

## Introduction

When I met Miguel Villanueva in the Mexican border town of Nogales, he had just been removed from the United States. He talked to me in fluent English as he ate breakfast at the Kino Border Initiative, a Roman Catholic shelter for migrants. After a prayer by a Jesuit priest, Miguel told me that at age fifteen, he had left his home in Mexico, where jobs were scarce and those that were available hardly paid enough to buy clothes, food, and fuel. Miguel and his brother headed north to the United States, settling in a Midwestern city. There he met a woman he came to call his wife, and together they had a daughter, now aged three. Lately, Miguel had worked two jobs waiting tables, one at a Mexican restaurant and another at an American breakfast restaurant.<sup>1</sup>

The trouble was that Miguel didn't have papers. He had entered the United States illegally, without permission from U.S. immigration authorities. Miguel's common law wife had permanent residency, and his daughter was a U.S. citizen because she was born on U.S. soil. Though Miguel lacked proper documentation, he managed to live in the Midwest for six years without being caught or deported. He tried registering for high school, but the school officials asked him for a Social Security number and identification, which he did not have. But just recently, at age twenty-one, Miguel was caught driving without a license, and the police handed him over to the immigration authorities. He was given the option of paying bail and waiting for a court date, where he might be sentenced to a few months in jail. Instead, he decided to return to Mexico, and the officials sent him to a Texas border town where he crossed into Mexico. After returning to see his mother – his father had died years before – Miguel made his way north to rejoin his wife and daughter. In decades past someone like him would have attempted a crossing at one of the larger border cities,

<sup>1</sup> To protect the subject's identity, his name has been changed and his places of residence have not been revealed. Given these conditions, the subject gave oral and written permission to let his story be used.

from Tijuana to San Diego or from Ciudad Juárez to El Paso, but now these cities had well-guarded crossing points, and high walls stretched along the U.S.-Mexico border for miles into the countryside. Avoiding the cities, Miguel crossed through the desert that stretches from the Mexican state of Sonora to the U.S. state of Arizona, a way that has led to death for many thousands of border crossers since 2000. Though he did not tell me so, Miguel probably paid someone called a *coyote* to help him across the border. He joined a group to walk on foot through an unfortified section of the border, making his way under a hot, dry sun through a mountainous landscape of snakes and scorpions, prickly cactuses, and flash floods in the summer monsoon season. After three days, the U.S. Border Patrol found Miguel, and when he could not produce travel documents, they took him into custody. As part of the Operation Streamline program, Miguel was tried along with dozens of others for illegal entry or reentry. He pled guilty to avoid a sentence of a year or two if he fought the charge. The judge gave him a month and a half in prison, telling him that if he was caught again he could be charged with a felony and spend years in prison. After serving his time in a jail in Arizona, Miguel was transported across the border to Nogales, Sonora, and left there.

At the Kino Border Initiative, Miguel ate his breakfast eagerly. I asked him what his plans were. “I’ll go back to see my mother for a little while.” “But you want to get back to your family, don’t you?” I said, and he told me, “Yes, I’ll try to get back to them. Can I go back to Tucson with you today?” “No, I’m sorry,” I responded, pondering what it would be like to hide him in the fifteen-passenger van that would take me back to the United States that day. “When are you coming back here?” he asked. “I don’t know,” I said.

Rev. Charles Adams pastors an evangelical church in a small city in the American South.<sup>2</sup> He told me that a family like Miguel’s comes to worship at his church. The parents lack the documents that would allow them to stay in the United States legally, and while in the United States they have had three children. Like Miguel’s daughter, these children are U.S. citizens because every person born in the United States is a citizen. If the parents were to follow the law, they would have to move with their children to a country their children have never lived in, likely to a place where opportunities to make a living and support their children are few. Pastor Charles said that his church members do not feel it is appropriate to hire the parents to work for them, something that would be against the law. He said that the church has occasionally helped the family with personal needs, like taking them to see a lawyer, who was not able to help them find a way out of their dilemma. When I contacted Charles a few years later, he told me that the family was still at his church, and their son was to be baptized that week. The parents were working and paying Social Security taxes, but lawyers told them there is nothing they can do but

<sup>2</sup> The name of the pastor has been changed and the location of his church hidden to protect his identity and the identity of the family. Under these conditions, the subject gave written permission for the use of his story.

wait, staying with their three U.S. citizen children, but staying without legal status. Charles refrained from telling me anything more, and his reticence indicated the bind he is in as the family's pastor and as a citizen who wishes to uphold the law.

Spencer Bachus served as a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1993 to 2015, representing much of the Birmingham, Alabama, metropolitan area.<sup>3</sup> A regular churchgoer, Bachus attends Hunter Street Baptist Church in the Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>4</sup> During his last term in Congress, he served on the House Judiciary Committee, the committee that must approve proposals to alter immigration laws before the entire House has a chance to vote on the laws. On most issues, Bachus tended to side with the more conservative end of his party, but he broke rank with his peers on immigration issues. Up for debate in 2013 was a series of proposals for reform, many gaining support from conservative Republicans in the House. While his fellows supported an increase in funds and agents committed to border security and an increase in visas for highly skilled workers, few of them supported an additional proposal, a pathway to citizenship for those illegally present in the United States. Bachus' conservative colleagues rejected this pathway as a concession to lawbreakers who should be deported from the country.

Bachus saw things differently, and he said that his Christian faith guided his judgment. When a constituent asked about immigration reform at a meeting in Gardendale, Alabama, Bachus spoke highly of recent immigrants, saying that nearly all of them came to the United States for the same reason present citizens' ancestors immigrated, to seek a better life. He pointed out that nearly all immigrants who lack legal status live with family members who are U.S. citizens. In many cases, enforcing immigration laws would mean dividing families. Said Bachus, "Y'all may think I'm copping out, but with my Christian faith, it's hard for me to say that I'm going to divide these families up." He related stories of constituents, a Guatemalan national who grew up in the United States and did not speak Spanish removed to Guatemala at age eighteen, a widow of a U.S. veteran threatened with deportation to the Philippines, and a fast-food manager who depended on undocumented workers to clean his store overnight. Bachus gave his prescription: "Bring them into our system. Give them legal status. They will pay worker's compensation. They will pay Social Security. They'll work hard." If nothing is done, Bachus said, these men and women will continue to work in the shadows and undermine legal residents' wages. He concluded: "I'll tell you this, as your Congressman, I am not going to separate families or send them back."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Bachus, Spencer T., III - Biographical Information," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000013>.

<sup>4</sup> "Chairman Spencer Bachus," *House Committee on Financial Services*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://financialservices.house.gov/about/chairman.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Rep. Spencer Bachus III, "Speech to Constituents" (Gardendale Civic Center, Gardendale, Ala., August 21, 2013), [www.dropbox.com/sh/lwo6835cvqrzofc/xwvCTxas9](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/lwo6835cvqrzofc/xwvCTxas9); Greg Sargent, "A Conservative Christian in a Deep Red District Makes Case for Immigration Reform,"

More than eleven million men, women, and children are estimated to live in the United States without authorization, amounting to a little over three out of every hundred residents.<sup>6</sup> Those who remain in the United States live what Leo Chavez calls “shadowed lives,” avoiding contact with government agencies while working without permission, going to college with little prospects for jobs afterwards, driving without a license, or witnessing crimes they are afraid to report.<sup>7</sup> Many experience life in the United States as what a character in a song by the band Los Tigres del Norte calls a *jaula de oro*, a golden cage, his prison. “I hardly ever leave the house / Well, I’m afraid they’ll find me / and they can deport me,” he sings.<sup>8</sup> Those like Miguel Villanueva who are prevented from returning to the United States leave behind a spouse or children whom they will rarely or never see. Some like Charles Adams’ congregants who remain in the United States without permission feel torn between following the law and supporting their U.S.-born children. In churches like Adams’, those who lack legal residency may be baptized and communing members, but their fellow churchgoers are hesitant to give them work. Those already established in the United States are unsure how to love their “illegal” neighbors. Lawmakers like Spencer Bachus want to prevent illegal immigration, but they find that their worship of Jesus Christ makes them unwilling to support enforcing the law if it means removing one member of a family to another country. In these stories and many more, following federal law stands at odds with the chance to make a decent living, the care of children and the unity of the family, the communion of the church, and friendship between neighbors.

*Washington Post*, August 23, 2013, [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/08/23/a-conservative-christian-in-a-deep-red-district-makes-case-for-immigration-reform/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/08/23/a-conservative-christian-in-a-deep-red-district-makes-case-for-immigration-reform/).

- <sup>6</sup> Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, “Overall Number of U.S. Unauthorized Immigrants Holds Steady Since 2009” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, September 20, 2016), 3, [www.pewhispanic.org/2016/09/20/overall-number-of-u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-holds-steady-since-2009/](http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/09/20/overall-number-of-u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-holds-steady-since-2009/), estimate that 11.1 million people lived in the United States without authorization in 2014. These can only be estimates, since unauthorized immigrants meet with success so long as they avoid detection. The same report estimated that in 2014, the median length of time that unauthorized immigrants had lived in the United States was 13.6 years. Passel et al. arrive at their figures through what is called the “residual method,” subtracting a government estimate of legal residents from the total foreign-born population measured in a survey, *ibid.*, 22–24, 29–30. Their 2016 report bases its figures for 2014 on estimates of the total U.S. population from the American Community Survey, which lists the U.S. population in 2014 as 318,857,056. 11.1 million is 3.14 percent of this total, or a little over three per hundred residents, *ibid.*, 8, 22; U.S. Census, “American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2014 1-Year Estimates” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_14\\_1YR\\_DP05&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_DP05&prodType=table).
- <sup>7</sup> Leo R. Chavez, *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992).
- <sup>8</sup> *Casi no salgo a la calle / Pues tengo miedo de que me hallen / y me pueden deportar / . . . Aunque la jaula sea de oro, / no deja de ser prisión*, Los Tigres del Norte, *Jaula de Oro*, *Jaula de Oro* (Fonovisa, 1984). Translation author’s.

## CHRISTIAN VOICES ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

What response does Christian theological ethics offer to illegal immigration in the United States? For someone who is unlawfully present like Miguel, for a church like Pastor Charles' where some members lack legal status, for a lawmaker like Congressman Bachus seeking to be wise and faithful, what counsel does the Christian faith provide? Amid a battle over language, how can this sort of migration be spoken of with truth and charity? What guidance does the faith offer to those who are considering migrating or have already immigrated without legal authorization? Before God, how can governments judge justly and churches act faithfully?

These questions need answers. Among theologians, discussion has begun, but more needs to be said to provide a robust response to illegal immigration. This will become clear through a review of works that have come out of two significant Christian communities in the United States. Evangelical Protestants form the first community, represented here by Daniel Carroll and James Hoffmeier. Roman Catholics form the second, represented here by Magisterial teaching since the late nineteenth century. Recent academic monographs in Christian ethics have begun to contribute to these discussions, as the third section will show. The impasses and the gaps in these discussions provide the occasion for this book.

*Evangelical Biblical Scholars on Illegal Immigration*

Where can Christian wisdom on illegal immigration be found? One of the larger Christian communities in the United States, evangelical Protestants, tends to look to the Bible. Two Old Testament scholars represent this tradition as they seek to present how the Bible deals with migration, reading it in an American context and writing short books for a general but intelligent audience. These are M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, author of *Christians at the Border*, and James K. Hoffmeier, author of *The Immigration Crisis*. Both scholars are clear that due to God's character and the identity of God's people, immigrants deserve respect, love, and just treatment.<sup>9</sup> They also agree that the Old Testament attests to borders, border controls, and practices of granting permission to cross borders in the Ancient Near East.<sup>10</sup> But Carroll and Hoffmeier interpret Old Testament legislation about migrants differently, and from the New Testament they draw out opposing views on how Christians ought to interact with civil law. As a result, their counsel on illegal immigration differs.

<sup>9</sup> M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2013), 77–78, 87, 91, 94–100; James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2009), 73, 75–76, 79, 120–21.

<sup>10</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 83–85; Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis*, 32–34, 38–39, 57.

One aim of this book is to continue the unfinished discussion between Carroll and Hoffmeier, and so their discussion deserves attention.

The two scholars differ first in the way they read Old Testament legal codes about migrants. Looking to terms for migrants and foreigners in the Hebrew Scriptures, Daniel Carroll writes that the adjectives נֹכְרִי, *nokrî*, and זָר, *zār*, apply to foreigners who may be newcomers to Israel but remain unassimilated, while the noun תּוֹשָׁב, *tôšāb*, seems to indicate one who relies on Israel for her sustenance. The more notable word is *gēr*, sojourner or migrant, and the term to which the laws about just treatment apply.<sup>11</sup> Sojourners were the ones the law says to love and to treat justly. These people without kin and land, who lacked ways to provide for themselves, were guaranteed protection in Israelite households and farms, at the temple, and at the city gate, where elders would issue judgments.<sup>12</sup> Unique among Ancient Near Eastern laws, these laws flowed from two sources, says Carroll: First, Deuteronomy and the Psalms present God as one who loves the sojourner, so that the one who does justice to the foreigner imitates God.<sup>13</sup> Second, the presence of immigrants reminded Israel that they had been sojourners enslaved in Egypt but rescued by a God who provided them with their land. “[T]he arrival and presence of sojourners,” Carroll intimates, “were not a threat to Israel’s national identity; rather, their presence was fundamental to its very meaning.”<sup>14</sup> Since justice for the immigrant distinguished Israel’s law from the laws of its neighbors and since it is described as a character trait of God himself, Carroll thinks that justice for the sojourner applies today. He says that like in ancient Israel, immigrants do not threaten American identity; rather, they remind the United States of her identity as a nation of immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

James Hoffmeier takes a different stance on the Old Testament terms for foreigners. Hoffmeier thinks these terms can be specified more fully, writing that the *nokrî* and the *zār* could be enemy invaders, squatters, people passing through, or workers residing for a limited time. Hoffmeier considers the *gēr* to be a foreigner who has been offered hospitality by a host, legally allowed to enter, protected by a sponsor, and when coupled with the term *tôšāb*, residing for a time.<sup>16</sup> Even the *gēr*, he says, could not invite family members to join him in his new land, except in the case of a spouse.<sup>17</sup> Hoffmeier finds a distinction between a foreigner and a resident alien, one passing through or staying temporarily and one who has been invited to stay for a while.<sup>18</sup> He infers that the *gēr* has “followed legal procedures to obtain

<sup>11</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 85–87.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 88–89.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 77–78, 87, 91; see Deut. 10:17–19; Ps. 146:6–9.

<sup>14</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013; see Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deut. 5:15; 10:19; 16:12; 24:18, 22; 26:5–10.

<sup>15</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 96–98.

<sup>16</sup> *The Immigration Crisis*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–52, 57.

recognized standing as a resident alien,” and he concludes that the laws concerning justice toward the foreigner only apply to the legal resident alien, not to the outright foreigner.<sup>19</sup>

When in the Old Testament, God commands and invites God’s people to love the sojourner as God does, Hoffmeier thinks that this sojourner corresponds to the legal immigrant in contemporary America, while other types of foreigners correspond to illegal immigrants today.<sup>20</sup> Many of the recommendations that Hoffmeier draws out of the Old Testament, including equal treatment under the law and equal social benefits as citizens, apply in his opinion only to the legal immigrant.<sup>21</sup> Carroll disagrees: He thinks that the distinctions between terms for foreigners and migrants in the Old Testament do not correspond to distinctions between legal and illegal immigrants today. The Scriptures do not describe processes for securing legal residence or monitoring passage across borders, says Carroll: instead, they encourage a “surprising openness” to migrants.<sup>22</sup> Writing a more extended response in a review of Hoffmeier’s book, Carroll ties this alleged misreading of Old Testament terms to a troubled starting place. Hoffmeier, says Carroll, starts his discussion with questions about borders and legal status, and this tone continues throughout his discussion. Carroll, on the other hand, begins by describing human beings as valuable and made in the image of God, and this starting point informs his treatment of immigration.<sup>23</sup>

Not only do Carroll and Hoffmeier differ on their views of Old Testament laws about migration, but they differ about what the New Testament says about Christian responsibility before civil government. On this subject, the two authors carry out a dialogue between the first edition of Carroll’s book, Hoffmeier’s book, and Carroll’s second edition. In his first edition, Daniel Carroll deals with the place of government by qualifying the well-known passage from Romans 13:1–7 that begins, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”<sup>24</sup> Carroll says that many quote this passage and bring discussions of illegal immigration to a quick end with the simple answer that Christians must follow the law.<sup>25</sup> Instead, Carroll chooses to place Paul’s instruction about the governing authorities within a broader framework. He begins with Christ as a refugee and Christians as aliens and strangers, and he points to the Lord’s Supper and the cross as situating hospitality at the center

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 76, 89, 96.

<sup>22</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 94.

<sup>23</sup> M. Daniel Carroll R., “Review: James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible*,” *Denver Journal* 13 (2010), [www.denverseminary.edu/article/the-immigration-crisis-immigrants-aliens-and-the-bible/](http://www.denverseminary.edu/article/the-immigration-crisis-immigrants-aliens-and-the-bible/).

<sup>24</sup> Romans 13:1 (E.S.V.)

<sup>25</sup> M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 131.

of the work of God.<sup>26</sup> Next, Carroll refers to the context of the Romans 13 passage in Romans 12, where the Apostle Paul tells his readers not to be shaped by the “pattern of this world” but to love and serve their enemies.<sup>27</sup> He says that this must serve as the backdrop for a reading of Romans 13, which he does not quote. In the United States, national leaders agree that immigration law must be reformed, Carroll notes, adding that in a democracy, citizens are permitted to seek reform. Many “undocumented immigrants,” he says, are Christians, and the Hispanic evangelicals and Pentecostals that he knows take Romans 13 seriously, recognizing that they violate the law, but recognizing the law’s “contradictions and inequities” as well. He concludes by asking his readers to approach present U.S. laws “self-consciously as Christians.”<sup>28</sup>

Hoffmeier answers Carroll, framing his consideration of church and state issues by saying that because believers belong to the kingdom of God, they are dual citizens and aliens in the world. He draws on passages from the gospels that point to obedience to civil authority before alighting on Romans 13:1–7. This passage, he says, requires Christians to submit to civil laws while also holding Christian citizenship.<sup>29</sup> He calls Carroll’s treatment of the passage “dismissive,” and he writes that Carroll’s use of other material in Scripture ignores the weightiness of immigration “crime.”<sup>30</sup> Hoffmeier says that Carroll’s reluctance about following U.S. immigration laws is only justified if those laws are “inherently unjust.”<sup>31</sup> But with reference to the longstanding precedent from the Old Testament of laws concerning the border crossing and residence of immigrants, Hoffmeier writes, “I see nothing in Scripture that would abrogate current immigration laws.”<sup>32</sup> He criticizes Carroll for failing to distinguish legal and illegal immigrants and to promote adherence to the law. Hoffmeier concludes that while churches are right to respond to people’s basic needs regardless of their immigration status, they should remind everyone of their responsibility to follow the law. This might include assisting those who are unlawfully present to gain legal status.<sup>33</sup>

In the second edition of his book, Carroll reacts to Hoffmeier, arguing that before a higher authority, Christians cannot endorse immigration laws as they now stand. He says that it is not enough to say that the United States holds to the rule of law and to end the discussion on immigration law by saying it must be followed. Instead, there is an opportunity to discuss whether the law is “good (in relationship to Christian commitments) and practical and efficient (for the national benefit).”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 133; Romans 12:1–2, 19–21.

<sup>28</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2008, 133–34, emphasis Carroll’s.

<sup>29</sup> *The Immigration Crisis*, 139, 141, 144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 144–45.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 145; see also 140–42, 146–47.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–52.

<sup>34</sup> Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 124.

Immigration law fails on both counts, he says. Carroll makes clear that he is not calling for widespread civil disobedience, but simply calling for Christians to reflect as Christians on immigration law, seeking change. Romans 13, he says, does not require the Christian to obey the governing authorities but rather to submit, and this signals limits on supporting what a government says.<sup>35</sup> When Hoffmeier says he finds nothing in Scripture that would go against current immigration laws, and when he says that laws must be inherently unjust for a Christian to resist them, Carroll disagrees. He says that “Christians must respond to a higher authority, the Lord of the church, and to a higher law and set of values.”<sup>36</sup>

For Daniel Carroll and James Hoffmeier, differing views on immigrants and differing views of civil authority produce differing views about illegal immigration. Their shared method of looking to the Bible as a whole to provide guidance about a current problem for Christian living produces different answers. Carroll thinks that the high valuation of migrants in the Scriptures should lead Christians to a nuanced response to U.S. immigration law, one that seeks better laws while siding with those who are present in the country without legal permission. Carroll does not spell out what legal reform would look like. Hoffmeier, on the other hand, thinks that U.S. immigration laws are not so unjust that Christians should oppose them.

Carroll’s comprehensive treatment of the biblical witness points in the right direction, and his work is sensitive to lives of migrants and the circumstances surrounding them in the United States today. Hoffmeier brings to the discussion an awareness of the conventions surrounding lands and borders in the Ancient Near East, and many of his judgments are sound. Still, he draws too close a correspondence between distinctions in ancient Hebrew and distinctions in contemporary United States. His stories of migration to the United States, many drawn from his experience, do not demonstrate an acquaintance with the dire circumstances that send many to the United States. When it comes to factors that pull and push migrants to the United States without legal permission, Hoffmeier fails to take them seriously. He does not mention poverty or violence in a sending country, a desire for family reunion, or U.S. industries’ dependence on low-paid undocumented labor. His statement that he finds nothing unjust about U.S. immigration laws shows a lack of knowledge of those laws, as Carroll notes. These are laws that provide no legal pathway to immigrate for many of the women and men whose labor U.S. employers require.<sup>37</sup> Hoffmeier’s focus on following the law does not enable his readers to consider the ways that the life of the people of God might run counter to the

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 123–26.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 125, citing Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20–23; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 1:15–18; and Revelation 1:17–18. See Carroll R., *Christians at the Border*, 2013, 122n23, to confirm that Carroll is responding to Hoffmeier.

<sup>37</sup> Carroll R., “Review: Hoffmeier, The Immigration Crisis.”

ways of a nation-state as it polices immigration. He does not leave room for U.S. immigration law to be exposed as the product of principalities and powers opposed to the reign of the Christ.

The disagreement between these evangelical biblical scholars reveals a need for two areas of inquiry if there is to be a more robust account of Christian living and witness in the face of illegal immigration. First, the discussion needs an attentive reading of the American legal tradition to see what about current immigration law can be affirmed and what needs reform. And while Carroll and Hoffmeier provide a basic biblical theology of migration, their discussion needs a more thorough theological account of civil authority.

### *Catholic Social Teaching on Illegal Immigration*

The discussion of illegal immigration takes a different turn among Roman Catholics. On a visit to Mexico in 2016, Pope Francis prayed before a large cross set up in Ciudad Juárez to commemorate those who had died crossing the border into the United States. Proceeding to celebrate mass before a crowd gathered on both sides of the border, he spoke of the horror of forced migration, where poverty, violence, drug trafficking, and crime sends so many across hostile landscapes in search of a better life. He called his hearers to ask for open hearts to hear God's call "in the suffering faces of countless men and women."<sup>38</sup> At the time of the visit, Donald Trump was a candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. president. At a press conference, a journalist told Francis that Trump had promised to build a wall between the United States and Mexico and deport eleven million illegal immigrants, a move that would separate families. Asked what he thought, Francis responded, "A person who thinks only of building walls, wherever it may be, and not of building bridges, is not Christian. This is not in the Gospel."<sup>39</sup> In what he did and said, Francis spoke out of the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. What follows notes this tradition's valuable teaching on migration as promulgated by the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, along the way indicating points where more needs to be said.

<sup>38</sup> Francis, "Homily" (Holy Mass, Apostolic Journey to Mexico, Ciudad Juárez Fairgrounds, February 17, 2016), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160217\\_omelia-messico-ciudad-jaurez.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160217_omelia-messico-ciudad-jaurez.html); Jim Yardley and Azam Ahmed, "Pope Francis Wades Into U.S. Immigration Morass With Border Trip," *The New York Times*, February 17, 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/world/americas/pope-francis-ciudad-juarez.html?emc=edit\\_ee\\_20160218&nl=todaysheadlines-europe&mlid=56985746](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/world/americas/pope-francis-ciudad-juarez.html?emc=edit_ee_20160218&nl=todaysheadlines-europe&mlid=56985746).

<sup>39</sup> Francis, "Press Conference" (Apostolic Journey to Mexico, Flight from Mexico to Rome, February 17, 2016), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160217\\_messico-conferenza-stampa.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160217_messico-conferenza-stampa.html); "Conferencia de prensa" (Viaje apostólico a México, Vuelo de México a Roma, February 17, 2016), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160217\\_messico-conferenza-stampa.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160217_messico-conferenza-stampa.html).