

Faith and The Border:
A Christian Response to Illegal Immigration

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A Controversial Topic

A clink of chains sounded in the cold courtroom as a long line of men entered and stood before a judge. Other than the scraping of chains and the shuffling of baggy pants and heavy shoes, silence filled the room. Hopeless and resigned looks were obvious on every face. Forty-six people in a Tucson courtroom were about to be sentenced back to Mexico for illegally crossing the border into Arizona. As I watched the proceedings of Operation Streamline with many people who advocate for immigration justice, illegal immigration became real to me. The judge did not sentence these crossers with felonies, although he had the legal right to do so. However, if these immigrants were caught crossing the border again, they would most likely be labeled felons and receive jail time. Most people do not realize that illegal border crossers are deported, detained, or even judged as felons because they are caught immigrating illegally. Whether right or wrong, legal or illegal, immigrants cross into the United States from Mexico. Some make it successfully and disappear into the country, others are apprehended and detained, but many lose their lives in the process. Regardless of political views regarding these immigrants, their lives matter and actions should be taken to reduce the number of deaths that occur each year.

Christian churches along the Mexico/United States border must become involved in remedying the injustices found in illegal immigration since the Bible states they should assist those in need. Some Catholic and Presbyterian churches are already involved in this social issue, but there is a large Christian population still uninvolved and uninformed about immigration. A variety of practical ways to reach this goal of involvement exists—those willing to help can join a group that ensures immigrants do not die in the desert or speak

up against social injustices. Christians can humanize illegal immigration by learning about it and by taking practical steps to end the injustices found within this social issue. Humanizing illegal immigration can bring justice to an often overlooked and disregarded population. To aid in the process, I have created a guiding outline designed to be utilized with an educational workshop to teach Christians about the issues surrounding illegal/undocumented immigration and to educate Christians about how they can get involved in response to a social issue that is often left for the government or for “others” to address. Information is presented from a Christian perspective yet also objectively focuses on what is currently being done by government agencies to address this social issue. Also addressed are the roots and histories of why people choose to migrate, and the practical responsibility of people of faith. A Christian perspective will be evident in this work, but it will not disregard or eliminate viewpoints that differ from it.

Studying illegal immigration, I came to the realization that a substantial portion of the population avoids participating in this particular social issue; Christians are a part of this population. Ironically, Christians are greatly involved with food banks and other social systems that support immigrants. Beyond these areas, Christians can contribute in ending immigration injustices by preventing dehydration in the desert, speaking up against social injustices found in immigration, and by working to change the laws and systems that promote injustice.

The first step to bring positive change in this social area is to humanize illegal immigration for Christians by educating them about undocumented immigration. They must hear the names and see the faces of those involved. Secondly, they must ascertain what the Bible says about the foreigner and those in need and what the Christian response

is towards them. For believers, earthly politics are secondary to kingdom politics, especially when it comes to those who are in need and overlooked by society. Christians must also be willing to make a change in their personal views to truly focus their attention on remedying social injustices found in immigration, especially for illegal/undocumented persons. A graphic event, like seeing a courtroom filled with fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters being deported, can be a strong catalyst to change individual perspectives. Churches have many missionaries and other people of like mind who look to find ways to engage in the local community, so presenting them with the sobering details of this social justice issue and giving volunteers opportunities to become involved is essential when it comes to humanizing immigration. The final step is to collaborate with other churches and organizations, even with those of different denominations. Via this step, an exchange of resources can be utilized to bring people to work towards a common goal of bettering the immigration system, so it benefits all parties involved.

The Document Language

As a precursor to this document, the terms “illegal” and “undocumented” will be used interchangeably to describe immigrants, since both words are frequently used to address this topic. When I was meeting with a nonprofit in Tucson, Arizona that often works with immigrants, the employees told me repeatedly that the term “illegal” makes those migrating feel like they are being dehumanized and criminalized. One of the women I interviewed, whose family has a history of crossing the border from Mexico into Arizona, very firmly stated she never uses the term “illegal” and prefers “undocumented” because it was a word that treated her and her family like people.

Undocumented means they do not have the correct papers to be considered citizens or to legally be in the United States. The term “illegal” has been used by the media and by political groups to objectify everyone without focusing on who the immigrants are as individuals.

Conversely, “illegal immigrant” is the term used to label the people who cross the border without proper documentation. Illegal is a very broad description and covers a variety of people, but it is used to name those who enter the United States (or another country) without permission or legal authorization. Groups classified as illegal include those who are seeking refugee status, or political asylum. According to Operation Streamline, crossing the border does not just entail deportation back to Mexico, but it also can result in undocumented immigrants receiving felonies and jail time. Those who cross the border without proper authorization are breaking the law and can receive criminal sentences, thus making the term “illegal” valid in relation to the law. The Border Patrol agent I talked with mentioned that he preferred to use the word “illegal” since that is technically how the United States government defines immigrants who are crossing the border without the correct papers. However, I may use the term “undocumented” more frequently, since this is meant to bridge the gap and allow one group to communicate with the other.

This paper will be written with minimal technical jargon since the people I am trying to reach are those who are learning about the immigration. Since first person is utilized in qualitative research because it represents the human elements, or the humanity of this particular topic. Therefore, this will also be a mixed-method approach which is necessary to bring both distance and familiarity to the subject of immigration. The

observations that have been done are both direct (working with a group who helps immigrants) and participant. I was not able to do a ride along with the US Border Patrol, but I was able to talk with officers and learn about their work routine. Due to time restraints, the ethnography involved was minimal, but sufficient for my purposes. As for interviews, many have been conversational and formally conducted when time and circumstances have allowed. These interviews have led to questions that have helped with my research and they have revealed answers to issues that I had not considered. My interviews were not standardized.

Some names are not included in this paper to give people the privacy they requested, although quotes will stay the same. This technique is common in qualitative research. It provides rich, detailed accounts of immigration while addressing the unique challenges present in both sides of the immigration issue. More details follow in the methods section.

Methods Used

Rather than gaining data by surveys and quantitative research methods, I utilized qualitative research methods. This means I met and worked with a variety of people—pastors, non-profit leaders, and organizations—to learn more about immigration. Alan Bryman, a qualitative research professor, describes what qualitative research emphasizes when he writes, “Qualitative research is often depicted as a research strategy whose emphasis on a relatively open-ended approach to the research process frequently produces surprises, changes of direction and new insights” (111). By taking a social situation that occurs in my hometown of Tucson, Arizona and blending it with contacts I already had, I was able to learn so much more about immigration and devise ways to

bridge a large gap of knowledge that is occurring in the people around me and in myself. Specifically, this gap consists of little research done from a Christian perspective relating to illegal immigration and how few Christians understand this issue and are therefore not willing to become involved in rectifying this social concern. For this work, however, Christians should remain open-minded and not be too quick to judge based on what they think they know about undocumented immigration.

I began my research by talking with Tucson, Arizona pastors I am already connected with and questioning if they would be interested in learning more about undocumented immigration. Most expressed interest in this idea; one said that he would not participate because his calling was leading him to reach another group of people. Ultimately, I worked and talked to fifteen pastors, all of different ages, who fell into the middle-class, white, politically conservative description. (Conservative is defined as politically right-winged with biblical, Christian belief systems.) From our conversations, I was able to gauge what was known and what information needed to be known within that group. There is a knowledge gap about what they collectively know about this issue and there is a lack of resources among people of faith and compassion who wish to work with immigration. The lack of information motivated me to find a practical way for Christians to respond and engage with what is occurring in the community around them.

After I conducted these interviews, I began fieldwork and partnered with an organization called Borderlinks to investigate how the local community was involved with immigration. Borderlinks is a local Tucson organization that brings in delegations and/or groups from across America to teach them about immigration. They organize tours to courthouses, make site visits to the Arizona desert where undocumented immigrants

often cross, and introduce participants to local social organizations like Humane Borders which is an organization that maintains a system of water systems in the Sonoran Desert on routes used by migrants.

Borderlinks also consists of activists who participate in protests and are active in local government. I interviewed a few of their organization's key leaders and then followed a delegation (a group of people) to see what education occurred and how this organization was training others on the topic of undocumented immigration. I attended a courtroom for an afternoon and saw first-hand the trials and deportations held in Pima County of those apprehended while trying to cross from Mexico into Arizona. Some of the people having hearings had been caught after being in the desert, in the middle of August, for weeks on end without access to clean water or supplies. Seeing the faces and hearing the stories of those affected by immigration humanized this social issue for me. It was then that I realized immigration is an issue that has been downplayed by the media and ignored by citizens.

A Starting Point

Initially, I was wary of researching immigration because I thought people had covered it before. Honestly, what was left to do? It surprised me to discover it was an issue that needed to be addressed, since none of the churches I personally know are involved in remedying illegal immigration. I can now see a large disconnect with those involved in ending undocumented immigration injustices and the Christians who preach love every Sunday to their congregations. Via interviews and observations, I learned what the Christian pastors thought of illegal immigration. From their perspective regarding this social issue, many of them stated they would love to do more within this field, but they

do not know how because little to no literature or resources were written to reach them as an audience.

A question that guided me during this research process was whether or not we could discuss immigration without involving politics. From my initial research, I believe that it is possible to discuss immigration outside of political boundaries, but unfortunately, not all people are accepting of those who believe differently than they do. Rather than debate different perspectives, it is more effective to have a resource Christians could reference if they had questions or wanted to know how they could get involved. Then, after they learned about immigration, they could join forces with those already involved in this social issue and work together with them. A second question that influenced my research was whether or not Christians could become involved in compassionate ministry within the circumstances of illegal immigration. What methods or ways could Christians employ that would be both legal and beneficial to those affected by undocumented immigration—namely the immigrants and their families? I realized through my fieldwork and interviews that many pastors did not even know much about immigration, the laws, or the people involved. These few questions drove the core of my research and led to the development of an outline for a workshop-based education resource for Christians who want to participate in changing the social dynamics of illegal immigration. After conducting fieldwork interviews and learning about undocumented immigration, how can we get Christians involved in undocumented immigration and other touchy political social issues? Can we successfully get them to partner with more liberally minded people and perhaps not just organizations that are entirely faith-based?

Can a similar goal unite different people? I believe it is possible. Believers and people of God just have to choose to make it a reality.

One of the things I heard the most, from both the nonprofit, liberal side and from the more conservative, Christian side was that they want to engage with one another and become involved, but they did not know how to relate or how to talk to each another. Christians did not want to partner with an organization and with people whom they felt did not like Christians. And the liberal activists who are already involved in this social issue did not know how to talk to or relay information to the more conservative, religious people. This is one of the main conversational topics both groups mentioned to me while wondering how they could communicate with more currently uninvolved people. This is a very difficult issue to bridge, especially because it is very political and debated, but there is a need to open lines of communication between both sides. So much more could be accomplished in ending illegal immigration injustices if people worked together rather than each group trying to accomplish their own agenda as it relates to immigration.

The Author's Background

I am a Credentialed minister with the Assemblies of God and have been raised in a very conservative, Christian household. My parents are pastors of a Cowboy church in Tucson, Arizona and they homeschooled me my entire life. So, growing up, I was inundated with the Bible and Christianity, as well as introduced to conservative politics. Even though I am a registered Republican, I can honestly say that I hate political parties and how they spur contempt for other people and cause division when there should be unity, especially as it relates to major social issues, like illegal immigration. As a member of a middle-class, white, American family, I have seen our family's truck get stolen and

taken across the border, only to be found crashed months later with all valuables gone. I have heard the stories of people who have gone camping in Southern Arizona and have encountered border crossers trying to break into their vehicle. I have been hiking in the middle of the desert and have come across backpacks, garbage, empty water bottles, and vacated camps of people who crossed into Arizona from Mexico. I realized that I wanted to do something to improve the state of illegal immigration because nothing is going to change or get better until “we the people” do something to improve this social issue. It is time that something is done. So, the question is, why would I care about bringing other people like me into the immigration debate? The answer is simple: because people are hurting and we can work together with others to end suffering.

Purpose

Believers are commanded to fill a need when a need is discovered. 1 John 3:17 tells Christians that if you have what you need and do not help others who are lacking, God’s love is not in you. This shows just how much God prioritizes that Christians help others. Hundreds of people die crossing through the harsh, Sonoran Desert every year. A news article from *The Guardian* estimates that over 2,269 immigrants died crossing the desert between the years of 1999 and 2012 and this rate has only increased (Helmore). That number only covers the bodies found in the desert and these bodies frequently remain unidentified thanks to the lack of ID found on them¹. Data from the local nonprofit group Tucson Samaritans reveals that 145 people died in 2017 while crossing from Mexico to Arizona (Tucson Samaritans). Anderson wrote, “While migrants move in

¹ See Appendix B for List of Found Border Crosser Bodies

hopes of finding better wages and living conditions, the darker side is that their journey is risky and too often deadly” (2008). Weaver, an anthropologist and ethnographer, quotes Anderson when he emphasizes just how terrible the issue of illegal immigration is (323). No matter what political stance you have or what your current occupation is, knowing that people die crossing a desert and are willing to risk death to cross a desert should make you think that something needs to be done². Organizations like Tucson Samaritans and Humane Borders leave water and supplies out in the desert to aid those who are crossing. However, this action can be considered illegal, since they know exactly along which paths to leave the water on. Usually the humanitarian aid camps are left untouched by the Border Patrol, but recently both aid groups and the Border Patrol have been clashing more in the desert. Border Patrol agents are also trained in first aid response, so they too can medically help the illegal immigrants they find in the desert. Christians ought to have a response to these divisions as well. Lederach claims, “To reconcile, we must live into compassion” (48). If Christians wish for all people to know the love of God and to understand the commandment believers have been given to love others, they have to restore the relationships that have been split and reconcile to each other. Beginning this process requires that the body of Christ is compassionate, even to “foreigners.”

The Bible states repeatedly that Christians are all foreigners and immigrants. They are citizens of Heaven but live on the Earth. The Old Testament relates the story of Moses and the Israelites in Exodus and relays the stories of them crossing through foreign lands to get to the land God promised them. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus even became

² See Appendix B for Map Detailing Deaths of Border Crossers

refugees as they fled King Herod to save Jesus' life when he was a baby. Leviticus 19:33-34 states, "33 'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.'"

In the New Testament, Matthew 25:34-36, 40 reiterates that Christians should be hospitable to strangers and foreigners when the author of the book quotes Jesus, who said:

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

God does not see race or country boundaries; instead, He sees all people as His creation and children. However, believers get so caught up in the politics of the United States that sometimes they can forget that Christians are a part of God's kingdom. But, as Katongole and Rice remind Christians, "Without reference to an explicit beyond, we are left with versions of reconciliation that offer little concrete hope that fundamental change is possible" (24). People cannot bring sustainable change—but God can. In God's kingdom, people are all equal, loved, and cherished by the King of Kings, who is the ultimate authority and ruler over all. However, since believers still live on the Earth and adhere to

the laws and policies made by man, it is not always possible for them to see people in the same equal light that God views all people. God also tells Christians to respect their authorities and obey the laws of the land, and the United States laws tell its citizens to exclude those who are entering the country illegally. Every city in the Bible had walls and every country had an army to defend against foreigners. Even the “New Jerusalem” as described in Revelation, has walls and gates. Sometimes, people do need the protection both of those things offer and sometimes they do need to keep people out. There is not unlimited space in earthly countries, and each person who enters the United States illegally prohibits someone else from entering legally as a refugee or as someone who wishes to become a citizen.

The main question of concern for Christian believers, then, becomes whether they should be hospitable and aid those who are risking their lives to cross a desert illegally or whether they should obey and respect the laws the United States government has given them. Which law Christians choose to follow is the law they prioritize—God or the government’s. These two somewhat contradictory responses are not as unapproachable as they seem, however, and can be blended so that people are aided and laws are followed. For example, Christians can bring the immigrants water in the desert, so as to prevent dehydration, while also calling the Border Patrol on the immigrants they do come across. They are not condoning their illegal entry but are choosing to see and treat them as people in need of assistance. The Border Patrol agent I met with told me that dehydration is the most expensive thing to treat in hospitals for taxpayers and the immigrants found dehydrated in the desert are often hospitalized for weeks. Christians could also choose to meet with those in the jail system or the undocumented immigrants the Border Patrol has

detained. Often, those caught trying to cross the border will not tell police if injustices were committed against them (rape and thievery among the immigrants are all too common), so this is another way Christians can step in to ensure that information is recorded accurately and immigrants are being treated as people. These are a few simple, caring ways Christians can respond to undocumented immigration without breaking the laws in the United States.

The Narrative

The United States needs immigration reform. People are still being hurt and taken advantage of and the borders still make people feel unsafe. The pastors I met with do not feel comfortable going hiking in the desert or leaving their cars unlocked. Judgments and racism are prevalent, especially in cities like Tucson, Arizona near the Mexico/United States border. At the Tucson malls, I hear random people complain about all the Latino shoppers who are rude and ruin their shopping experiences. Despite the increase of Border Patrol agents and national security measures, undocumented immigrants still continue to cross the harsh desert. What is so inviting in the United States that men and women will risk their lives to make a perilous journey through one of the harshest environments on Earth? I am not even talking about the coyotes (a smuggler of immigrants) or the drug runners that we hear so much about in the media, but the ordinary, everyday people of Mexico and other Latino countries. The only reason why people would risk their very lives to cross a desert would be because they have hope for a better life than if they had stayed in their home country.

The first thing to learn is why people migrate, whether that is from Mexico to another country or from the United States to another. Historically, migrations occur for a

variety of reasons. Some people claim refugee status and are fleeing to another country because where they lived before was not safe for them. Others accept new jobs or want to become citizens in another country because that would benefit their families more. Illegal immigrants from Mexico must be very desperate to make a better life for their families and themselves if they are willing to cross extreme temperatures for weeks on end for the mere possibility of finding work. Economists have discussed the flow of money between countries and this applies to Mexico/United States money flow as well. Dayton-Johnson, an economist, writes in relation to this, “The larger the income difference between two countries, the larger, all things remaining equal, the flow of migrants from the poorer to the richer country,” (4). Dayton-Johnson also addresses how transnational settings, like between Mexico and the United States, consist of: “Flows of people, flows of money, and flows of ideas” (7). Immigration is not an uncommon occurrence, especially between two bordering countries of diverse economic status.

Research, both qualitative and literature-based, shows that people migrate from Mexico because they want to live a higher quality of life and to be able to provide for their children. Neoliberalism and globalization have promoted structural violence in Mexico, which brings poverty to the common people (Weaver 316). In basic terms, Thomas Weaver, a professor emeritus from the University of Arizona, blames the poverty Mexican people experience on the economics and imports of goods from other countries. The American dream of prospering if you work hard enough is tantalizing for many people in Mexico because they want to be able to afford what they need for their families. Weaver shows that we as United States citizens have also negatively impacted the Mexican labor market. In 1994, Mexico entered into the North American Free Trade

Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada, but this agreement became mainly detrimental to Mexico. When NAFTA lowered protective tariffs, Mexico began importing goods more than exporting them, causing Mexican industries to fall behind (Weaver 320). One of the main crops that Mexican farmers had grown and sold before (maize), phased out because the corn that was imported was so much cheaper than what the farmers could grow; much the same happened to Mexico's coffee industry (Weaver 321). This caused farmers to lose their land and their livelihoods, which then brought about a movement from agricultural systems to industrialized systems (rural to urban). And, when factory work became especially exploitive and structural violence set in, these farmers began to look for jobs anywhere else, including in the United States.

Globalization has greatly affected Mexico's economy. One of the main complications and considerations of globalization involves its push for a free market economy in every country and promoting the idea of neoliberalism (Lechner and Boli 557). "Neoliberalism is a policy model that transfers economic factors from the public sector to the private," Investopedia, a financial education website, explains. However, each country and culture is different and what works for one may harm another, since people are more interdependent now because of globalization. I do not think that there could be one correct way for all societies to move forward within the context of globalization, as each society has a different historical and economic context, so each will be affected by globalization differently. In some countries, this appears in the form of immigration. But, globalization is not all negative and I do not think that optimism is a poor choice within this context. Groody mentions beliefs like Christianity bring people of different cultures together in a way deeper than the social world; however, hospitality and

community in a world rife with discrimination is rare (252). The positives of bringing people together cross-culturally can be utilized to humanize immigrants and to find better ways to define or break down cultural boundaries. In our globalized world, people brought together by the same beliefs, like Christians, could play a large part in bringing differing people together in a healthy manner.

The opportunities of globalization could outweigh the negative, as it does bring people of different cultures together in commonality. However, losing individual culture in the process and increasing the financial division between the poor and rich are two downsides to globalization. This is also what causes the poor to migrate more to try to find ways to better their life positions. Much of this gap is what stimulates illegal immigration as well. If these two issues could be navigated better within the context of globalization, the positive opportunities of globalization could be amplified. So, in order to decrease the division between rich and poor, the free market economy should not be pushed by globalization. Rather, the markets of each culture should depend upon the individual culture and do what is best for that individual culture. This would also allow cultures to maintain their individuality, but still enter into trade and globalization with other cultures. Building community between cultures requires understanding and prioritizing commonalities rather than emphasizing differences. But, cultures should also not be required to change so they can properly integrate into a global community. To move forward in the best way, they need to maintain their individuality and do what is best for the people within their culture, while living peaceably and working with cultures different from themselves. This would at least eliminate some of the attitudes various cultural parties have towards each other. I cannot see this realistically happening in the

near future, but this would be the best and most positive example and benefit of globalization.

However, in the context of people migrating from Mexico to the United States, globalization promotes more harm than good, since the rich have been benefitting and the poor have been suffering. And, even though all people see ourselves as people—just from different cultures and backgrounds—the free market economy can only continue to inflate prices for people in Mexico. “Structural violence is enacted by market rule and later channelled by international and domestic racism, classism, sexism, and anti-immigrant prejudice,” states an ethnographer named Seth Holmes who lived alongside of the people migrating from Mexico (41). The poor in Mexico who are the most affected by the results of the economy have little choice in how they are going to support their families. From their perspective, they could either stay in Mexico and go hungry and face brutality from people in power, or they could risk their lives to find work in the United States where they hear everyone has opportunities to find work. Immigration reform is directly impacted by economic reform and so must provide a way for the poor people in either economy to not just survive but to advance and break out of their impoverished lives. An immigration bill passed in 2013 in the United States states:

(3) We have always welcomed newcomers to the United States and will continue to do so. But in order to qualify for the honor and privilege of eventual citizenship, our laws must be followed. The world depends on America to be strong — economically, militarily and ethically. The establishment of a stable, just and efficient immigration system only supports those goals. As a nation, we have the right and responsibility to make our

borders safe, to establish clear and just rules for seeking citizenship, to control the flow of legal immigration, and to eliminate illegal immigration, which in some cases has become a threat to our national security (United 8).

This bill both recognizes the need for border security and that our nation was founded by immigrants and requires immigrants to continue to grow and prosper. Although globalization has stimulated immigration in the first place, if seen with the right perspective, it could be a positive and integral part of the United States. I wonder, though, if United States citizens actually are impoverishing the citizens of other countries by imposing their own system of free market on them, since the poor just keep suffering and the wage gaps continue to widen.

The United States does need to keep its current citizens safe, but it should also be their responsibility that anyone in poverty receives a chance to make a better life for themselves and for their families. However, they cannot afford to do this. As citizens of Heaven, Christians' job is to not see borders but to see the people God has created. We cannot do everything, but we can do something. Christians should bring the "Good News" to others and to care for those who are in need. Sometimes, this would be ensuring that people do not die in the desert but are still detained by Border Patrol so that people seeking refugee status from Eastern Europe can enter the United States. Doing something could also be as simple as revitalizing Christian jail ministry so that many detained immigrants can hear about the hope Christ brings. Christians and people of God need responses like these, especially if the free market economies and the individual thirst for wealth is what drove immigrants to end up in those situations in the first place. Believers

have to take some responsibility for the country's global actions and the economic situation the United States has forced many impoverished people in.

Current Attitudes

Recent findings from Michael Sobczak, an immigration researcher, has shown that a vast majority of Americans have anti-immigration attitudes, especially those who have been born in America and are predominantly white (185-186). Because of the attitudes in society, racism and classism exist, even though people may deny this fact because they live in a free country. Living just an hour North of the Mexico/United States border, too often I hear racist jokes about Mexican workers and comments like, "Who will pick our vegetables if we build Trump's wall?" Because this is a dominant attitude locally observed, it can become the normal response to immigration if people are not careful. The fear of dangerous drug lords and cartels from Mexico also do not promote an inviting spirit from United States citizens to those from Mexico, whether they came into the United States legally or not. It is very difficult for Christians to shake the politics out of their belief structure and realize that discriminatory attitudes are not what God wants them to have.

The liberal attitude towards illegal immigration has changed in recent years. An American columnist named Peter Beinart thinks that the cause of this stems from politics, since the growing Latin American population in the United States of natural/naturalized citizens tends to give the Democratic party a leading edge in votes. Beinart, a Democrat himself, goes on to explain that because of this, pro-immigration laws began to emerge. In his article titled "The Democrats' Immigration Mistake," though, he goes on to explain that immigrants cannot come to the United States without affecting the poorest

populations that already live in the United States—namely the Native Americans. Other populations adversely affected, according to the numbers, are African Americans and Hispanics, since they also comprise some of the poorest communities (Macartney 11). Beinart also describes why Americans may be wary of new immigrants when he writes, “To promote both mass immigration and greater economic redistribution, they must convince more native-born white Americans that immigrants will not weaken the bonds of national identity.” The attitude of segregation comes from the very idea that someone will lose their identity by another appearing—in this case, Americans keeping Latinos at a distance because they are afraid that the Latinos will change how the United States citizens perceive themselves and their social identities. If Christians could bring people together who have different national identities, the boundaries of race and social identities can be greatly diminished. This would greatly change United States citizens’ response to illegal immigration.

Another attitude that must be confronted is the attitude of dehumanization. One of the main lessons I have learned while working with such a socially challenging topic is that dehumanization is a dangerous trap we can all unknowingly fall into. The news, mass migration numbers, statistics and financial reports, and politics all dehumanize undocumented immigrants. People forget that border crossers are real people with real needs who are risking their very real lives to make a hazardous desert trek. Tucsonians, people who live in the Sonoran Desert and experience the heat ourselves, are oblivious that people are walking through the desert without the necessities that are so readily available to us.

From what I have seen and studied, in fieldwork and even noticed beforehand, Latin Americans value and cherish their families above all else. And often, this is the reason why undocumented migrants cross the desert. They want to find work to provide for their families. Of course, there are still criminals and drug dealers among the immigrants, just like there are criminals and drug dealers in the United States living amongst us. However, the majority of illegal immigrants are just hoping to be able to provide a better life for their families and the end results for those who cross illegally are the ones deported back to Mexico. According to Garcia, who works with Borderlinks “No one wants to leave the place they are born.” Why are people leaving their home countries and migrating to a place that tend to dehumanize and deport them? Simply because they feel they must.

“Seeing my people suffer makes me mad. And when I get mad, I get creative. So much pain and as humans we all have a right to happiness and you have to fight for it. I just want to be a small piece of the puzzle and we can have justice,” said Garcia who strongly ended our interview with these words. People who fight for justice for undocumented immigrants are passionate. Pastors, nonprofit workers, and social justice workers all have passion in common. They are passionate about serving others and advocating for a cause. Using passion as a commonality could start different people working together to end the injustices found in immigration (including, but not limited to treatment, labeled felonies, the reasons behind migration, and being victimized). All these injustices need to be eliminated.

Are Christians and Christian pastors afraid that if they learn about something, they will feel obligated to respond and meet that need? Time and money are difficult

commodities for pastors and remaining ignorant is easier than becoming responsible. Why are they not involved, for the most part, in ending undocumented immigration injustices? To answer simply, attitude has much to do with why this is. Attitude and being ignorant of why social issues exist do not negate the fact that issues will not go away if ignored. Arbinger Institute explains this type of thinking as “being in the box” because we are justifying our thinking/actions and blaming others at the same time. Their suggested way of remedying this way of thinking is to “see others as people” (Arbinger Institute 40). I’m not proposing that Christians change their beliefs, religion, or political party, but I am asking for a change in their attitude as it relates to immigration, legal and illegal, because immigrants are people who God created and people who need Him.

A Christian Response

Many Christians stay out of contested political issues because politics could divide their congregations. Christians should not prioritize political parties over reaching people who are in need and involving themselves in an issue that so obviously needs solutions. But, believers assist those who are in need every day, usually people who are in churches or people like the homeless population because everyone agrees that those people need assistance. When it comes to speaking out for people who have no voice, for immigrants and refugees who may be breaking laws and may not even speak the same language, Christians balk because they are uninformed, uninvolved, and unwilling.

Some of the pastors I interviewed stated that undocumented immigrants make the country less safe. It was mentioned in an interview that, “Violent criminals, communicable diseases or lack of immunizations, civil unrest, and people unknown and unaccounted for make America less safe” (Purcell 2017). These leaders were also highly

concerned with how undocumented immigrants affected the economy and health care. The pastors, almost as a whole, mentioned that because undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes, the immigrants receive free health care and education, costing actual citizens more money in taxes. However, facts show that undocumented immigrants pay nearly \$12 billion each year in taxes (Soergel 2017). The Border Patrol agent who I spoke with added that each immigrant they pick up in the desert tends to cost taxpayers money in hospital bills and illegal immigration, as a whole, drains around \$160 billion from the economy each year. Each pastor, each Christian leader, also mentioned that their job is to show compassion, justice, and mercy to all people, regardless of their legal status. Oneida Christensen, whose parents were immigrants themselves, summed it up best stating, “I do believe God’s heart is to love and serve everyone, regardless of status” (2017).

The pastors varied greatly in what they thought about illegal immigration. One pastor stated, “Actively participating in illegal activity hinders the testimony of the church” (Sainz 2017). On the opposite end of the spectrum, Pastor Kai Eilert commented, “I would reach out by asking what their needs are and going from there to do my best to serve them” (2017). He continued, “As a pastor, and more importantly, as a follower of Jesus, my purpose is to show everyone the love of Christ” (Eilert 2017). However, condoning illegal activity is much different than helping those who are already here find ways to eat and actually survive in the first place. Crossing the border illegally is occurring, whether we approve of it or not, so it is up to us as pastors and as people of God how we choose to respond to this without committing crimes ourselves.

Dale Burke, who works with immigrants and Latin Americans in Bastrop, Texas, is the president of Literacy Volunteers and heads up ESL classes. He even received the

award “Bastrop Person of the Year” for all the work he is doing in the community. Burke is a strong example of a godly, Christian man who is meeting the needs that he sees in his local community:

We need to have love in our hearts for all people and seek to lead them to the Lord or help them in their Christian walk, as many are already believers in Christ. I am definitely a conservative Christian and have to limit my time in listening to talk radio or seeing negative comments on Facebook, as much of it is filled with hatred and anger because of injustice. This does not mean we abandon our constitution but seek to find ways to deal with our laws and keeping things in order to promote a good prospering, safe society until Jesus returns. (Burke)

This means getting involved in his local, small-town community and promoting the change that he believes needs to happen. Christians must see beyond this and have a new perspective on life in order to really grasp the needs that people have and to choose to make a difference in the world around you. Burke concluded his interview by stating, “Undocumented immigration is a very complex issue and it is a spiritual issue we must address” (2017).

Issues do not solve themselves; rather, people created the systems that created the social issues and people are the ones who will undo these systems. These people exist on every level in society and these people are usually the ones who bring the most change. As Lechner and Boli state, “While human rights are formalized at the international level, they are first and foremost at the local level” (329). Lechner and Boli are saying that people are necessary to bring positive change to individuals. Once change is brought in a

small way to a small area, it cannot help but grow and produce results that people cannot ignore.

Practical Applications

A practical approach to doing something would be to speak with the illegal immigrants who have been incarcerated. Many of these immigrants have suffered great injustices and will not talk to the Border Patrol agents about them. The agent I was in contact with told me that there is a great need for Christians to listen to the immigrants' stories and report to the Border Patrol if any harm had been done to them. Yes, they broke the law by crossing the border and that was wrong, but the immigrants should also be treated as people and not be victimized or mistreated. The Border Patrol agent also informed me that the jail systems are filled with Muslims seeking to convert convicts, so Christians are greatly needed to speak in the jails. Believers have to go to the incarcerated, undocumented immigrants and show them that Christians care about their stories and who they are as people, and above all else, that God cares for them.

Another practical step Christians can take as it relates to illegal immigration is to assist in deportation proceedings. However, getting involved in this manner may require fluency in Spanish or other Latino languages. Many of the immigrants want to know if their families are doing okay and they need encouragement for what they are facing. Pastors, Christian leaders, and congregations all can offer Biblical encouragement to individuals. And, because labeling repeat illegal crossers as felons and sending them to prison with rapists and murderers does not always fit the crime, Christians can lobby and become politically active in seeking to change the local laws that often victimize these immigrants more. People of God cannot pretend that these problems do not exist. Yes,

the media, politicians, and people lie, exaggerate, and promote selfish agendas, but pretending like no problem exists is not going to improve anything. If people are getting hurt and injustices are rampant, then Christians know that the situation is not God's perfect plan. This is why, as Salter-McNeil relates, "Reconciliation is an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance, and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God's original intention for all creation to flourish" (22). God never intended for people to be hurt, or for sin to enter the world, or even for the divisions people have created for one another to exist. Christians can bring positive change in these areas.

One thing that was suggested by many different pastors and ministerial leaders was that United States citizens' biggest concern should be what to do about the illegal immigrants already in the United States. One pastor stated that we could make the process of becoming citizens easier for those who are already here, to hopefully prevent people from trying to cross the desert without the proper documents (Metcalf 2017). Whether they thought Christians should do practical things to end immigration injustices or offer hospitality to those who are in need, everyone unanimously agreed that the system needs to change. Another idea was to find ways to make the immigration process easier and more incorporating of the issues that drive people to immigrate in the first place. But, this is a big picture idea that has to start at the local level. When I was observing what I did in the courtroom, I heard many people question the methods of providing refugee status for those coming up from Mexico. The main issue is that factors outside of anyone's control often push people to cross the border legally and illegally. So, the immigration process needs to be changed because no individual should suffer because

of where manmade systems have placed him or her within society. It is up to us to make this change.

Working with Borderlinks really showed me how important it is to pass on the knowledge that we have gained to others. Borderlinks does this by providing different activities to weeklong delegations/groups and immersing them in the Latin American culture. They provide workshops on the history of immigration and take the delegations to courtrooms to observe Operation Streamline (the operation that was mentioned at the beginning of this thesis which deports immigrants or labels them as felons). One thing that Borderlinks does really well is providing qualitative opportunities for people to go out into the field themselves to make their own decisions based on what they observe. Christians do not have to reinvent the wheel and there are ways that we can work with the organizations in place to have a greater impact. There is always something that can be done to impact communities by standing up for something that promotes justice; this something is to stay knowledgeable about immigration and do everything that can be done to show God's love for others without the constraints of race, politics, language, or culture.

One thing all Christians can do to bring justice is to stay informed and not fear political backlash. Not everyone agrees with every approach on immigration. Another action that would greatly impact spreading the Christian faith to others is to work together with people outside of their "religion" and/or denominations. People are stronger together and social situations are changed for the better when believers work with others to make it so. Christians cannot afford to remain ignorant and cannot choose to do nothing or to live passively. Passivity is not encouraged as a follower of Christ. God told

believers to be the light and to go out into the world. Christians cannot do this if they are living in fear, wondering what others may think of them, or trying to remain on good terms with and compromise with the world around them. To see change in social situations, people have to make that change happen. It is time for Christians to step up and become engaged in their communities and in the social issues that affect their neighbors and even the local economy. If people who love God neglect the needs of those they can positively impact, they are failing in what God has called them to do. However, this requires Christians to be humble and to choose to work with people who are “different” from them.

Summary

Immigration can unite people rather than divide them. Differences can make people stronger, especially if they can work together with others to reach a common goal, such as aiding those who are in need of food and water or working with undocumented immigrants. This is accomplished by humanizing immigration. Researching means stepping into the worldviews of others; Christians have to be open and listen to what is being said around us (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater 219). Dehumanization and purposeful ignorance are two very dangerous mindsets to fall into when it comes to immigration. If Christians have any compassion at all, they should care for the individual one, rather than focusing on overwhelming numbers and statistics. Making an actual difference in the world seems like an impossible task, but really, if the focus is on reaching and aiding the one person, no matter their story, great things can be done and the world can be impacted for the better. It just takes one step at a time after breaking away from the fear that holds people back. Penna writes that, “A meaningful change—and therefore a meaningful

outcome—is something that makes a marked difference in a situation, something that creates an essentially new situation” (38).

The practical ways Christians can bring meaningful change to immigration is by getting involved. Bring water to the immigrants to prevent dehydration but also call the Border Patrol on these immigrants. Christians also should become advocates within the justice systems and communicate with the incarcerated immigrants. Once there, listen to the stories of undocumented immigrants to ensure they are receiving proper justice and were not victimized or mistreated during the process. Because undocumented people are not the only ones within their care, Christians have the responsibility to pass on the information they have learned so that others can begin to see immigrants in a positive light. Not as law breakers, but as humans who need hope. Believers can do this by adopting a practical political response; lobby and advocate for the punishment to fit the crime and for the economy to benefit the impoverished. Faith and a passion for justice must be the driving factor because each person is a small piece of the puzzle. Christians must do their part and help those who are in need and give a voice to those who have none, especially undocumented immigrants.

To maintain objectivity, I again emphasize that I am not writing about undocumented immigration to discuss political views or present political stances, although acknowledging that these divisions exist is important. I observed, I interviewed, I researched, and I wrote to understand immigration, as it exists in Tucson, Arizona, and to inform with the purpose of educating Christian believers that illegal immigration is an issue that needs to be addressed, modified, and improved upon because people are being affected on a personal level. The undocumented in custody and the unknown bodies

found in the desert show immigration reform is a relevant issue that needs attention.

~~Immigrants~~ People are suffering injustices that include injury, confinement, and death.

Added to these risks are the likelihood that they have also suffered abuse, rape, robbery, and physical harm. By learning about undocumented immigration and by choosing to take practical steps to end social injustices pertaining to immigration, Christians can bring about a real difference to individuals in need.

Final Thoughts

I have written and attached the outline/schedule for a 10-week workshop that can be utilized to provide a learning resource about immigration from Mexico to the United States from a Christian perspective, a point of view I found lacking while doing research and interviewing government officials, immigrants, and pastors. It is very difficult to learn something when the topic exists but the audience you are attempting to reach does not understand it. People cannot help until they understand. The ideas I had about illegal immigration prior to my research, and the ideas pastors and other Christians still have, are not consistent with the actual facts, so education must happen to change perspectives allowing all involved parties teach one another. Dialogue through education must begin between Christian churches and those working from a non-faith approach to end injustices in illegal immigration. Practical application is essential to changing mindsets and social situations, so I definitely want to incorporate practical and meaningful opportunities into the information I share as a result of this research. I agree with Merriam and Tisdell who wrote, “We believe that research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest

promise of making a difference in people's lives" (1). It is up to Christians to give those without a voice a voice and those without hope, hope. Christians do not have to accept the status quo and believers no longer can afford to remain ignorant. God has called Christians to a higher standard as people who believe in Him; so, it is time for them to take action by choosing what they are going to do to benefit the world around them. This is why it is essential that believers become involved with ending the injustices found in illegal immigration and do their part to make this world a better place for each individual.

Appendix A

Ten-Week Immigration Workshop Outline

A Workshop Outline Created to Guide and Teach Christians About Illegal Immigration

Side note: This workshop will need to be updated and researched by the presenter each week, so the most relevant information is utilized and presented. Therefore, some weeks will just have course topics named and the presenter is responsible for researching the information.

Week 1: Defining Immigration and Who Migrates

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Where are you descended from and how did you or your ancestors end up in America?

6:30pm

Summary of the workshops and what will be focused on

- Let them know that each week will entail a challenge question that is homework that must be done by the next week.
- This workshop has a Qualitative focus and hands-on activities for the best workshop experience.
- Give each individual a journal where they can record their experiences.

What is Immigration?

Who migrates?

- “You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land,” –Warson Shire, as quoted in Omid Safi’s “Love in a Time of Refugees”
- Immigrants fleeing religious persecution created America, and immigrants, as well as refugees, still are found around the world today—migrating for hope of a better life.

Where does immigration take place?

- Everywhere.

What is Illegal Immigration?

What is Dehumanization?

What is Legal Immigration?

How do people become legal immigrants?

How many undocumented immigrants currently live in America?

- An estimated 11.2 million undocumented and illegal immigrants as of 2018

Why should we concern ourselves with this social issue?

- We know that God has created all people in His image and we are told to be His hands and feet. God hates suffering and world systems that tell people they are better than

others. Suffering, poverty, racism, and people being taken advantage of are rampant in the issues of immigration.

When should people do something about it?

- The best time to act is always now. Every year this goes unresolved, unchallenged, and unquestioned by all sectors of society, people die in the desert while seeking the chance to have a better life. What can we do about it?
- We cannot ignore a social issue that is occurring around us and pretend like it is not happening and choose not to become involved. Evil thrives when good people do nothing.

How can we help?

We can help as believers by learning about this social issue and choosing to do something about it. Around the world, people die migrating every day so change needs to happen and it is up to us as “We the People” to bring it about. We can help by educating others about it. And, we can help by doing something about it ourselves. This option may entail bringing water to them in the desert and even calling Border Patrol on them. This could also mean jail ministry and listening to their “real stories” about what happened that they would be hesitant to tell Border Patrol. We can also help by lobbying and by changing the government laws so that the punishments fit the crimes committed.

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Hand them the US Naturalization Test and have them study it for three weeks

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1vGeRiPXis&feature=youtu.be>)

Week 2: What the Bible Says About Immigration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Split people into small groups. Name people in the Bible who did not come into contact with foreigners or experience what it felt like to be uprooted and moved from their families, homes, or country. Then, have them name people in the Bible who were immigrants.

6:30pm

Immigrants in the Bible

- Abraham
- Moses
- The Israelites (repeatedly)
- Ruth
- Joseph, Mary, and Jesus

Scriptures about foreigners from both the Old and New Testaments

- Leviticus 19:33-34
- Matthew 25:34-36, 40

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Ask five other Christians (not in this class) what they think about immigration and what God and the Bible say about it. Record their responses.

Week 3: Fears and Concerns Christians Have Voiced Regarding Immigration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

Go over the weekly challenge results from last week in smaller group settings.

6:10pm

Icebreaker: People are afraid of what they do not understand. Write out a list of fears you have and count how many of them are because you do not fully understand what it is or because it is unknown, uncomfortable, or out of the ordinary for you.

6:30pm

Based on interviews from different pastors and ministry leaders around Tucson and the list of concerns they had regarding undocumented immigration and immigration in general:

Economy and Loss of Jobs

- Immigrants often do the jobs that Americans, especially white Americans, would not stoop to do. Mexican immigrants (legal and illegal) often are the housecleaners, farm workers, manual laborers, and landscapers. They get

these jobs because no one else wants them and desperate people cannot be picky. In fact, these people are the ones who provide work in our economy and if they left American economy, especially the agricultural economy, would collapse.

School Systems and Education

- Yes, immigrant children attend public schools for free (Immigrant Student's Rights to Attend Public Schools). And these schools are supported by our taxes. But, no child should be turned away from receiving an education. And, in Mexico, they are not necessarily guaranteed an education, which means they cannot improve their status in life or find a way to make their way out of poverty or to fulfill their potential. Education is essential.

Loss of American Culture

- American culture was built with immigrants and immigrants displaced the original residents of America—the Native Americans. Culture is constantly shifting and changing and we should not fear our loss of identity. As Christians, our identity as Christians is not found on the Earth and in Earthly cultures anyways.

Healthcare

- Fact: The majority of immigrants does not qualify for healthcare and cannot receive any benefits from the healthcare system. Except, our local law does not turn away any patients who are in need of emergency services. Many of them also do not go to the doctor when they need to because they fear deportation. Under the Affordable Care Act, no undocumented immigrants are eligible for health insurance at all (Castaneda).

Safety

- People are concerned over what is safe for their family and for themselves. They want to know that they are not in danger of being robbed, mugged, or put in any other danger. It is no secret that life by the border of Mexico is dangerous and I personally know many people who have been robbed and their goods smuggled away to Mexico. Desperate people do desperate things, but most of the ordinary people who are coming to Arizona or to America are people who simply desire jobs, work, and money to send home to their families. They are just as concerned over the safety of their families as you are.

Drugs and Illegal Substance Abuse

- Some border crossers are less than honest and transport illegal drugs and other substances. “Coyotes” or illegal

immigrant smugglers are known for their less than ideal traveling methods and are usually considered to be dangerous. Drug runners also are dangerous and desperate. However, there are not as many of these as media has portrayed and blown out of proportion.

Too Many Citizens

- The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and Dream Act give children of immigrants the right to become citizens if they have lived here over four years and meet certain qualifications (Penichet-Paul). The United States has limited the number of immigrants and refugees before, but there is room in America for more citizens. We are not running out of space.

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Research the reasons behind the fears that you have. Learn, study, and grow. If you are afraid of something regarding immigration, research it and learn the “why” behind it. You are not entitled to an opinion until you know “why” you have it and can make an informed decision.

Week 4: The American History of Immigration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

Ask if anyone would like to share what he or she learned from the icebreaker last week and discuss.

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Quiz everyone on the U.S. Naturalization Test by asking random questions and calling on random people to answer them.

6:30pm

- Start in the 1600s with the first Pilgrims coming over
- Create a timeline of events from the first immigrants to current American history including the Slave Trade, Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, and Westward Expansion.
- What would America be like without welcoming those fleeing persecution, danger, or other things that wished to harm people?
- Impoverished communities and work
- Language barriers
- Talk about other people seeking refugee status from Europe and other countries besides Mexico.

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Find someone whose family migrated to the U.S. recently and ask him or her about their experience and how they felt about it. Ask them how they would have improved their experience and what they would tell others coming to America. What were the hardest and the best things about moving to America?

Week 5: The Laws and Policies Concerning Immigration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

Review the weekly challenge from last week and hear the results of people who completed it successfully. Ask them how it made them feel and what they learned and experienced from it.

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Have people relate their experiences with being in court, breaking a law, being on jury duty, or being in any situation where they felt on trial for something. Then, have them imagine how they would feel if they did not understand the language of everything that went on around them. Have them rate their experience on a scale of 1-10.

6:30pm

Operation Streamline

- Operation Streamline experiences
- Operation Streamline means that migrants found crossing the border illegally can immediately be charged with felonies, whether they are a repeat offender or a first-time offender (Prendergast).

SB 1070 (if the workshop is conducted in Arizona)

Federal Laws

Border Patrol

Deportation

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Research the immigration process and make a list of what it takes, how long it takes, and how much it costs to become an American citizen.

Week 6: Immigration Politics

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Get in groups and make a list of all the local nonprofits you can think of. How many have political ties and what political sides do they take? How many are “religious” and do they state their political views/parties? Are there any nonprofits that are both “religious” and governmental?

6:30pm

- The economics that drive people to migrate from Mexico
- Mexican politics, NAFTA, and crops
- President Trump’s wall and increasing border patrol
- Birth citizenship and politics concerning the legalization of illegal immigrants living in America
- Definitions of Liberal, Conservative, and Christian

The people/organizations involved in immigration and why

- The majority of organizations in Tucson, AZ right now working with immigrants, legal and illegal, are liberal organizations and do not support President Trump’s agenda or conservative values. Why

are these the people who are helping? Why are they involved in immigration? Also, why are there hardly any, if any at all, conservatives involved in this social issue? Do they not care about this issue? Why not? Why are liberals the ones involved right now?

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Have you prioritized your political party over helping other people? Are there others you have not noticed outside of legal and illegal immigrants? Are your American political ideals more important than what the Bible says? Keep a journal every day this week praying over those who you have overlooked or disregarded.

Week 7: Local Culture and Biases about Immigration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Discuss what has challenged you the most the last few weeks and why. Talk about practical applications you already will walk away with.

6:30pm

- The definitions of racism, biases, and prejudices
- Slang and insults
- Assumptions about occupations regarding race in Tucson

- The concept of worldview and how we all have been raised with certain perceptions
- Discuss the fact that no one is innocent. We are guilty of looking the other way. We are guilty of allowing imperfect systems to continue without challenging the norm. We are not perfect and our worldviews/perceptions/way of living are not perfect. We need to realize and accept this and choose to make decisions that correct our “naive” way of thinking.

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Examine your own thoughts, worldview, and assumptions about immigration. Do they line up with the facts? Do they line up with how God addresses immigration? List at least five ways you can improve your biases/perceptions in regard to this social issue.

Week 8: Undocumented/Illegal Immigration Perspectives

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Find a person in the room you have not really talked to yet. Go up to them and try to tell them their history and what has happened in their past. Tell them what you think their favorite colors are and what they like to do for fun. Have them do the same for you after. How accurate were you? Were you able to tell their stories for them or did you need them to tell you themselves?

6:30pm

- Have people who have been involved with or experienced undocumented immigration or legal immigration talk with the group.
- Relate stories and first-hand experiences of immigration
- Listen to the perspectives of those who have been affected by immigration

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: How often do you listen to the stories of the people who go unheard? What other groups of people are not listened to?

Brainstorm different ways you could share stories and learn how to listen to the people who society does not notice.

Extra challenge: Go talk to some of these people and find a way to share the story that they tell you. Let it challenge your own perception as an outsider.

Week 9: Ways Undocumented Immigrants Are Being Aided

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

Share any stories from the challenge and extra challenge from the week before.

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Share outreach programs and methods that your church participates in. Tell the group what you also individually do to talk to people outside of your church.

6:30pm

List organizations in Tucson that are making a difference

- Borderlinks
- Tucson Samaritans
- Minutemen
- Churches
- Etc.

What they are doing

- Medical station in desert
- Pro Bono lawyers
- Water stations
- Some of these could be considered illegal, since how could they know about where to put the water stations on specific paths in the first place. It would be possible to place water in the desert and then call the Border Patrol as a response to giving them water as well.
- Things that should be added that can be done that is not being addressed by Christians as frequently:
 - Jail ministry

- Talking to them while incarcerated to hear their specific stories
- Reporting any injustices they faced to Border Patrol since they will not talk to the Border Patrol

BORSTAR team

Government agencies

7:15pm

Weekly Challenge: Find a practical way you can be involved. Take a look at your weekly schedule and see what you spend the most of your time on.

We always have more time than we think we have. Is this a social issue that you could afford to rearrange your schedule a bit for?

Week 10: Recap, Summary, and Celebration

6:00pm

Introduction and Snacks

6:10pm

Icebreaker: Revisit some of your assumptions regarding immigration before beginning this workshop series. What has changed in your perceptions since then?

6:20pm

Recap and Summary:

Hand out a list of resources that everyone can read and look up

Summarize the topics covered in the workshops

6:30pm

End of Class Challenge: Divide the entire group up into smaller groups. Each group has to brainstorm and find practical ways they can combine their faith, churches, and resources to become involved in immigration in Tucson. Have them come up with a solid plan within their group before leaving. Here are some questions to have them discuss within their groups and find the answers to help them get started:

- What can be done differently to improve the immigration situation and how can this be put into place practically?
- How do we help the people for the people instead of the cause?
- What can I do specifically and how can I engage?
 - Jail ministry
 - Talking to them while incarcerated
 - Delivering them water in the desert and then calling Border Patrol on them so we do not condone illegal activity but still keep them from dehydration
 - Lobby
- What are some things I wish other believers knew and how can I participate in sharing that information?
- How can we find ways to partner with other people to bring about greater good and more results?
 - Make sure they do not name things that could be against the law of the United States.

- Knowledge brings responsibility. What is my role in this as a citizen in Tucson, as a church leader, and as a follower of Jesus?
- Just because this is the way things are, does not mean they have to stay this way. How can we improve the system?
- Where can the churches go that the government cannot?
- How would Jesus respond?

List of Resources for the Workshop Outline

- Arbinger Institute. *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010.
- Custom Map of Arizona Migrant Deaths. Retrieved from www.humaneborders.info/app/map.asp.
- Dayton-Johnson, Jeff. "Chapter 1: Flows of People, Money, Ideas [Conceptual Overview]". *Latin American Economic Outlook 2010*. pp. 1-9.
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Appendix B

List of deaths found from people crossing the border in 2017 (Custom Map of Arizona Migrant Deaths. Retrieved from

www.humaneborders.info/app/map.asp.)

ML Number	Name	Sex	Age	Reporting Date	Cause of Death	State	County
17-0019	Guillen Vazquez, Ignacio R.	male	30	1/2/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0033	Unidentified	male		1/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0062	Unidentified	male		1/4/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0066	Unidentified	male		1/5/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	La Paz
17-0081	Unidentified	male		1/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0082	Unidentified	male		1/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0084	Medina Sosa, Denis	male	36	1/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0101	Unidentified	male		1/9/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0109	Unidentified	female		1/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0124	Unidentified	female		1/11/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0160	Unidentified	male		1/15/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0178	Unidentified	male		1/18/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0179	Unidentified	male		1/18/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0253	Unidentified	male		1/27/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0274	Unidentified	male		1/30/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Santa Cruz
17-0355	Unidentified	male		2/8/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Cochise
17-0364	Unidentified	male		2/9/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0380	Unidentified	undetermined		2/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0381	Unidentified	undetermined		2/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima

17-0382	Unidentified	male		2/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0403	Unidentified	female		2/13/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0410	Unidentified	male		2/14/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0422	Unidentified	undetermined		2/15/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Santa Cruz
17-0423	Unidentified	male		2/11/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0437	Unidentified	undetermined		2/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0443	Unidentified	male		2/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0450	Unidentified	male		2/18/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0472	Unidentified	male		2/20/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0473	Unidentified	male		2/20/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0488	Unidentified	male		2/22/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0511	Delgado Reyes, Juan L.	male	45	2/24/17	Other Disease	Arizona	Pima
17-0516	Unidentified	male		2/25/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0549	Unidentified	male		2/28/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0610	Unidentified	male		3/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0633	Unidentified	male		3/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0636	Cruz Miranda, Urbano	male	48	3/10/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0733	Unidentified	male		3/21/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0734	Unidentified	male		3/15/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0759	Unidentified	male		3/24/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Yuma
17-0941	Unidentified	male		4/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-0982	Unidentified	male		4/21/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1011	Martinez Gomez, Filadelfo	male	24	4/24/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1028	Unidentified	male		4/26/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1075	Unidentified	male		5/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1120	Unidentified	male		5/6/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1182	Unidentified	male		5/13/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1192	Unidentified	male		5/15/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima

17-1205	Unidentified	male		5/13/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1221	Camacho Andrade, Antonio	male	48	5/19/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1273	Unidentified	male		5/25/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1287	Unidentified	male		5/27/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1288	Unidentified	male		5/27/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Maricopa
17-1300	Unidentified	male		5/29/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1314	Unidentified	male		5/31/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1315	Unidentified	male		5/31/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1316	Martinez Nunez, Dennis R.	male	30	5/31/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1375	Unidentified	male		6/6/17	Skeletal Remains Other Injury /	Arizona	Pima
17-1399	Unidentified	male		6/7/17	Homicide	Arizona	Maricopa
17-1405	Vargas Reynoso, Felipe	male	30	6/8/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1431	Benitez Vasquez, Jose O.	male	43	6/12/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1436	Unidentified	male		6/12/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1461	Unidentified	male		6/15/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1466	Unidentified	male		6/16/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima
17-1469	Carrera Contreras, Jose A.	male	23	6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1470	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1471	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1472	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1473	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1474	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1475	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1476	Unidentified	male		6/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1568	Pablo Gomez, Alfredo	male	31	6/26/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1573	Sandoval Sandoval, Juan M.	male	46	6/26/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1596	Hernandez Gonzalez, Bersain	male	26	6/27/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima

17-1600	Unidentified	male		6/28/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1625	Mendez Hernandez, Juan C.	male	21	6/30/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1645	Norales Fernandez, Jose R.	male	22	7/2/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1681	Unidentified	male		7/5/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1682	Unidentified	male		7/5/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1688	Ayala Higuera, Jesus I.	male	29	7/5/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1724	Carmona Chavez, Felipe	male	25	7/9/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima
17-1726	Sierra Cortes, Jaime	male	32	7/9/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1742	Unidentified	male		7/11/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1799	Lanuza Xuruc, Jerver I.	male	24	7/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1832	Unidentified	male		7/21/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1842	Unidentified	male		7/23/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1859	Unidentified	male		7/26/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1880	Unidentified	male		7/26/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1883	Unidentified	undetermined		7/28/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1897	Unidentified	male		7/30/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1921	Unidentified	male		8/2/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-1944	Unidentified	male		8/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1995	Unidentified	male		8/11/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-1996	Unidentified	male		8/12/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2006	Unidentified	male		8/15/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2014	Vividor Amaya, Jose F.	male	30	8/16/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2030	Unidentified	male		8/18/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2048	Menendez Fuentes, Eulogio I.	male	30	8/20/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2116	Ruiz Sanchez, Roberto F. Chavez Morales, Everildo	male	27	8/27/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2123	O.	male	21	8/28/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2186	Unidentified	male		9/4/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima

17-2206	Unidentified	male		9/6/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2210	Unidentified	male		9/5/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2211	Unidentified	male		9/6/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2217	Barron Payan, Hugo E.	male	44	9/2/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima
17-2249	Diaz Lopez, Geldy Y.	male	23	9/11/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima
17-2260	Hernandez Ramirez, Luis H.	male	22	9/12/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2261	Unidentified	male		9/12/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2272	Cortes Guillen, Ramiro	male	35	9/14/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2290	Unidentified	male		9/16/17	Undetermined	Arizona	Pima
17-2435	Unidentified	male		10/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2436	Hernandez Tapia, Francisco	male	35	9/25/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2469	Lopez Villa, Jesus M.	male	25	10/7/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2563	Bonilla Rivera, Uriel	male	30	10/19/17	Exposure	Arizona	Pima
17-2573	Unidentified	male		10/20/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2608	Unidentified	male		10/20/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2643	Unidentified	male		10/30/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2667	Unidentified	male		11/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2719	Unidentified	male		11/9/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2777	Unidentified	male		11/16/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Cochise
17-2792	Unidentified	male		11/17/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Cochise
17-2853	Unidentified	male		11/24/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2885	Unidentified	male		11/28/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2895	Chávez Chávez, Rolando	male	26	11/29/17	Gunshot Wound	Arizona	Pima
17-2928	Unidentified	male		12/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-2938	Unidentified	male		12/3/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Cochise
17-3060	Unidentified	male		12/18/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima
17-3171	Unidentified	male		12/30/17	Skeletal Remains	Arizona	Pima

Map of deaths found from people crossing the border in 2017 (Custom Map of Arizona Migrant Deaths. Retrieved from www.humaneborders.info/app/map.asp.)



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