

Pro-Amnesty Movement Blessed by Church Bosses

Is the disconnect between the hierarchy and those in the pews expanding?

BY PETER B. GEMMA

The fight for immigration reform—tighter limits and stricter regulations—is over. Those who believe 11-14 million illegal aliens can, and should, be assimilated into the mainstream of America's economy and culture have prevailed. Those who still hold out against this inevitable conclusion run the gamut from being simply naïve to creepy bigots.

That's what the elitist establishment wants Americans to think, and that's what opponents of amnesty for illegal aliens are afraid of.

The mainstream media are working hard in this public relations juggernaut. They give attention to those who hold the levers of power and who are working to ensure that amnesty for illegals is the law of the land. Popular Senator Marco Rubio—widely speculated to be a 2016 Republican presidential candidate—is touting groundbreaking legislation that does all but call for amnesty in plain words. A “conservative” political action committee has secured \$300,000 in advertising on “conservative” Fox News TV to promote his initiative. Religious community allies have been blatant in why they back Rubio's position. Ralph Reed, founder and chairman of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, admitted bluntly:

We have been encouraging of folks like Marco Rubio and provided them with critical cover. What really changed the political calculus was the introduction of a religious, spiritual, and compassionate case for immigration reform.¹

Fox News Network's highly rated broadcaster, Sean Hannity, is on board with Rubio, along with powerful GOP Congressmen Paul Ryan and Eric Cantor and other Republican leaders. Libertarian Senator Rand

Paul and tax reform crusader Grover Norquist support the Rubio measure as well, as do RINOs (Republicans in Name Only) Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham.

Only a year ago, the GOP platform declared, “We oppose amnesty because it would have the effect of encouraging illegal immigration and would give an unfair advantage to those who have broken our laws.” Political winds can change dramatically in controlled climate conditions.

And, as expected, influential Democrats are taking the lead on the drive to institute amnesty: New York's Governor Mario Cuomo, a potential 2016 presidential candidate, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton head a long list of open borders advocates on the Left. This is at least consistent with their strategy of party growth: Asian, African, and Hispanic minorities voted four-to-one Democratic in 2012.

Of course as happens in many political controversies, perception becomes reality: no politician or special interest group supports amnesty, yet everyone seems to accept the idea of legalizing the status of those who snuck over the border to be here—it's the same thing, only different, as the saying goes. There is much talk of immigration “reform” (bills that essentially stamp an official *imprimatur* onto illegals), but lobbyists, politicians, and the press will not plainly speak the word a-m-n-e-s-t-y.

While the Catholic Church spends more than \$3 million annually on its logistical support for illegal aliens—and lobbying for open borders—it claims, “the Church does not favor illegal immigration in any sense.” At the same time, it claims that, “amnesty is not a dirty word from the Catholic perspective.” It also says, “the Church brings special expertise to the table because we are an immigrant church and we have helped assist immigrants assimilate into the nation for years. Moreover, many immigrant families who attend Catholic parishes would be positively impacted by immigration

Peter B. Gemma, a Social Contract Contributing Editor, is a widely published writer whose work has appeared in USA Today, DailyCaller.com, and Military History.

reform and a legalization program.” The Catholic Bishops also assert, “The Church has always supported the right of a sovereign nation to secure its borders.” All these statements come from the same document issued by the Office of Migration and Refugee Policy, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.²

The media do their best to make the case that the fight to control the nation’s border with Mexico and protect American jobs from low-wage illegal aliens is finished, i.e., it’s as good as it will probably get. In which case, it’s time to settle the amnesty question for illegals that have already crept over the border. How? Well, the headline of an item in the March 13, 2013, *New York Times* assures readers that, “U.S. Citizens Join Illegal Immigrants in Pressing Lawmakers for Change.”³ A March 26, 2013, story in *The Atlantic* magazine goes a step beyond the current amnesty crises and asserts, “The government spends \$5 billion a year detaining and deporting immigrants who may soon be eligible for amnesty over minor infractions. Why not just pardon them instead?”⁴

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“Real Clear Politics,” the most visited political website on the Internet, tries to explain, “How Unions Came to Champion Immigrants,” a rather tough sell to 12 million jobless Americans.⁵

Away from Capitol Hill, grassroots support for illegal immigrants, ranging from professional ethnic lobbies to big business interests to liberal church groups, is well organized and vociferous—which makes it *appear* broad-based. Again, the notion is the fight for immigration restrictions is over: the “reformists” won.

Corporations seeking cheap labor, as well as their allies—tax-exempt foundations with a multi-cultural political agenda—underwrite the open borders lobby. The Ford Foundation seeded the militant Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund with a grant of \$2.2 million. *La Raza* (“The Race”), which maintains a network of over 300 affiliated community-based organizations, is supported by the Ford Foundation, Bank of America, PepsiCo, CitiBank, Wal-Mart, Comcast, and Verizon. An interlocking network of organizations and corporations, ranging from better-known

liberal advocates such as the American Civil Liberties Union to the innocuous-sounding National Immigration Forum (NIF), make up the open borders network. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation gave grants and donations totaling over \$8.6 million to the National Immigration Forum. That kind of coalition, integrating political and business elites with liberal ideologues, is powerful enough, but there is another dimension that encourages the integration of illegal aliens into American society.

Here’s an example: the National Immigration Forum’s chairman is John Gay of the National Restaurant Association—a special interest in the market for cheap labor. Its Board members include: Craig Regelbrugge, representing the American Nursery and Landscape Association (another trade that relies heavily on cheap labor), Randel Johnson of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as Gideon Aronoff of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and Kevin Appleby of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Appleby and Aronoff represent the liberal church hierarchy’s support of amnesty.

Among the powerful vested interests that advocate for amnesty is the Catholic Church. And for good reason. Latinos represent 29 percent of all Catholics, but 45 percent of those between the ages of 19 and 25. The exploding birthrate of Hispanics is the only way the Church has to expand, or even hold onto a fair share of the faith-based community. Its traditional base of congregants continues to shrink by double digits. Half of its diocesan schools have shut their doors, and parochial school enrollment is down by two-thirds in the past 30 years. However, the Hispanic contingent in the Catholic Church, just as within the larger American culture, is not homogeneous: 56 percent prefer to hear their Mass in Spanish, and only eight percent in English. In the churches Hispanics attend, an extraordinary 91 percent offer Spanish language services.⁶

It’s among the special interests that one ally of the open borders axis stands out: mainline leaders of the faith-based community (NB: two religious leaders sit on the National Immigration Forum’s board). A Reuters News Service story reports, “After decades of promoting traditionally conservative causes like opposition to abortion, many evangelical leaders are now wielding their formidable influence to persuade Republican lawmakers to back one of President Barack Obama’s top priorities.”⁷

Christianity Today—the *New York Times* of the Evangelical constituency—quotes the National Association of Evangelicals president, Leith Anderson, as saying, “Many of the immigrants in America are us, that is, the growing edge of evangelical churches and denominations in the United States is the immigrant commu-

nity.” The NAE membership encompasses 40 denominations and scores of other evangelical groups.⁸

As advocates for illegal aliens, the Catholic Church is in spiritual solidarity with Evangelicals. According to Fox News Latino, “Roman Catholic bishops in the United States are urging the public not to obey laws that counter religious beliefs...” The Fox News division went on to report,

In a new 12-page document that quotes the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the bishops said priests, lay people, public figures and others must be involved in the effort to change recent state and federal laws that church leaders believe violate religious freedom. Church leaders have been fighting tough immigration laws in Alabama and elsewhere that many religious groups say make it impossible for them to aid undocumented immigrants. Many such laws include provisions making it a crime to harbor or transport undocumented immigrants.

In 2006, Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony

directed all priests in his 288-parish archdiocese to simply ignore federal laws that require anyone working on behalf of the church to question the citizenship of its clients (i.e., the Catholic Church assistance to illegal aliens applying for its various welfare programs). The directive was given by Mahony in response to the immigration bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December 2005, and mandated the prosecution of anyone who knowingly aided an illegal alien.

The Catholic Church has also helped to organize the massive illegal alien rallies seen in recent years around the nation. A March 2006 rally held in Washington, D.C. was sponsored by, among others, the Archdiocese of Washington’s Office of Justice and Service, Catholic Charities of the Arlington, Virginia Diocese, and the Catholic Social Justice Lobby Network. Baltimore churches St. Michael and St. Patrick even sent a four-bus convoy filled with illegal aliens to the Washington rally.

During Pope Benedict XVI’s 2008 visit to the United States, he admonished Americans to adopt a welcoming attitude toward those who break our laws by entering this country illegally. Benedict said, “I want

PROFITING FROM TAXPAYER-FUNDED CHRISTIAN CHARITY

Financial Statement* 2011: Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.usccb.org

Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) secures grants and contracts from the U.S. government to carry out its critical work in support of vulnerable newcomers. It also receives vital funding from the annual Catholic Relief Services Collection held in parishes nationwide. These monies are used to meet the service needs of immigrants, refugees, migrants, trafficking victims, and other people seeking safety and freedom. MRS is also grateful for USCCB and foundation grants and private contributions in support of our unique mission.

REVENUE		EXPENSES	
Federal Grants/Contracts	\$66,723,452.27	Personnel	\$8,114,648.17
CRS Collection	\$1,483,837.18	Operating	\$6,053,614.98
Travel Loans/Fees	\$3,751,295.46	Diocesan Programs & Direct Assistance	
Investment Inc.	\$50,922.07	to Refugees & Other Clients	\$57,260,886.18
Private Grants/Donations	\$24,387.00	MRS Grants & Donations	\$300,151.29
Other	\$68,590.71	Total Expenses	\$71,729,300.62
Total Revenue	\$72,102,484.69	Revenue in Excess of Expenses	\$373,184.07

*These numbers are based on unaudited figures of the MRS financial statement.

Refugees Rejuvenate Minnesota Parish

Quote: About 400 Myanmar refugees have found a spiritual home at St. Bernard [parish] in recent months. For Father [Mike] Anderson, the refugees’ arrival has been nothing short of a miracle. “I think it’s the best thing that could have happened to us,” he told *The Catholic Spirit*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. “For 15 years, we’ve watched our parish rolls drop from 1,000 families to less than 400 families. . . . (The refugees) are a sign of new life.” —*National Catholic Reporter*, January 3, 2011

to encourage you and your communities to continue to welcome the immigrants who join your ranks today, to share their joys and hopes, to support them in their sorrows and trials and to help them flourish in their new home.”⁹

In 2008, it was discovered that the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, a Vatican-based group which answers directly to the Pope, made a large donation to help build a shelter for Central Americans on their illegal journey to the United States. The money was given to the Brothers on the Path refuge, located in the Mexican city of Ixtepec.¹⁰

More recently, one Catholic Bishop, Jaime Soto of Sacramento California, actually filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in opposition to Arizona’s tough new restrictions on illegal immigrants, saying the anti-illegal immigration law places the “positive work” of the Catholic Church “at risk,” and that he is “very concerned” with the “very imprudent and impractical trend” in state legislation.

The Catholic Church is far from alone in the faith-based community drive for amnesty.

The politically savvy Jewish community has very specific goals in mind when establishing a strong coalition with Hispanics. The powerful American Jewish Committee’s website boasts, “AJC holds workshops for Latino and Jewish leaders with the goal of building relationships that foster mutual understanding, enhance coalitional readiness for advocacy, and create awareness of the core values and concerns of each group. Workshops focus attention on issues that are common to both groups, such as immigration, while aiming to develop enduring partnerships.” The lobby asserts,

AJC affirms that immigration reform is in the best interest of America’s economy, security and values. As its signature contribution to the immigration debate, the Bridging America Project engages leaders from mainstream sectors of society (including business, labor, education, healthcare, faith and law enforcement) to form coalitions of “unlikely allies” in support of fair and pragmatic immigration reform.

Not to be left behind, the Church of Latter Day Saints—Mormons—usually thought of as politically conservative and slow to welcome cultural changes, are now embracing the elitist establishment-directed rush to integrate illegal aliens into American society. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the Mormon Church’s First Presidency, told the *Salt Lake City Tribune* that, “President Barack Obama’s outline for immigration reform matches the values of the Mormon faith.”¹¹

As with Capitol Hill politicians who cannot relate to their constituents on the issue, religious leaders in

church pulpits have a disconnect with their parishioners.

First, a look at the political disconnect: compare the beliefs of Americans regarding the impact of illegal aliens with the establishment elitists like Marco Rubio and the Chamber of Commerce.

- Sixty-five percent of likely voters oppose birthright citizenship for children born to illegal alien mothers;¹²
- Seventy percent are not confident that immigration laws would be enforced in the future if illegal aliens were given amnesty;¹³
- Seventy-four percent believe that the government is not effective at preventing illegal immigration;¹⁴
- Sixty-six percent believe illegal aliens are a net drain on public resources.¹⁵

Political perception isn’t reality for most Americans, especially when the facts leak out. During the time period when unemployment rates hovered just under 10 percent, a 2010 *Washington Post* story revealed that from 2009 to 2010, foreign-born Hispanics gained 98,000 construction jobs while white—and black—construction workers lost 511,000 jobs. In the second quarter of 2010, foreign-born workers gained 656,000 jobs and native-born workers lost 1.2 million jobs.

By contrast, a March 2010 survey by Rasmussen Reports revealed what Americans—employed, underemployed, unemployed—felt about the impact of illegal immigration.

- Sixty-eight percent think that securing the border is more important than granting amnesty to illegal aliens;
- Sixty-seven percent believe that illegal immigration is a strain on the federal budget;
- Sixty-six percent agree that the availability of government benefits attracts illegal aliens to the U.S.¹⁶

A June 27, 2012, Rasmussen Reports national survey found that 58 percent of voters believe the federal government encourages rather than discourages illegal immigration: just 24 percent disagree.¹⁷ Another 2012 Rasmussen poll revealed 63 percent oppose driver’s licenses and any public benefits for illegal aliens who somehow get work permits.¹⁸

Interweave those numbers into the religious hierarchy disconnect: a February 2013 poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press finds that 55 percent of Evangelicals are more likely to see immigrants as a burden than a strength. Pew found that evangelicals are twice as likely to see immigrants as, “a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.” Nearly half of Catholics state the same

thing.¹⁹ Forty-three percent of American Jews prefer immigration enforcement that pushes illegal aliens out of the country.

What's being sold as political and religious reality ain't necessarily so. In an article entitled, "Not so fast: Evangelicals differ with their leaders on immigration reform," Salt Lake City's *Deseret News* reporter David Ward writes, "It's been in the headlines for months ... 'Evangelicals push Congress for immigration changes,' [and] 'Among U.S. evangelicals, surprising support for immigration reform,' [and] 'Obama's immigration plan encourages evangelicals.' Outlets including *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, Reuters News Service and numerous others have written more or less the same story on the subject. The problem is that it's not exactly true." Ward continues,

Evangelicals are not largely behind comprehensive immigration reform, which is commonly taken to mean a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and, simultaneously, measures for improved enforcement of immigration law.²⁰

In the same article, Allan Wall, an Oklahoma schoolteacher and practicing Evangelical, is quoted as saying, "Despite the stereotype of some kind of monolithic army of evangelical zombies being controlled by their leaders, in reality it's a rather fractious bunch." Wall, who lived in Mexico for 15 years and whose wife is Mexican, goes on to note, "We're not very confident the government is going to do all these things—the back taxes and showing English proficiency—because of the simple fact that the Obama administration right now is not enforcing the law anyway."

The *Deseret News* story further cites American Family Radio host Bryan Fischer, also an Evangelical, who remarks, "The leadership of the Evangelical community is almost completely out of alignment right now with ordinary Evangelicals and ordinary Americans. I think it's because of the shallow, superficial appeal of being considered compassionate by the mainstream media. They get a lot of fawning, favorable press, and they eat that up. They know the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* will say nice things about them." Fisher went on to observe,

I do think that Evangelicals, because we place a high value on love and compassion, can easily be fooled into compromising justice based on a shallow understanding of compassion.

The National Association of Evangelicals resolution, mentioned above, endorsing "comprehensive immigration reform" was not unanimously adopted (although that fact is hard to find in news coverage). Only 11

denominations actually signed the NAE's pro-amnesty resolution. Several member denominations publicly disavowed the amnesty endorsement, including the Salvation Army. The Presbyterian Church in America publicly declared that the NAE position "has not become the PCA position on immigration."²¹

Unlike some other social and spiritual questions among the faith-based community, the theological debate about illegal immigration is fairly clear-cut.

Roman Catholic priest Patrick Bascio, author of *The Immorality of Illegal Immigration*, has noted:

Groups that favor illegal immigration often invoke the Almighty and wrap themselves in the mantle of compassion as their justification for turning a blind eye to the terrible consequences to America of our porous borders. If simply giving somebody something they want without making them earn it is compassion, then laziness is next to godliness. The American and Mexican bishops should use their good intentions and powerful influence to remind the Mexican government that it has a responsibility for its citizens.²²

Open border advocates say that as Christians, they have to separate the notion of the act of entering the country illegally from attending to the needs of the illegals themselves. The first obligation of a Christian is to express a Christ-like compassion, whether it is to the powerful tax collector or the humble fisherman.²³ Those who come into the country, albeit illegally, are desperately seeking work, refuge from danger and persecution, or a better life for themselves and their families. Christian compassion for the downtrodden must be shown toward those who would risk their lives in dangerous attempts to cross the border.

Christians active in opposing the invasion of illegal aliens acknowledge the need for compassion but do not equate that with accommodation. Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, a noted secular Christian leader, has observed, "Our borders are compromised by illegal immigration, infiltration of terrorists, and by government policies of regional partnership that actually dilute the sovereignty of the United States. The choice is not between our Christian duty and our border laws; it's a matter of life or death for our nation." Moore, best known for defying courts in the erection of Ten Commandments tablets on public grounds, also believes,

The same God who commands that we treat aliens and 'strangers' with righteousness and justice also clearly defined the physical borders for the nation of Israel, in detailed geographical terms, in Numbers 34. Israel, then and today, would not exist without borders, and neither will America. We should love and

care for ‘the stranger among us’ and always be mindful of their need for salvation. But we also have a duty to apply all laws equally and fairly without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin. Our immigration laws must be strictly and justly enforced. It’s not only a matter of national survival, it’s our Christian duty.”²⁴

The divide between the faith-based community and their leaders is stark. One of the largest, most comprehensive polls ever conducted on immigration was completed in the fall of 2009. The Zogby Public Opinion Company surveyed 42,026 adults (the usual cross-section in surveys is 1,000-1,500 people) and found that mainline Protestants support enforcement over a pathway to citizenship by a 64-to-24 percent margin. Born-again Protestants (Evangelicals and Fundamentalists) support enforcement over a pathway to citizenship by a 76-to-12 percent margin. Seventy-two percent of mainline Protestants say legal immigration levels are too high, and 78 percent of born-again Protestants say they are too high.²⁵

Yet from the pulpits there is an unyielding and united chorus of open borders propaganda. New York’s Roman Catholic Cardinal Timothy Dolan declared that support for immigration enforcement was “not American.”²⁶ Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, called Alabama’s new restrictive immigration laws “anti-American, anti-Christian, and anti-family.”²⁷ Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles compared Arizona’s illegal immigration regulations to “German Nazi and Russian Communist techniques.”²⁸

This kind of fiery rhetoric is backed by impressive financial clout. A March 5, 2013 *Washington Post* story reports the Catholic Church’s has a finely tuned mix of religion and politics: “The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on Tuesday added to the nearly \$3 million the church has invested in the past year on immigration reform efforts, saying they sense a political opening on a topic that’s long been a concern for a strongly immigrant faith.” The report goes on to note,

The organization of U.S. Catholic bishops said it would make \$800,000 in grants available for projects aimed at mobilizing regular Catholics to push for the bishops’ immigration platform. That includes family reunification, a path to citizenship and addressing the root causes of immigration, among other things.²⁹

Billionaire left-wing philanthropist George Soros has stated, “My foundations support people in the country who care about an open society. It’s their work that I’m supporting. But I can empower them. I can support

them, and I can help them.” He puts his money where his mouth is. The organizations he funds include: the innocuous-sounding Faithful America, a seemingly Catholic organization that is an open borders advocacy group. In fact Soros, a self-identified atheist, has donated some \$600,000 to various left-wing religious groups such as Union for Reform Judaism, and the United Church of Christ, organizations usually found on the inter-faith appeals for amnesty legislation.

The National Council of Churches (NCC) is a key player—and funder—in the religious component of the open borders axis. In addition to funding by George Soros, the NCC has raised more money from left-wing foundations than from its 37 member churches. The tax-exempt foundations that fund NCC include the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Ted Turner’s Better World Fund, and the United Nations Foundation. Those resources get ploughed back into such groups as *La Raza*.

The open borders axis is a rich and powerful circle: most major media, a majority of politicians, many religious leaders, a host of mega-corporations—all of whom feed each other. It’s easy to feel out of the loop if one is opposed to or even questions the dogma of amnesty today, amnesty tomorrow, amnesty forever.

However, there are level-headed and compelling voices that can be heard over the steady drumbeats of the open borders crowd.

Kelly Monroe Kullberg, author of the bestselling *Finding God at Harvard* (2007), writes, “The difficulty comes with the influx of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants into a region whose majority population is neither adequately equipped nor enthusiastic to receive them.” She goes on to say:

In this context it’s appropriate to explore what is meant, in Scripture, by the usefulness of hedges and fences, the importance of just weights, and the sheer folly and even sinfulness of those who spend what they have not first saved. Individuals, groups, and nations that put themselves in debt, especially severe debt, place themselves in positions of vulnerability and even enslavement to those whom they owe. As the author of the Proverbs tells us, ‘The borrower is servant to the lender.’ At some point, it is neither wise nor right to put ourselves in deeper and deeper debt in order to provide greater and greater benefits to more and more people. We’re first to put our own house in order.”³⁰

Father Bascio has identified the pulpit-pew disconnect when he observes, “The Christian leadership of this country, not really comprehending the wide-ranging problems connected with illegal immigration, has

blessed violating the sovereignty of our nation, depressing the wages of American workers, encouraging the growth of the most violent gangs in America, driving up black unemployment, and draining the best and brightest of the Third World, leaving it helpless. How could the church possibly desire that this state of affairs continue?”

The image machine of the open borders lobby has not muffled the voices of immigration restrictionists, especially those in the faith-based community. As commentator Patrick Buchanan, a lay Catholic leader, sees it, “If America is not to disintegrate, if she is to regain the ‘out of many, one,’ unity we knew in the Eisenhower-Kennedy era, the first imperative is to re-adopt the immigration policy that produced that era of good feeling, so that the melting pot, fractured though it is, can begin again to do its work.” But is the open borders axis winning? Buchanan says they are failing and “... will continue to fail. For it is based on ... an ideology whose tenets are at war with the laws of nature. Like Marxists who were going to create a new man and a new society, our establishment is attempting the impossible.”³¹ ■

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