



IMMIGRANT CONNECTION

WAYPOINTS

ALONG THE WELCOME JOURNEY



BEST PRACTICES LEARNED FROM PRACTITIONERS DURING THE IC WELCOME CALL

PREACHING AND TEACHING – A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION

January 2021

A welcome call with Pastor Adam Lipscomb, Pastors Emily and Matt Miller,
Professor Luigi Peñaranda, and Pastor Zach Szmara

To watch the recording: <https://youtu.be/ZpTw8HdjYpI>

FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHTS

- Immigrant is not a hot topic just right now, it is a hot topic always...it's not just a hot topic in the United States, it's a hot topic everywhere around the world...yet God doesn't just speak about immigrants occasionally in the Bible, He CONSISTENTLY tells His people to have compassion on the immigrant in their midst...throughout History, Wisdom, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles...it's all over the pages of the Bible.
- The question shouldn't be "How do you preach on immigration?" but "How do you NOT preach on it?"
- We confuse sermons where we talk about how we should *treat* immigrants with being told how we should *vote* on the topic of immigration.
- Any time we step into the pulpit, we should be prepared to talk about "hot topics" like immigration. We are so counter-cultural that we should not be surprised that we have to talk about topics that make us feel uncomfortable. The Gospel itself is countercultural – loving like Jesus is countercultural! The bottom line – God loves immigrants. If we ignore it, we're ignoring the Gospel.

BIBLICAL PASSAGES TO GET YOU STARTED

- Leviticus 19:34 – REMEMBER the immigrants because you were immigrants. Help your congregation get back into touch with our own immigration story! Ex: what did German/Irish/Dutch people face when they came?
- Ruth - Such a practical story of immigration.
- Joseph (Genesis 27, 42)
- Matthew 25: 31-46 - What you have done to the least of these you have done unto me.
- Samaritans (John 4): Ae people who were just viewed negatively and we would prefer to not talk to or talk about. Who are our Samaritans?
- Other Preaching Resources:
 - <https://www.icwelcome.org/resources>
 - <https://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/preach/>

HOLISTIC LESSONS TO PREPARE YOUR CONGREGATION

- Realize this is a journey. It's not ideal to have a guest speaker or preach one sermon that "drops a bomb" and just move on. There should be preparation beforehand and follow-up afterwards as this is a journey that requires proximity and relationship. Prepare small groups, Sunday school, and/or workshops that can occur before and after.
- Embrace displacement: The center of our theological understanding is built around the notion of displacement - Genesis 1 – being displaced from the Garden! How then can we be a blessing? Abraham was blessed to be a blessing as an immigrant, how can we be a blessing?
- A lot of the convincing comes with actions and not with words. Pastors that want to teach about loving immigrants but are not engaged in the "Act" of loving personally, need to remain silent. You can't lead people to love what you don't love. So, putting yourselves in situations where you must "face" immigrants is key. The question is not "how do I teach?" it but how do I live it. The rest is easier, just share your experiences.

ONE PRACTICAL NEXT STEP:

- Sign up for an upcoming 8-week learning cohort: www.icwelcome.org/cohort
- Learn some key terms. When friends and family seem like they might be saying things incorrectly, have information so you know. Ex: chain-migration – family migration!
- Learn about your own immigration story.
- Learn your own neighborhood: www.icwelcome.org/learnlocal
- Don't view immigrants as a "project" or a group that needs to be "led" by you. There is so much that we can learn from immigrants. Let's be open to learning from them. What if *immigrants* are the blessing to *us*? The hardest thing to teach white pastors is that, perhaps, immigrants are here, not so that white churches can diversify their services but so that the American church could have an encounter with the real, non-white, non-resident Jesus. The salvation of immigrants is not found in white churches. But I have a feeling that the salvation of white churches is found in the Jesus of the immigrants. In other words, immigrants are not here so that white churches can saved them. They are here so that white Christianity can be saved.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

1. Arthur Glasser - *Announcing the Kingdom of God: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible*
2. Justo González - *Santa Biblia: The Bible through Hispanic Eyes / Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective / Faith and Wealth / The Mestizo Augustine: A Theologian Between Two Cultures*
3. Robert Romero - *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Social Justice, Theology, and Identity*
4. Daniel Carroll – *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World*
5. Soong-Chan Rah – *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity / Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church / lots of others!*
6. Ernesto Cardenal - *The Gospel in Solentiname*
7. *Cultural Background Study Bible*

To sign up for upcoming Immigrant Connection Welcome Calls: www.icwelcome.org/call