10). What was his responsibility as a follower of Christ? Since Christ called us “to liberty” (Galatians 5:13), does that mean that Onesimus was then free from the authority of his master?

It could be said that Onesimus was an “unauthorized/illegal alien.” He had “immigrated” from the house of his master without the necessary authorization. He had crossed the “borders” of his master’s house to escape and search for a better life, but he ended up in a place where he had no legal right to stay. And although he could have been “very useful” to other people, including Paul, (vss. 11,13), his “application for a visa” still had not been accepted (vss. 9-21).

Paul wanted to make sure that Onesimus began his life as a Christian “legitimately” (cf. 2 Timothy 2:5). So, although Philemon owed Paul a large “debt” (vs. 19), and although Paul would have benefited greatly from Onesimus’ help during his imprisonment (vs. 13), the apostle himself insisted that the slave return to his master (vs. 12). Because Onesimus was still under the legal authority of his master (1 Corinthians 7:20-24), Paul refused to do anything without Philemon’s consent (vs. 14). This principle can still be applied in the 21st century: Christians should not do anything that human authority (which we should honor and obey) does not authorize, as long as it is in harmony with the will and law of God.

“Repent and Be Converted”

As in the Old Testament, the “evangelistic cry” of the New Testament is “Repent and be converted.” John the Baptizer began his ministry saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Jesus repeated that same warning (Matthew 4:17). When God finally opened the doors of the kingdom of heaven through the preaching of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, Peter instructed all the Jews: “Repent, and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). The rest of the New Testament repeats consistently the same admonition (Acts 3:19; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9).

But what is repentance? Repentance is a retrospective and introspective personal analysis that produces a regenerative change. In simple terms, repentance is penitence for sin (Acts 2:37; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11), which produces a change of attitude and action (Matthew 3:8; Acts 3:19; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:11).

In what way does biblical repentance affect the lives of those who decide to obey the Gospel? Paul offered a simple explanation when he told the Ephesians to “put off...the old man” and “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (4:22,24). In other words, repentance means that one stops doing something **and** begins doing something else. The repentant person not only leaves behind what is evil but also begins

to do what is good. Repentance also can require different things of different people. In the case of a thief, repentance requires that he stop stealing and begin to work (Ephesians 4:28). In the case of a liar, repentance requires that he stop lying and begin telling the truth (Ephesians 4:25). In the case of one who uses corrupt words, repentance requires that he stop using abusive speech and slander and begin using words to edify (Ephesians 4:29). In the case of one who is sexually immoral, repentance requires that he stop practicing immorality (Colossians 3:5) and begin searching for holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1). Then, what does repentance require of someone who disobeys divinely established civil authorities? Answer: it requires that that person stop opposing the government (Romans 13:2), and instead, submit to it (Romans 13:1,5; 1 Peter 2:13-14), demonstrating honor, respect, and obedience to both the authorities and to God (Romans 13:7; 1 Peter 2:17).

“Do You Not Judge Those Who Are Inside?”

Today there is a growing tendency to be more “tolerant”—especially in the area of religion. Many “Christians” have developed a phobia against everything that is analytical, critical, or sensible. An extension of this is the idea that Christians should not judge others in any situation. However, this idea is unbiblical and irrational.

It is true that the Lord condemned dishonest and unjust judgment in Matthew 7, but in the same text He warned His followers to “remove the plank from



their own eye” in order to “remove the speck from their brother’s eye” (vs. 5). To judge the “speck” in a brother’s eye is not a dishonest action if the one who makes the judgment first considers and corrects his own faults. Although Jesus opposed thoughtless and dishonest judgment, He never opposed righteous and sincere judgment; in fact, He demanded His followers to practice such judgment (see Lyons, 2003). He said, “Judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

The apostles also emphasized the necessity of applying judgment diligently and fairly. Paul told the Corinthians: “Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?... Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?” (1 Corinthians 6:3,5). “For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?” (1 Corinthians 5:12).

Although we will all finally be judged before the throne of God (2 Timothy 4:1), Christians are called to make honest and fair judgments in order to help a brother and to avoid error. Regarding doctrine, Christians must make judgments in order to rid themselves of skepticism and lack of faith (Hebrews 3:12), to examine everything (1 Thessalonians 5:21), to thoroughly search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), to prove the spirits (1 John 4:1), to convince those who contradict the Truth (Titus 1:9), to prohibit false teachings (1 Timothy 1:3), and to reject false teachers (2 John 10). Christians also must make judgments regarding morality, being careful to first analyze their own lives

(Romans 2:1,17-23), not participating in unfruitful works of the flesh (Ephesians 5:11), and keeping themselves free of the immoral “leaven” of the world (1 Corinthians 5:6-7,13).

Regarding clear apostolic teaching that we must submit to higher authorities (Romans 13), every Christian has the responsibility to make judgments that will help himself and his brother conform to the will of God. A Christian must not wash his hands of that responsibility, as Pilate did (cf. Matthew 27:24).

“Let None of You Suffer as an...Evildoer”

Certainly “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). First-century Christians suffered persecution (Acts 8:1; 11:19); the apostles suffered persecution (1 Corinthians 4:12; Galatians 5:11); and Jesus Himself suffered persecution (Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 2:21).

Persecution for the cause of Christ can take on different forms, and the faithful Christian may not have the ability to avoid it. For this reason, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:10-12). But there is a kind of persecution that the Christian should avoid

completely: justified persecution, that is to say, the persecution that comes as a consequence for sin.

Peter wrote, “For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:20-21). “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters” (1 Peter 4:15). In his commentary on 1 Peter 4:15, Kistemaker presented an insightful explanation on the terms “murderer,” “thief,” and “evildoer” which Peter used:

Peter mentions three categories: the murderer, the thief, and the evildoer. He implies that for someone to be so designated he must engage in criminal activities that are punishable by law. He warns that a Christian ought to live such an exemplary life that he can never be classified as a criminal who is guilty before a court of law.... Now they are no longer part of the world. However, should they suffer for criminal deeds, they would no longer be a testimony for Christ (1987, 2:177).

The word “evildoer” has additional importance in this study. This word makes reference to “a wicked man; or as guilty of injustice and wrong towards others” (Barnes, 1847b, 2:197). Peter also used this word in 1 Peter 2:12,14, where the context is clearly referring to those who break human laws. Christians should conduct themselves honorably so that when oth-

ers “speak against [them] as evildoers, they may, by [their] good works which they observe, glorify God” (1 Peter 2:12). Peter went on to say: “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (vss. 13-15).

“Remind Them to Be Subject to Rulers and Authorities”

Paul wrote his letters at a time when it would have been easy to “forget” the Christian principle of submission to civil authorities. The apostle had experienced innumerable injustices himself at the hands of the Roman authorities (2 Corinthians 11:23,25-26). Immorality and wickedness characterized the Roman emperors and other authorities. Therefore, the Jews throughout the Roman Empire were inclined to insubordination during that time period (see Conybeare and Howson, 1951, p. 762). And the Cretans “were very dissatisfied with Roman rule, and showed signs of revolt, according to Polybius and Plutarch” (quoted in Coffman, 1986, 9:325). In the midst of such conditions, Paul told Titus to **remind** the brethren in Crete to “be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work” (3:1). The Christians in Crete needed to be good examples in an environment in which their countrymen had a bad reputation (Titus 1:12).

Apostolic teachings emphasize the fact that the failures and defects of a government do not free Christians of their responsibility to submit to that government (cf. Matthew 23:1-3). Sadly, some Christians have decided to forget their responsibilities to the government (i.e., submission) and to their brothers and sisters in Christ (i.e., to remind them about submission).

When it comes to abiding by federal immigration laws, it seems that this “amnesia” is a widespread illness among those who claim to follow Christ. Faithful Christians would do well to stop for a moment and **remember**.

**“And to Him Who Knows to Do Good,
and Does Not Do It, to Him It Is Sin”**

Christian responsibility has both negative and positive aspects. The negative aspect restricts a Christian from participating in certain activities that are in opposition to divine will. The positive aspect drives a Christian to be part of activities that are in harmony with divine will. Being a responsible Christian involves going beyond the prohibition, “Don’t do what is wrong,” to the command, “Do what is right.”

With the knowledge of what is right (the result of earnest study of God’s Word) comes the responsibility to **do** what is right (John 12:47-48). As one’s knowledge and understanding of what is right and good grows, he should be willing to put that knowledge into practice. So a Christian breaks God’s law not



only when he does what he knows he should not do, but also when he neglects the good that he knows he should do (James 4:17). Biblical teaching clearly indicates that a Christian should submit to civil law—as long as it does not contradict God’s law (Acts 4:19). The Christian should not simply avoid rebellion to civil authorities (the negative aspect of Christian responsibility—Romans 13:2), but he should also submit to them (the positive aspect of that responsibility—Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-15).

Summary

The willingness of ancient Christians to submit to human law can be summarized in the words of the *Epistle of Diognetus*: “They [Christians—MP] spend their existence upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they surpass the laws” (Radford, 1908, p. 64). Sadly, the passing of the centuries seems to have weakened that willingness—in spite of the clear, abundant biblical teachings on the subject of Christian submission to civil laws and authorities.



HISPANIC MINISTRIES IN THE UNITED STATES

One only has to read a few books, newspaper articles, and Internet reports, or watch a news program on television to realize that the subject of illegal immigration is not a trivial matter in the U.S. But some would suggest: “Those things **only** happen on TV. They don’t affect us? After all, the Lord’s church is different, don’t you think?” Very few realize the extent of illegal immigration’s overall effects on the Lord’s church, and its specific effects on the evangelistic efforts we call “Hispanic ministries.”

Although I grew up in a South American country, from my youth I knew about the problem of illegal immigration in the United States. During those years, I heard stories about people who tried to cross the U.S. border illegally and failed, as well as stories about those who succeeded, trying to realize the so-called “American dream.” Those stories were about people that I had never met. I did not know a single member of the Lord’s church who was involved in any of those

stories—until 10 years ago, when a lady in a congregation in Peru told me openly that her daughter was living illegally in the U.S. I was surprised, to say the least, and even more surprised when I was informed that she had paid more than \$1,000 to obtain false documentation so that her son could also cross the U.S. border. During the course of my conversation with that lady, it was obvious that she had never considered that her actions were reprehensible.

After a few years of working with another congregation in Peru, my wife (who was born in North America) and I decided to move to the United States. I planned to dedicate myself to preaching and to translating biblical materials into Spanish, and the U.S. Hispanic ministries of the church represented a great opportunity to continue preaching and spreading the cause of Christ. In 2004, my family and I visited the U.S., and I was interviewed for positions with such ministries. On one such trip, I met with the elders and those in charge of missions at three congregations which were considering starting Hispanic ministries. My perception after those three interviews was that the representatives of those congregations really had not considered the magnitude of the challenges illegal immigration presents for Hispanic ministries. Some of them had not even considered the subject.

That same year I accepted a position as a translator for Apologetics Press. Since then I have received numerous requests from congregations who wanted to meet with me—congregations who were considering starting Hispanic ministries and wanted to hear

a “Hispanic perspective.” My experiences with these congregations have been the same as before: they had not considered the impact of illegal immigration on Hispanic ministries. During one such meeting in Tennessee, while presenting information about the topic and its effects on Hispanic ministries, one of the elders interrupted me to declare that for him it was “simply a political matter,” implying that the issue was irrelevant to what they hoped to do.

Some time ago, when I decided to address this subject in written form, I contacted different congregations of the Lord’s church by phone to obtain information about their Hispanic ministries. Although this was not an exhaustive survey, the information that I obtained confirmed that my experiences were not isolated cases, and that the elder’s comment reflects a common point of view among members of the church. Of the several Hispanic congregations that I contacted, in five states, their ministers had different opinions about illegal immigration and its relationship to Christianity. Approximately 40% agreed that Christians should deal with illegal immigration doctrinally. On the other hand, approximately 60% considered it as strictly a matter of opinion or politics, or they simply had no opinion about the subject.

Although the statistics speak for themselves, it is interesting to note that of the 40% of those who indicated that illegal immigration should be viewed from a doctrinal perspective, more than 26% of them had never studied or taught the subject from that perspective. One of them lamented, “We are just one against

100.” That leaves us with less than 14% of Hispanic ministers that not only believe that the subject should be dealt with doctrinally, but that also act accordingly. Dealing with the subject of illegal immigration—with an open Bible—is urgently needed.

THE DYSFUNCTIONAL EFFECTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON HISPANIC MINISTRIES

It is my conviction that Hispanic ministries are a **great evangelistic effort**. Since I grew up in a Hispanic country and worked with several Hispanic congregations, I had, have, and will continue to have a special appreciation for Hispanic ministries. My plea is that no Hispanic ministry in the United States ever ends, but that many more will be able to see “the light of day.” But as they spread around the nation, I also hope that awareness will grow about the dysfunctional effects of illegal immigration on those ministries.

Dysfunctional Ministers

It has been said that each congregation is “a reflection of its leaders.” In fact, when a congregation does not function properly, it is likely that its leaders are not functioning well either. If a leader says something is a “doctrinal matter,” but he has never taught on the subject and reveals his unwillingness to do so, it becomes obvious that such a leader (1) has a devalued concept of doctrine, or (2) he does not really believe that such a matter has anything to do with doctrine,

or (3) both. Whatever the case may be, such a person cannot be an effective leader if he has a faulty perspective about doctrine.

A leader cannot make effective judgments if he does not act appropriately himself (Matthew 7:1-5). A couple of years ago, a member of the Lord's church told me why his congregation no longer had a Hispanic ministry: the minister they had hired was an illegal immigrant himself. That is not a unique case. Over the years, several congregations of the church have inadvertently employed people who entered the U.S. illegally, or who were living in the States without the necessary documentation. Experience, facts, and reason force us to conclude that the situation is no different today. [To read some recommendations on hiring Hispanic ministers, see Appendix D.]

If a minister or the leaders of a congregation—whether Hispanic or English—do not submit themselves to the authorities, how can they remind the members to follow this command (Titus 3:1)?

Dysfunctional Congregations

The brief survey that I conducted confirmed that the memberships of many Hispanic congregations in the U.S. are larger than many congregations in Latin America. One might think this would be cause for rejoicing and excitement. However, the survey also revealed that approximately 50% of the members have legal status and the other 50% do not. This is a se-

rious problem for the Lord's church which concerns me greatly.

If about half of the Hispanic membership in the U.S. is not living in accordance with the laws of the land, how will we be able to carry out our mission to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 4:14), have "favor with all the people" (Acts 2:47), and avoid giving offense to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)?

Dysfunctional Families

It has been said that the family is "the foundation of society." One could also say that the family is the foundation of the church. Without strong families, strong churches cannot exist. Illegal immigration weakens the family and sometimes destroys it. Many who make the decision to cross the U.S. border also make the lamentable choice to abandon their families (wives, husbands, and/or children). Although the "noble cause" that pushes them is their search for a "better future" for their families, they choose to leave behind the family unit that could really give them a better future.

Dividing a family affects the way it should function. How can parents raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; cf. Deuteronomy 6:6-9)? How will a husband be able to live wisely with his wife if they are purposely living hundreds (or thousands) of miles apart (1 Peter 3:7)? How will a wife bring her husband to the Lord by her conduct (1 Peter 3:1)? And how will they be able to

fulfill their conjugal duties to one another (1 Corinthians 7:3,5)?

Dysfunctional Relationships

Some years ago my wife and I met a Mexican couple who had illegally immigrated to the United States. They had two daughters. We invited them to the services of the church, but only the father came with his daughters. He and I became good friends, and for several months, we studied the Bible together. The life of this young father was a terrible drama, and resembled the stories of so many other illegal aliens. He had been married in Mexico but had separated from his wife, for unscriptural reasons (cf. Matthew 19:9). Then he met another young Mexican woman with whom he began an illicit relationship, and they had a daughter. Together they decided to illegally cross the U.S. border, risking their lives and the life of their little girl. Once they were in the U.S., they had another daughter so they could continue to illegally stay in the U.S. because of her citizenship.

This father not only needed to correct his legal status with the authorities, he also needed to correct his marital status. The woman with whom he was living was not his wife. Because of the hurried and unwise decisions he had made, he was in a labyrinth from which it seemed there was no way out. Those decisions affected his relationships with the two women in his life—and will affect his daughters all their lives. Even taking steps to try to correct the situation according to the will of God seemed to have enormous

repercussions. Sadly, this young father succumbed to the pressure and decided to continue the illicit relationship in which he was living.

There are many such stories hidden in the hearts of those who have crossed the border of the U.S., stories which are often stumbling blocks to obeying the Gospel.

Dysfunctional Christians

Illegal immigration poses a colossal challenge to the spiritual life of one struggling to draw nearer to God. The Bible clearly teaches that one result of obeying the Gospel is the forgiveness of the penitent believer's past sins (Acts 2:38; 10:43; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). But obedience to the Gospel **does not legitimize** any illicit activity of a new Christian. If someone becomes involved in a homosexual "marriage" and then decides to obey the Gospel, God will pardon his past sins (1 Corinthians 6:9,11), but his immoral relationship is not any more acceptable after his baptism than it was before. If someone steals his neighbor's motorcycle and then decides to obey the Gospel, God will forgive him (1 Corinthians 6:10-11), but his obedience in no way means that he can keep the motorcycle or does not have to face the consequences of his actions. If a man takes another's wife and then decides to obey the Gospel, God will forgive his adultery (1 Corinthians 6:9,11), but his obedience in no way indicates that he and the woman can stay together and still be acceptable to God. In each of these cases, he who draws near to God must decide to relinquish his former way of life, putting off "the old man

which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of [his] mind,” putting on “the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Can this principle be applied to the problem of illegal immigration? The person who crosses the border of one nation into another, without permission and approval of higher authorities, has broken the divine precept which states that “every person” is to submit to those authorities (Romans 13:1). If this person decides to obey the Gospel, God will certainly pardon his resistance to civil authority (Romans 13:2), but his obedience to the Gospel in no way means that God suddenly approves of his illegal actions. As in the situations described in the previous paragraph, such a person must decide to leave behind the old man of sin to pursue righteousness and holiness and truth.

How can a Christian live with a “pure conscience” (1 Timothy 3:9; 1 Peter 3:21) if every second, minute, and hour of his life he continues to break the law and defy the divinely sanctioned authority of the government?

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION FOR THESE PROBLEMS?

Information

In every aspect of human life, information is crucial—whether it be about open heart surgery or a sporting event. In the spiritual realm, the necessity

of information is even more crucial because it carries with it eternal consequences. The lament of the prophet Hosea still applies today: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (4:6).

Because illegal immigration has the potential to negatively affect God’s people today, it is very important that non-Hispanic as well as Hispanic congregations have adequate knowledge about it and the laws that govern it.

Some time ago, the leadership of a congregation in Nevada decided to publicly address the problem of illegal immigration from the perspective of Christians’ responsibility to civil laws. After that lesson, the congregation lost half of its Hispanic membership. Jesus experienced similar heart-breaking losses when “many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66) because they considered His teachings too “hard” (6:60). [NOTE: As people who have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:10), we should extend a warm welcome to those who also search for mercy and compassion from God. Like any other person, illegal immigrants are welcomed in our assemblies. We should encourage them to be part of our services so that they can hear the Word, but we cannot approve of or excuse insubordination.]

Generally speaking, the Truth has never been popular, and those who teach it have always encountered opposition. It was not popular in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5; 1 Peter 3:20), or Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), or Moses (Numbers 14:9-12), or the judges (Judges

17:6; 21:25), or the kings of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 15:25-26,33-34; 16:25-26), or the prophets (Daniel 9:9-11; Matthew 23:37), or Jesus (Matthew 7:13-14; John 1:11), or at the beginning of the Christian Age (2 Timothy 4:3-4). No matter what the opposition might be, ministers should not shy away from preaching “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Teaching the Truth is not always welcomed (Galatians 4:16), even when it is done in love (Ephesians 4:15; John 1:9-11), but it still must be taught.

Location

In our mobile society, it is important to have a good sense of location. With an average annual mileage of 15,000 miles per driver (approximately one round-trip between Los Angeles, California and Hong Kong, China), the necessity of a global positioning system (GPS) seems to be indispensable. In the spiritual aspect, the necessity of location is even more important.

From my perspective, spiritual location functions in the opposite way of our physical location. Generally, when we want to take a trip, we map out the journey to our final destination (in the future) on the basis of where we are (at the present). In the spiritual realm, we must determine our final destination (eternity) in order to determine what our position should be today.

The New Testament emphasizes the same point. Jesus said that His followers are “not of the world” (John 17:14). The apostles and prophets preached that God “has begotten us again to a living hope through

the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4). “[O]ur citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). We are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11).

When a believer seriously considers that his final destination is heaven, he will make every effort to stay on the path that leads to eternal reward. When a believer deeply loves God and wants to live with Him eternally (1 Thessalonians 4:17), his perspective about the world and his place in it will change, his perspective about his spiritual life will change, and his decisions and actions will change.

Without a doubt, some of the decisions which followers of Christ must make in view of eternity are difficult (Matthew 19:21-22; Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33). For someone who purposely breaks immigration laws and then looks for ways to legitimize his actions, the only solution may be to return to his native country in order to assure his heavenly home. In view of his eternal location, such a person may need to change his earthly location. Sadly, many more try to cross the border of the United States than to cross the border into heaven.

Commitment

Generally speaking, our society no longer believes in commitment. Hollywood makes fun of the solemn



vow: “Till death do us part.” The medical community makes fun of the Hippocratic Oath: “I will not give to a woman an abortive remedy.” And the political world makes fun of the patriotic motto: “In God we trust.” In this atmosphere of general lack of conscience, God still requires commitment from Christians.

Christians must demonstrate their commitment to God and to their fellow man in many different ways. They must be committed to being set apart, holy, and to conforming to His will (Romans 12:2). One of the church’s obligations to others is to carry out the Lord’s commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16), to share the Gospel with everyone—including those who illegally cross the border into the U.S. If an illegal alien obeys the Gospel, comes to understand biblical teaching about submission to civil authorities, and then decides to return to the country from which he came, what should the church do? If possible, shouldn’t the church provide economic help for the brother or sister to return to their country and get his or her life right with God? If the church is called to provide “the things which are needed for the body” (James 2:16), shouldn’t it provide “the things which are needed” for that person to survive spiritually as well? Shouldn’t the church be willing to spend its resources in such efforts, for the love of the souls of men (2 Corinthians 12:15)?

Consider the great spiritual benefits that result from this type of commitment from the Lord’s church. About four years ago, Darwin was an illegal alien from Guatemala living in the U.S. He had been living and

working in east Tennessee where he contacted a congregation of the Lord's church. The elders and the preacher of the congregation taught him the Word of God, and hoped that Darwin would begin a Hispanic ministry there. I was invited to preach at that congregation, and I had the opportunity to meet with the elders and discuss the situation. I also had the opportunity to speak with Darwin about his responsibility, as a Christian, to God and the government. He had not only crossed the border illegally, but he had also left a family in Guatemala. He was not married, but he had lived with a woman for several years. After our meeting, the church continued teaching Darwin about his responsibilities as a Christian.

I returned to that congregation after several months, and I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Darwin had decided to return to Guatemala after considering his responsibilities to God, the civil authorities, and to his family. The church did not begin its Hispanic ministry with Darwin in the United States, but it had begun a missionary effort whose results have yet to be fully measured. The church helped Darwin to return to his country. There he shared the Gospel with the mother of his children, he married her, and she was baptized sometime thereafter. The church in Tennessee contacted the Hispanic congregation closest to Darwin's home in Guatemala (about four and a half hours away) and helped him with the necessary funds to transport his family each weekend. Darwin continued studying God's Word and sharing the Gospel in his community.

About two years ago, the congregation in Tennessee decided to help him even more by sending him to a school of preaching. During his absence, he offered his home to a group of believers as a meeting place. In the first year Darvin was away, God added more than 10 people to the church meeting in his home. Today, Darvin, his wife Lily, and his children are in the Bible School of the Americas in Panama, where Darvin is preparing himself to continue sowing the Word of God in open hearts.

The church in Tennessee continues to provide spiritual support for Darvin and his family as well. Thanks to their combined commitment, other souls obeyed the Gospel, and a new Hispanic ministry began in Darvin's neighborhood in Guatemala. Only God knows the spiritual, eternal benefits for the Lord's church that will be gained in the future. "To [God] be the glory" (Romans 11:36).

Without churches that will step up and deeply commit themselves to God and to their neighbors, many other sincere souls will not hear the Gospel. Without Hispanic ministries that have a biblical perspective of their evangelistic responsibility, the "Darvins" of the world will continue to simply warm the pews in church buildings across the U.S.



CONCLUSION

Studying the Word of God and investigating U.S. immigration laws forces us to conclude that a successful Hispanic ministry....

...is where controversial topics are not put aside in order to avoid opposition, but where those topics are dealt with in love, in spite of the opposition.

...is where Christians are deeply interested in their own spiritual welfare and that of others.

...is not where Christians hope for a period of amnesty from legal prosecution, but rather where Christians experience a time of spiritual regeneration.

...is not where the majority of members only hear the Word, but rather where the members put what they have heard into practice.

...is where greater emphasis is given to one's heavenly citizenship than to one's earthly citizenship.

...spreads its influence, not only within the United States, but also beyond its borders.

...may generate economic losses, but its spiritual profits will be immeasurable.

...is not where Christians demand “rights” which are not legally theirs, but where they strive to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to God, to their fellow man, and to government.

...is where mature Christians are willing to accept earthly separation in order to guarantee an eternal reunion.

There can be no doubt that illegal immigration poses many challenges to the Lord’s church, but it also provides great opportunities to spread the Gospel. Each year, the church spends hundreds of thousands of dollars to send missionaries to foreign countries. Those good men and women have to spend their early years in the field, learning the language and adapting to different customs and conditions. Although this evangelistic effort is laudable, some congregations fail to see the incalculable potential of converting illegal immigrants who continually come into the U.S. and helping them to return to their homelands to spread the Word. Illegal immigrants literally constitute an untapped army of potential evangelists!

Many congregations which have Hispanic ministries (or are thinking about starting them), and their Hispanic ministers, need a new perspective. They need to abandon the focus on **quantity** and embrace the focus on **quality**. Hispanic ministers should avoid trying to please their supporting congregations through large numbers of members, making every

effort to please God in all things instead (Ephesians 6:6). Ministers can plant and water, but God is the One who gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7). In the end, “each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it” (1 Corinthians 3:13). May the Lord help us to work diligently to reach souls for Him and to willingly face our responsibility to teach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).



APPENDIX A

U.S. IMMIGRATION LAWS

Immigration and Nationality Act

Prevention of Unauthorized Landing of Aliens

It shall be the **duty** of every person, including the owners, masters, officers, and agents of vessels, aircraft, transportation lines, or international bridges or toll roads...bringing an alien to, or providing a means for an alien to come to, the United States..., **to prevent** the landing of such alien in the United States at a port of entry other than as designated by the Attorney General or at any time or place other than as designated by the immigration officers (2009, Act 271, emp. added).

Unlawful Bringing of Aliens into United States

It shall be **unlawful** for any person, including any transportation company, or the owner, master, commanding officer, agent, charterer, or consignee of any vessel or aircraft, **to bring** to the United States from any place outside thereof (other than from foreign contiguous territory) any alien **who**



does not have a valid passport and an unexpired visa (2009, Act 273, emp. added).

Unlawful Employment of Aliens

(a) Making Employment of Unauthorized Aliens Unlawful.-

(1) In general.-It is **unlawful** for a person or other entity-

(A) **to hire, or to recruit or refer** for a fee, for employment in the United States an alien knowing the alien is an unauthorized alien (as defined in subsection (h) (3)) with respect to such employment....
[NOTE: Article (h)(3) defines an “unauthorized alien” as someone who, at a given time, is not legally admitted for permanent residence, or someone who is not authorized for employment by the Immigration and Naturalization Act or the Attorney General.]

(2) Continuing employment.-It is **unlawful** for a person or other entity, after hiring an alien for employment in accordance with paragraph (1), **to continue to employ** the alien in the United States knowing the alien is (or has become) an unauthorized alien with respect to such employment.

(b) Employment Verification System.-

(1) Attestation after examination of documentation.-

(A) In general.-The person or entity **must attest**, under penalty of perjury and on



a form designated or established by the Attorney General by regulation, that it has verified that the individual is not an unauthorized alien by examining-

- (i) a document described in subparagraph (B), or
- (ii) a document described in subparagraph (C) and a document described in subparagraph (D). [NOTE: the documents described in subparagraph (B) include: a U.S. passport, a residency card, a registration card or other document designated by the Attorney General. The documents of subparagraph (C) include: a social security card (without employment restrictions in the U.S.) or other documents that, by law, the Attorney General considers acceptable. The documents of subparagraph (D) include a valid driver's license issued by one of the 50 states of the U.S.]

- (2) Individual attestation of employment authorization.-The individual **must attest**, under penalty of perjury on the form designated or established for purposes of paragraph (1), that the individual is a citizen or national of the United States, an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, or an alien who is authorized under this Act or by the Attorney General to be hired, recruited, or referred for such employment (2009, Act 274A, emp. added).



Entry of Alien at Improper Time or Place; Misrepresentation and Concealment of Facts

- (a) Any alien who (1) enters or attempts to enter the United States at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers, or (2) eludes examination or inspection by immigration officers, or (3) attempts to enter or obtains entry to the United States by a willfully false or misleading representation or the willful concealment of a material fact, shall, for the first commission of any such **offense**, be fined under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both, and, for a subsequent commission of any such offense, be fined under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both.
- (b) Any alien who is **apprehended while entering (or attempting to enter)** the United States at a time or place other than as designated by immigration officers shall be subject to a civil penalty...
- (c) An individual who **knowingly enters into a marriage for the purpose of evading any provision of the immigration laws** shall be imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or fined not more than \$250,000, or both.
- (d) Any individual who **knowingly establishes a commercial enterprise for the purpose of evading any provision of the immigration laws** shall be imprisoned for



not more than 5 years, fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or both (2009, Act 275, emp. added).

U.S. Code

Admission of immigrants into the United States

Except as provided in subsection (b) and subsection (c) of this section [subsection (b) deals with readmission without required documents at the discretion of the Attorney General; subsection (c) deals with the admission of aliens as refugees], no immigrant shall be admitted into the United States unless at the time of application for admission he (1) has a valid unexpired immigrant visa...and (2) presents a valid unexpired passport or other suitable travel document or document of identity and nationality, if such document is required under the regulations issued by the Attorney General (2006, Title 8, Chapter 12, Section 1181).

Inadmissible Aliens

This is one of the most extensive sections of Title 8 of the U.S. Code, containing more than 80 pages of material. Only a general summary will be presented.

Section 1182 considers inadmissible aliens as:

1. any foreigner who enters illegally, i.e., in violation of immigration laws, who is in the U.S. without having been legally admitted, or who enters the country at a time and place not designated by the Attorney General [(6)(A)].



2. any foreigner who by fraud or by deliberate forgery seeks to obtain, or has obtained, a visa, some documentation of admission, or any other benefit provided under this section [(6)(C)].
3. any immigrant who does not have valid, adequate documentation for the time of his entrance, or who has not received a visa according to the section regarding the allotment of immigrant visas (1153) [(7)(A)].
4. any non-immigrant who does not have a valid visa for a minimum of six months [(7)(B); (9)(B)(C)].
5. any alien who has been previously deported under immigration inspection and who seeks readmission within five years from the time of his deportation (or within 20 years, in the case of a subsequent deportation) [(9)(A)] (2006, Title 8, Chapter 12, Section 1182).

Deportable Aliens

Any alien (including an alien crewman) in and admitted to the United States shall, upon the order of the Attorney General, be removed if the alien is within one or more of the following classes of deportable aliens:

- (1) Inadmissible at time of entry or of adjustment of status or violates status [an alien who does not meet existing conditions for his arrival time, or who remains in the U.S. in violation of federal law, or who does not have valid non-immigrant documentation—MP] (2006, Title 8, Chapter 12, Section 1227).



Citizen of the United States

Whoever falsely and willfully represents himself to be a citizen of the United States shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both (2006, Title 18, Part I, Chapter 43, Section 911).

Naturalization, Citizenship or Alien Registry

- (a) Whoever knowingly makes any false statement under oath, in any case, proceeding, or matter relating to, or under, or by virtue of any law of the United States relating to naturalization, citizenship, or registry of aliens; or...
- (c) Whoever uses or attempts to use any certificate of arrival, declaration of intention, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship or other documentary evidence of naturalization or of citizenship, or any duplicate or copy thereof, knowing the same to have been procured by fraud or false evidence or without required appearance or hearing of the applicant in court or otherwise unlawfully obtained...

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both (2006, Title 18, Part I, Chapter 47, Section 1015).

Misuse of Evidence of Citizenship or Naturalization

Whoever knowingly uses for any purpose any order, certificate, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship, judgment, decree, or exemplification, unlawfully issued or made, or copies or du-



plicates thereof, showing any person to be naturalized or admitted to be a citizen, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both (2006, Title 18, Part I, Chapter 69, Section 1423; see also Part I, Chapter 69, Section 1424).

Procurement of Citizenship or Naturalization Unlawfully

- (a) Whoever knowingly procures or attempts to procure, contrary to law, the naturalization of any person, or documentary or other evidence of naturalization or of citizenship; or
- (b) Whoever, whether for himself or another person not entitled thereto, knowingly issues, procures or obtains or applies for or otherwise attempts to procure or obtain naturalization, or citizenship, or a declaration of intention to become a citizen, or a certificate of arrival or any certificate or evidence of nationalization or citizenship, documentary or otherwise, or duplicates or copies of any of the foregoing—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned...15 years (in the case of any other offense) [according to the 1996 amendment, “no more than five years” in the case of any offense other than to facilitate acts of international terrorism or drug trafficking—MP], or both (2006, Title 18, Part I, Chapter 69, Section 1425; see also Part I, Chapter 69, Sections 1426-1427).





APPENDIX B

OTHER LAWS RELATED TO THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Traffic Laws *(California Vehicle Code)*

Unlawful to Drive Unless Licensed

- (a) A person may not drive a motor vehicle upon a highway, unless the person then holds a valid driver's license issued under this code... (2009, Division 6, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 12500).

Use of a Vehicle by an Unlicensed Driver: Owner's Duty

- (a) No owner of a motor vehicle may knowingly allow another person to drive the vehicle upon a highway unless the owner determines that the person possesses a valid driver's license that authorizes the person to operate the vehicle... (2009, Division 6, Chapter 4, Section 14604).

Evidence of Financial Responsibility

- (a) All drivers and all owners of a motor vehicle shall at all times be able to establish financial responsibility pursuant to Section 16021, and shall at all times carry in the vehicle evidence of the form of financial responsibility in effect for the vehicle. [NOTE: According to Section 16021, the driver must be capable of presenting documentation about his insurance company and the type of insurance he has, in accordance with the laws established by the Department of Transportation] (2009, Division 7, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 16020).

Registration Required

- (1) No person shall drive, move, or leave standing upon a highway, or in an offstreet public parking facility, any motor vehicle...unless it is registered and the appropriate fees have been paid under this code or registered under the permanent trailer identification program... (2009, Division 3, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 4000).

Employment Law ***(Employment Law Guide)***

Under the INA, employers may hire only persons who may legally work in the United States (i.e., citizens and nationals of the U.S.) and aliens authorized to work in the U.S. The employer must verify the identity and employment eligibility of anyone to be hired, which includes completing the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9).

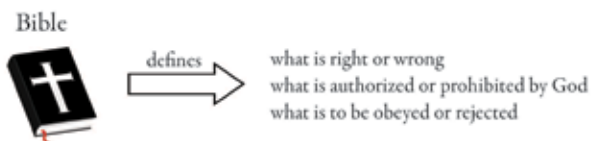
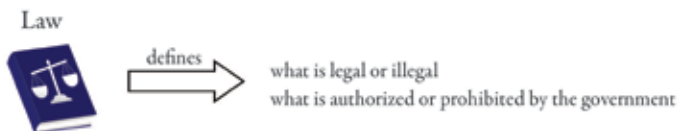


Employers must keep each I-9 on file for at least three years, or one year after employment ends, whichever is longer (2008).



APPENDIX C

LEGAL THOUGHT



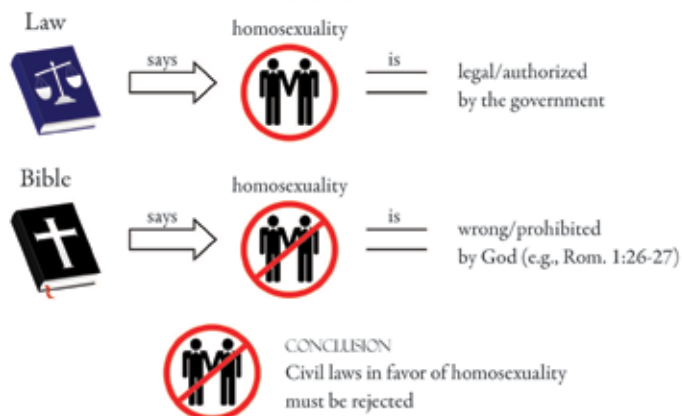
EXAMPLE 1



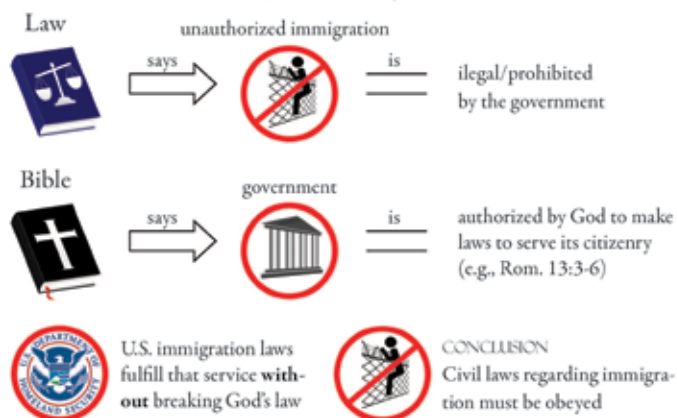
CONCLUSION

Civil laws against theft must
be obeyed

EXAMPLE 2



EXAMPLE 3





APPENDIX D

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HIRING HISPANIC MINISTERS

The following list is for the benefit of congregations in the United States, who have, or are considering starting, a Hispanic ministry.

1. Look for information about the Hispanic population in your area.
 - a. The average immigration status
 - b. Areas of highest concentration of Hispanics
2. Carefully research candidates for Hispanic ministers.
 - a. Personal background (e.g., family background, doctrinal background)
 - b. Immigration documentation and status (e.g., type of visa, work authorization, expiration date of his visa, possibility of renewing his visa)
3. Prepare a questionnaire for the minister candidate. The following questions could be included:

- a. What is your perspective about illegal immigration?
 - b. Do you believe it is right for a Christian to stay in a country illegally?
 - c. Are you willing to teach publicly about a Christian's responsibility to the government, especially in relation to illegal immigration?
 - d. What would be your principal objective in our Hispanic ministry?
4. Provide this book to the minister candidate. (For additional information, contact Apologetics Press.)
 5. Gather all the pertinent and necessary documentation for the candidate's employment.
 - a. Require copies of his worker visa, residence visa or naturalization certification, etc.
 - b. Complete and file the form of eligibility for employment (I-9).
 6. Conduct a follow-up into the minister's immigration status after he begins working with the ministry.
 - a. Require updated, valid documentation (e.g., renewed visa, change of immigration status or documentation of application in process).
 - b. File additional copies of immigration documentation.



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