February 2017

Undocumented Immigrants in the United States: A Discussion of Catholic Social Thought and "Mormon Social Thought" Principles

Rebecca van Uitert

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcls

Part of the Catholic Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/jcls/vol46/iss2/7
UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A DISCUSSION OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND "MORMON SOCIAL THOUGHT" PRINCIPLES

REBECCA VAN UITERT†

INTRODUCTION

Anti-immigrant sentiment has long existed in the United States.1 The tragic events of September 11, 2001, only exacerbated those tensions.2 This upsurge in anti-immigrant hostility has correspondingly increased scrutiny and criticism of the undocumented immigrants3 currently living within our

† J.D., June 2007, St. John's University School of Law; B.A., 2002, summa cum laude, Brigham Young University. The author practices immigration law at Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP, and also provides pro bono legal services through the Catholic Charities-St. John's University Undocumented Immigrant Minors Project. Previously, the author was a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, assigned to work with the undocumented immigrant community in Southern California.


3 The term "illegal alien" is racist, dehumanizing, and harmful. See Kevin R. Johnson, A "Hard Look" at the Executive Branch's Asylum Decisions, 1991 UTAH L. REV. 279, 281 n.5 (1991) (arguing that the term "serve[s] as a device that intellectually legitimizes [immigrants'] mistreatment."); Beth Lyon, When More "Security" Equals Less Workplace Safety: Reconsidering U.S. Laws that Disadvantage Unauthorized Workers, 6 U. PA. J. LAB. & EMP. L. 571, 576 (2004) (calling the term "racially loaded, ambiguous, imprecise, and pejorative"). For the purposes of this paper, "undocumented immigrant" will be used to refer to a person who resides in the United States but who is not a United States citizen, legal permanent resident, or holder of an authorized temporary visa.

277
borders. Across the nation, undocumented immigrants are viewed as "a growing threat to American society, its culture, and the economy."

Current U.S. immigration laws exploit immigrant laborers, undermine human dignity, and damage family relationships. The existing laws governing legal migration ignore the realities of market forces, and result in millions of individuals unlawfully entering the country to labor in backbreaking occupations that few American workers will pursue. Even while providing this essential labor force, paying their taxes just as other residents, and contributing in myriad ways to the overall well-being of our society, undocumented immigrants are treated as subhuman—denied the benefits and protections offered to individuals fortunate enough to be born north of the Rio Grande. Moreover,

---

4 See Kathleen A. Connolly, Comment, In Search of the American Dream: An Examination of Undocumented Students, In-State Tuition, and the Dream Act, 55 Cath. U. L. Rev. 193, 213 (2005) (noting that the rise in hostility is due in large part to debate over whether undocumented immigrants should receive federal and state benefits).


countless individuals—mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters—are separated from their families indefinitely as they await opportunities to immigrate legally.11

From a secular perspective, the concept of equality among all people is a fundamental tenet of our democratic society.12 The Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."13 Yet, we refuse to recognize the humanity of undocumented residents in our country with whom we live, work, and go to school, based on the false notion that they are not as deserving as United States citizens.14 This flies in the face of our country’s long-standing commitment to equality.15 Furthermore, the inequality suffered by undocumented immigrants “fosters angst and separation that attack the very soul of a person and ultimately, of a nation.”16 Thus, in addition to the direct negative impact that current anti-

12 See John SW Park, Race Discourse and Proposition 187, 2 MICH. J. RACE & L. 175, 199 (1999) (“Historically, however, the most prevalent view of rights—at least in the United States... was that a person had rights simply by virtue of being a human being...”).
13 THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE para. 2 (U.S. 1776).
14 See Connolly, supra note 4, at 215–17.
immigrant attitudes have upon individuals, the inequitable distinctions that are drawn adversely affect our society's image as being just and humane.\textsuperscript{17}

From a religious perspective, the inhumane treatment of undocumented residents is of immense concern. This paper explores current U.S. immigration policy in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("LDS Church" or "Mormon Church"),\textsuperscript{18} and argues that both belief systems share common elements regarding the treatment of undocumented immigrants. In order to build a foundation for understanding such a perspective, Part I provides a brief description of the unauthorized immigrants living in the United States today. Part II then outlines the basic doctrines of Catholic Social Thought with respect to undocumented immigrants. Part III examines whether the history, culture, and doctrine of the LDS Church inform a position on the topic. Part IV argues that when considering the values espoused by both religious traditions, immigration policy reform must be focused on compassionate, yet pragmatic, solutions.

I. UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

A. Background

At least twelve million undocumented immigrants live in the United States.\textsuperscript{19} The undocumented population has consistently

\textsuperscript{17} See Richard A. Boswell, Restrictions on Non-Citizens' Access to Public Benefits: Flawed Premise, Unnecessary Response, 42 UCLA L. REV. 1475, 1506 (1995) (explaining how "limiting undocumented persons to emergency medical care places all persons in the community at risk" and noting that "the [welfare reform] proposals are wrong because they are immoral, punitive, and inhumane").

\textsuperscript{18} The term "Mormon" originated as a derogatory name for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The name was derived from Church members' belief in the Book of Mormon, a book of scripture similar to the Bible. While the term has lost much of its negative connotation, the official website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints indicates that the term "Latter-day Saint" is preferred over "Mormon." See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Style Guide—The Name of the Church, http://www.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=ca07ae4af9c7e010VgnVCM1000004e94610aRCRD (last visited Aug. 9, 2007). Throughout this paper, I will use the terms "Mormon," "Latter-day Saint," and "LDS" interchangeably.

increased in size for several decades, and is projected to increase by at least 275,000 persons annually. Of these immigrants, it is estimated that fifty-seven percent, or more than six million, are from Mexico. Other Latin American immigrants constitute approximately two and one-half million individuals in the undocumented population, or about twenty-five percent of the total. Asians account for nine percent, Europeans and Canadians for six percent, and Africans for the remaining four percent. The vast majority of undocumented immigrants live in only eight states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Arizona, Illinois, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

Most undocumented immigrants in the United States are economic refugees. They come to the U.S. seeking greater economic opportunities for themselves and for their families. Additionally, numerous undocumented immigrants migrate for the purpose of family reunification—in many cases to join a


22 PASSEL, UNAUTHORIZED, supra note 20, at 4.

23 Id.

24 Id.

25 Id. at 11.

26 See Maria Isabel Medina, The Criminalization of Immigration Law: Employer Sanctions and Marriage Fraud, 5 GEO. MASON L. REV. 669, 678 (1997) (arguing that most undocumented immigrants leave their countries of origin in order to obtain employment, better wages, and an improved standard of living).

27 Id.
family member who immigrated previously for employment purposes.  

Among the approximately twelve million undocumented immigrants living in the United States are at least six million families with members who are undocumented. Some researchers even go so far as to claim that as many as ten percent of all children living in the U.S. have an undocumented parent. These undocumented families have, on average, 2.29 members, which is larger than the average non-immigrant family size of 1.96 members. Undocumented children are more likely to live in a two-parent household than non-immigrant children.

Despite the fact that undocumented immigrants are more likely to be structured in two-parent family units, undocumented families are much more susceptible to poverty than non-immigrant families. Significantly, thirty-nine percent of all children in undocumented families live below the poverty line. With almost half of all undocumented immigrants working for less than $7.50 an hour, the average undocumented family income is a meager $27,400 per year. Furthermore, not only do undocumented workers earn lower wages, but they are many times less likely to have health insurance than non-immigrant families. In sum, the children of undocumented immigrants are

---

29 "As of 2005, there were 6.6 million families in which either the head of the family or the spouse was unauthorized. These unauthorized families contained 14.6 million persons." PASSEL, ESTIMATES, supra note 19, at ii.  
31 PASSEL, UNAUTHORIZED, supra note 20, at 30, 32.  
32 Id. at 34.  
33 Id.  
34 Id.  
36 PASSEL, UNAUTHORIZED, supra note 20, at 30.  
37 Id. at 35 (finding that fifty-three percent of undocumented children lack health insurance, as compared to nine percent of non-immigrant children, and that fifty-nine percent of undocumented adults lack health insurance, as compared to fourteen percent of non-immigrant adults).
much more likely to be disadvantaged than the children of non-immigrants.\textsuperscript{38}

**B. Roots of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment**

1. Economic Concerns

   The majority of Americans believe that undocumented immigrants are exploiting the American economy.\textsuperscript{39} Popular culture portrays the undocumented immigrant as unemployed,\textsuperscript{40} lazy,\textsuperscript{41} tax-evading,\textsuperscript{42} and, in general, unfairly taking advantage of the generosity of federal and local public benefits.\textsuperscript{43} In reality,
undocumented immigrants "contribute significantly to the [United States] economy,"\(^4\) and "actually contribute more to public coffers in taxes than they cost in social services."\(^4\) In fact, the total projected net benefit attributable to immigrants in the Social Security system will be nearly five hundred billion dollars for the period 1998 to 2022;\(^4\) the foreign-born population accounts for nearly fifteen percent of the total civilian labor force;\(^4\) and, foreign-born men have a higher labor force participation rate (eighty percent) than native-born men (seventy-four percent).\(^4\) Furthermore, recent studies show that the use of public benefits by immigrant families is lower than non-immigrant families.\(^4\)

(stating that the general public believes that undocumented immigrants "use public health services, send their children to public schools, and, through fraudulent documents, get on welfare roles"); STEVEN A. CAMAROTA, CTR. FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES, BACK WHERE WE STARTED: AN EXAMINATION OF TRENDS IN IMMIGRANT WELFARE USE SINCE WELFARE REFORM 1–2 (2003), available at http://www.cis.org/articles/2003/back503.pdf; WELCH, supra note 5, at 29.

\(^4\) Peter L. Reich, Public Benefits for Undocumented Aliens: State Law into the Breach Once More, 21 N.M. L. REV. 219, 243 (1991) (discussing numerous studies that claim undocumented immigrants create a net economic benefit for the U.S. economy); see also Lipman, supra note 8, at 7 (arguing that although undocumented workers are subject to the same income tax laws as U.S. citizens, because of their immigration status most pay a higher effective tax rate than similarly-situated documented workers). Undocumented immigrants also contribute to the tax system through sales tax and property tax payments. BISCHOFF, supra note 21, at 270. One study concluded that undocumented households, on average, contribute more than $4,200 annually to the federal tax system. See CTR. FOR IMMIGRATION STUDIES, HIGH COST, supra note 43.

\(^4\) NAT'L IMMIGRATION LAW CTR., FACTS, supra note 35; PASS, supra note 20, at 25.

\(^4\) Thirty-three percent of all low-income U.S. citizens used Medicaid in 2001,
2. Cultural Concerns

Nativism rears its ugly head anew with every successive wave of immigration. As large groups of German, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, and Italian immigrants arrived in the United States, each was viewed with suspicion by the American public. The “mainstream” society of each era claimed that the new immigrants were racially inferior, and would be incapable of assimilating into the American way of life. Yet, these new immigrants eventually integrated, and, ironically, shortly thereafter began to make the same ill-informed claims against newer groups of immigrants.

The trend continues today. In the twenty-first century, many Americans fear that the rising number of immigrants is destroying American culture and identity. While this apprehension is felt toward all immigrants, a recent poll shows that undocumented immigrants are particularly feared as a threat to our way of life. Mexicans, who comprise the majority of undocumented immigrants, are viewed as the most dangerous—due to misperceptions that they assimilate less rapidly than other immigrant groups. Critics contend that Mexicans have little desire to learn English, gain an education, work in “suitable” occupations, become American citizens, or live compared with only thirteen percent of low-income immigrants. Marie Wang & John Holahan, The Decline in Medicaid Use by Noncitizens Since Welfare Reform, URBAN INST., May 21, 2003, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/800621_HPOnline_5.pdf. Low-income immigrant families with children have lower Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) use rates than low-income citizen families with children. Michael Fix & Jeffrey Passel, The Scope and Impact of Welfare Reform’s Immigration Provisions, Jan. 2002, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410412_discussion02-03.pdf.


50 See Johnson & Hing, supra note 8, at 1352–53, 1368–76.


52 Johnson & Hing, supra note 8, at 1352–53.

53 Johnson & Hing, supra note 8, at 1352–53.


55 See id. (finding through poll data that undocumented immigrants are viewed more negatively than documented immigrants).

in nuclear family units. Similar to unfounded economic concerns, these cultural fears are also misplaced. Current research shows that Mexican immigrants "overwhelmingly participate in the labor market, learn English, exhibit high labor participation rates, are firmly committed to family, and participate in community life in ways comparable to other Americans." In sum, we have little to fear about undocumented immigrants, because, in truth, they are a lot like us.

II. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

A. Catholic Social Thought

Catholic Social Thought ("CST") examines the relationship between Catholic doctrine and the collective aspects of humanity. This tradition of reflecting upon social matters dates back to the life of Jesus Christ. However, CST first began to emerge as a field of inquiry in the late nineteenth century. Since that time, it has developed into a robust academic and spiritual discipline, boasting hundreds, if not thousands, of scholarly experts. CST examines a wide variety of social issues, ranging from economic justice, ecology, and human rights, to urbanization, class conflict, and consumerism. The movement

57 See generally id.
59 "CST is by definition a sphere of prudential judgment in which we try to discern the meaning of our faith for complex questions of social and economic life." Mark A. Sargent, Competing Visions of the Corporation in Catholic Social Thought, 1 J. CATH. SOC. THOUGHT 561, 561 (2004), available at http://law.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=villanovalwps.
60 See Terry Coonan, There Are No Strangers Among Us: Catholic Social Teachings and U.S. Immigration Law, 40 CATH. LAW. 105, 113 n.21 (2000).
61 "Catholic social teaching, like everything else Christian, [began] with the person and message of Jesus." CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT: THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE 2 (David J O'Brien & Thomas A. Shannon eds., 2004). Catholic Social Thought is commonly regarded as having been born in 1891 through the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on social questions, Rerum Novarum. See id. at 1.
is driven by writings issued by the Magisterium.\textsuperscript{64} This process was explained by one CST scholar as: "In the matter of Catholic social teaching, the Church asks, the Church answers, and the Church identifies the significant problems around which the questions turn."\textsuperscript{65}

B. The Catholic Church's Position on Undocumented Immigration

One of the "significant problems" identified by the Catholic Church is undocumented immigration. In fact, the Catholic Church is at the center of the current debate.\textsuperscript{66} In 2005, the Church launched its official pro-immigrant campaign, \textit{Justice for Immigrants, A Journey of Hope}, a movement which calls for expanding development in third world countries, allowing unauthorized workers the opportunity to earn the right to remain in the U.S. permanently, and increasing the number of family- and employment-based visas.\textsuperscript{67} To achieve these objectives, the Church openly supports immigrants’ rights activists, and encourages parishioners to participate in protests against current policies, even offering the services of bishops and priests to lead the rally cry.\textsuperscript{68}

The Church's vocal participation in the immigration debate has caused many critics to accuse the Church of advocating for "open borders," and even actively promoting additional illegal

\textsuperscript{64} The Magisterium is the source of all Catholic Social Thought, in that the encyclicals, or "circulars," that the Pope delivers to the world are the primary source material for scholarly examination. See O'Brien & Shannon, \textit{supra} note 61, at 1-7. Since the late 1970s, Catholic Social Thought has rapidly developed in the United States, and is strongly supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. See \textit{id.} at viii; see also \textit{UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions} 1 (1998) [hereinafter \textit{Sharing Catholic Social Teaching}].

\textsuperscript{65} Byron, \textit{supra} note 62, at 558.


\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Id.}
immigration. In response to these allegations, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued this statement:

Church teaching supports the rights of sovereign nations to control their borders. Enforcement of our borders, however, should include the protection of the basic human rights and dignity of the migrant and not place lives at risk... The Catholic Church does not support or encourage illegal immigration because 1) it is contrary to federal law and 2) it is not good... for society...

In summary, it is clear that although the Catholic Church does not support breaking the law, it does advocate repairing the broken laws that currently fail to effectively regulate immigration.

C. Foundation for the Catholic Church's Position

The Church's sympathetic position toward unauthorized migrants is founded upon its history as an immigrant church in the United States, the teachings of the scriptures, and the writings of numerous Catholic leaders.

1. History of the Catholic Church in the United States

Compassion toward immigrants is deeply rooted in the Church's history as an immigrant church in the United States. Although Catholicism was first brought to the U.S. by Spanish and French explorers in the 1700s, the number of American Catholics did not surge until the end of the nineteenth century when large groups of Irish and Italian immigrants entered the country. By 1920, seventy-five percent of all Catholics living in the U.S. were foreign born, with the most recent arrivals coming

---

69 See Paulette Chu Miniter, Is the Catholic Church Pro-Immigrant? You Bet, USA TODAY, Aug. 20, 2006, at 11A (implying that the Church promotes illegal immigration in order to boost membership numbers); Daneen G. Peterson, HR 4437 Enforcement vs. Amnesty: The Big Lie, UNITED PATRIOTS AM., May 17, 2006, http://www.unitedpatriotsofamerica.com/Home/Popup_Article_Details/Params/artic le/1327/default.aspx (accusing the Catholic Church of "aiding and abetting" illegal immigration).


71 Id.

72 See supra note 6 and accompanying text.

73 Coonan, supra note 60, at 105.

74 Miniter, supra note 69.
from Southern and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{75} In the twenty-first century, many of the immigrants coming to the U.S. are from Mexico and Latin America, regions of the world that are overwhelmingly Catholic.\textsuperscript{76} Not surprisingly, it has been estimated that nearly half of all newly arriving immigrants in the U.S. are Catholic.\textsuperscript{77} Today, many American Catholics can either personally identify with the immigrant experience, or have a parent or grandparent who was an immigrant.\textsuperscript{78} This collective historical memory of immigration colors the Church's official pronouncements, as well as the feelings of individual Catholic Americans.\textsuperscript{79}

2. The Holy Bible

Both the Old and New Testaments instruct us to be sympathetic and kind-hearted toward immigrants. Beginning in the Book of Genesis, Abraham and Sarah extended gracious hospitality to three strangers visiting their home, setting an example for all of Abraham's later descendents of the manner in which they should properly treat visitors to their lands and homes.\textsuperscript{80} The Lord's instruction to the children of the House of Israel, themselves immigrants and refugees, provides further lessons: "For the Lord, your God ... befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you, too, must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt."\textsuperscript{81} In the New Testament, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fled persecution in Israel and temporarily resettled in the land of Egypt.\textsuperscript{82} Perhaps Jesus' childhood experience as a refugee in a foreign land informed his great sermon on charity:

\textsuperscript{75} Kerwin, supra note 66.
\textsuperscript{77} Kerwin, supra note 66.
\textsuperscript{78} Id.
\textsuperscript{79} Coonan, supra note 60, at 105.
\textsuperscript{80} See Genesis 18:1–8 (King James). In Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope, the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States provide numerous scriptural citations that support a sympathetic stance toward immigrants. UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope (2003) [hereinafter Strangers No Longer]. Each of the scriptures I cite in this section is discussed in the Bishops' statement. See id.
\textsuperscript{81} Strangers No Longer, supra note 80, ¶ 25 (referencing Deuteronomy 10:17–19).
\textsuperscript{82} Id. ¶ 26 (referencing Matthew 2:15).
For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in. . . . Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.\(^{83}\)

Following in that same vein, St. Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians underscores the importance of fully accepting immigrants into our communities: “[T]herefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens [sic] with the saints, and of the household of God.”\(^{84}\)

3. Teachings of the Popes on Immigration

For well over one hundred years the popes of the Catholic Church have been speaking out for the just treatment of immigrants. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII recognized that many individuals migrate out of just motives in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.\(^{85}\) In 1952, Pope Pius XII confirmed the Church’s commitment to the charitable treatment of all immigrants in *Exsul Familia*.\(^{86}\) As part of *Pacem in Terris*, in 1963, Pope John XXIII clearly laid out what would become the modern Church’s standpoint on immigration: “[E]very human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own State. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there.”\(^{87}\) While Pope John XXIII limited the right to migrate to situations evincing “just reasons,” he also emphasized the obligations of powerful nations, such as the United States, to promote the common good by welcoming immigrants into their lands.\(^{88}\)

Pope John Paul II was the first pope to address specifically the plight of unauthorized immigrants with his 1995 address entitled *Message for World Migration Day: Undocumented*.

\(^{83}\) Matthew 25:35–40 (King James).

\(^{84}\) Ephesians 2:19.


\(^{86}\) See Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* ¶ 50 (1952).

\(^{87}\) John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* ¶ 25 (1963) [hereinafter *Pacem in Terris*].

\(^{88}\) See id. ¶ 25, 106.
In this moving sermon, he decried the exploitation of undocumented laborers in wealthy nations. In later pronouncements, he went on to demand additional human rights for undocumented immigrants and their families living in the United States.

Only a few months after his election as pope, Pope Benedict XVI called for the just and humane treatment of undocumented immigrants in his 2005 Message for World Migration Day: Migration, A Sign of the Times. In his address, Pope Benedict also highlighted a less-discussed, but significant, recent phenomena in undocumented immigration: the increasing number of women who are immigrating in order to financially provide for their families' survival. He noted that these women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in the domestic and service-related industries, often working as near-slaves for their employers. More recently, in his 2007 Message for World Migration Day: The Migrant Family, the Pope centered his remarks upon the plight of the immigrant family, calling for legislative policies that would promote family reunification, support separated family members, and protect immigrant women at risk of becoming involved in prostitution.

D. Traditional CST Principles Related to Undocumented Immigration

The Church’s present position on undocumented immigration is a natural outgrowth of both its immigrant experience and the essential texts discussed above. Within the many documents which address the topic, three traditional CST principles appear to lead out with respect to the treatment of undocumented immigrants: Dignity of the Human Person, Solidarity, and Preferential Protection for the Poor.

90 See id.
91 See John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in America ¶ 65 (1999).
93 See id. (discussing the “feminization” of migration).
94 Id.
95 See Benedict XVI, Papal Letter The Migrant Family (2007).
96 See supra notes 66–71 and accompanying text.
97 Father Robert P. Maloney, C.M., outlines the basic tenets of CST as Dignity of the Human Person, Respect for Human Life, Association, Participation,
1. Dignity of the Human Person

Perhaps the most fundamental of CST doctrines, this principle teaches us that all human beings are created in the image of God, and are, therefore, "the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world." As such, every human being is "invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family." Each person should be esteemed for their unique existence and contribution to humankind. Importantly, human value does not correspond to work performed or accomplishments achieved; rather, it flows from our essential, immutable dignity as children of God. Furthermore, if we accept the innate dignity of the human person, a desire for human equality directly follows. Since we all possess the same divine nature, we are all equals before God and before the world.

In application to undocumented immigrants, this principle stands for the idea that all persons, regardless of race, national origin, or immigration status, should be valued and respected within our communities. Human dignity is realized on a personal level when we view an undocumented individual as an equal, a neighbor, a friend, or a sister, and treat her as such.

2. Solidarity

Intertwined with the concepts of human dignity and equality is the principle of solidarity. Solidarity encourages us to recognize the interdependent relationships we share as members...
of a larger human family,\textsuperscript{105} and to take joy in the opportunities that life provides us to serve as our "brother's keeper."\textsuperscript{106} As brothers and sisters, we must work together toward the common good of all mankind.\textsuperscript{107} The common good, described by the Catechism as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and easily,"\textsuperscript{108} is best achieved when each individual and group within society takes account of the legitimate needs and aspirations of other individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{109}

When acting with solidarity in mind, no citizen can rightly claim that she is not responsible for the well-being of her undocumented sisters and brothers.\textsuperscript{110} Solidarity moves us with empathy toward the plight of unauthorized migrants.\textsuperscript{111} As such, we should not only accept our undocumented neighbors into our communities, but actively assist them as they transition to becoming part of American society.\textsuperscript{112}

3. Preferential Protection for the Poor

With the principles of human dignity and solidarity as a foundation, the Catholic Church openly calls for special treatment for the poorest individuals in our communities. While the world teaches us to despise the poor, for they are often uneducated, uncomely, or unclean, the Church teaches us that we should increase our love toward, and interactions with, individuals living in poverty.\textsuperscript{113} As Father Robert P. Malone taught:

We believe that we touch Christ when we touch the needy. . . . The opposite of rich and powerful is poor and powerless. If the good of all, the common good, is to prevail,

\textsuperscript{105} See Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, supra note 64.
\textsuperscript{106} Genesis 4:9 (King James); see JOHN PAUL II, ENCYClical LETTER EVANGELIUM VITAE ¶ 8 (1995) ("We cannot but think of today's tendency for people to refuse to accept responsibility for their brothers and sisters. Symptoms of this trend include the lack of solidarity toward society's weakest members—such as the elderly, the infirm, immigrants, children . . .").
\textsuperscript{107} See MALONEY, supra note 97, ¶ 6, 10.
\textsuperscript{108} CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ¶ 1906 (2d ed. 1997).
\textsuperscript{109} GAUDIUM ET SPEG, supra note 104, ¶ 26.
\textsuperscript{110} See Oven, supra note 76, at 536.
\textsuperscript{111} See id. at 535.
\textsuperscript{112} PACEM IN TERRIS, supra note 87, ¶¶ 106–07.
\textsuperscript{113} Silecchia, Reflections, supra note 98, at 1148–49.
preferential protection must move toward those affected adversely by the absence of power and the presence of privation.\(^\text{114}\)

As undocumented immigrants are among the poorest individuals living in the United States today,\(^\text{115}\) and as their numbers are increasing in nearly every community across the nation,\(^\text{116}\) the Church's call for increased compassion for the poor has ready application in the lives of most American citizens. Instead of exploiting their labor and ignoring their most basic of human needs, such as adequate food, clothing, and shelter, we should, as individuals and as communities, promote measures that provide undocumented immigrants with the same types of assistance that we extend to the US-born poor.\(^\text{117}\)

III. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

A. Mormon Social Thought?

In contrast to Catholic Social Thought, Mormon Social Thought ("MST") does not exist as a formalized discipline.\(^\text{118}\) This may be due to a variety of factors. When drawing comparisons with the Catholic Church, at the outset one must recognize that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a relatively new faith, in that it was not formally organized until 1830.\(^\text{119}\) Complex branches of inquiry such as religious social thought may require hundreds, if not thousands, of years to emerge, let alone mature.

Moreover, within the LDS Church, significant emphasis is placed upon deference to the official pronouncements delivered by the Church leadership.\(^\text{120}\) Latter-day Saints believe that the

\(^{114}\) See Maloney, supra note 97.

\(^{115}\) See supra notes 33–38 and accompanying text.

\(^{116}\) See supra notes 19–21 and accompanying text.

\(^{117}\) See generally Michael Scaperlanda, Who Is My Neighbor? An Essay on Immigrants, Welfare Reform, and the Constitution, 29 CONN. L. REV. 1587 (1997) (arguing "that drawing the line between citizens and most legal aliens for purposes of welfare eligibility fundamentally violates our sense of who we are as a nation").

\(^{118}\) See Melissa De Leon Mason, They Got One Thing Right . . ., BY COMMON CONSENT, Oct. 16, 2006, http://www.bycommonconsent.com/2006/10/they-got-one-thing-right (lamenting the absence of an organized body of Mormon Social Thought).

\(^{119}\) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, History of the Church, http://www.mormon.org/learn/0,8672,956-1,00.html (last visited Aug. 9, 2007).

\(^{120}\) See Robert L. Millett, What Is Our Doctrine?, 4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR 15
head of the Church, known as the prophet, is authorized to receive modern-day revelation, similar to the revelation received by the prophets of the Bible, such as Moses, Isaiah, or Peter. The prophet reveals the word of God to the body of the Church via official channels, such as announcement in the semi-annual General Conference of the Church, or publication in the Ensign, the Church's monthly periodical. Upon receiving these statements, members are invited to study and pray about their veracity, and then, as individually guided through the Holy Spirit, the members apply these principles to their personal lives. Additional written commentary or debate about these sacred pronouncements is viewed as unnecessary, and perhaps even dangerous, in that the purity of the original teachings may

passim (2003), available at http://www.lds.org/institutes/attachment/display/1, 18728,91079,00.pdf. Even the Dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University feels compelled to preface his remarks with this disclaimer: "[L]et me affirm that I understand implicitly that the authority to declare, interpret, and clarify doctrine rests with living apostles [sic] and prophets. This article will thus speak only about doctrine and in no way attempt to reach beyond my own stewardship." Id. at 15.


123 See Courtney Campbell, Social Responsibility and LDS Ethics: How Have Mormons Responded to the Moral Dilemma of Modernity?, SUNSTONE MAG. (The Sunstone Found., Salt Lake City, Utah), Autumn 1984, at 11–18, available at http://www.sunstoneonline.com/magazine/searchable/mag-text.asp?MagID=44 ("By refusing to dictate normative positions on most issues for its members, the Church places the burden of ethical choices and social involvement on the individual, thereby accentuating the theological tenet of individual agency and responsibility."); Dallin H. Oaks, Scripture Reading and Revelation, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Jan. 1995, at 7 ("We encourage everyone to make careful study of the scriptures and of the prophetic teachings concerning them and to prayerfully seek personal revelation to know their meaning for themselves.").

In many ways, this is similar to the Catholic tradition. As one CST scholar explained about papal documents and bishops' statements: "[T]hey operate at a level of considerable generality. They also usually avoid making specific policy recommendations, recognizing the hierarchy's limited expertise, leaving questions of application to the prudential judgment and moral discernment of the laity." Sargent, supra note 59, at 2.
be tainted through excessively critical, secular analysis. This, at times, has led to undercurrents of anti-intellectualism within the mainstream Church.

Lastly, the LDS Church maintains a strong stance of political neutrality. Church leaders explain this position by stating that their primary duty is “to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ,” not to become involved in political issues. This has been the Church’s standard procedure since 1835, when the

---

124 See Gordon B. Hinckley, President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Remarks at the Brigham Young University-Hawaii Commencement Exercises: The Continuing Pursuit of Truth (June 18, 1983), in ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Apr. 1986, at 2.

125 Gordon B. Hinckley, the prophet of the LDS Church, discussed the Church’s relationship with intellectualism:

A scholar once expressed the view that the Church is an enemy of intellectualism. If he meant by intellectualism that branch of philosophy which teaches “the doctrine that knowledge is wholly or chiefly derived from pure reason” and “that reason is the final principle of reality,” then, yes, we are opposed to so narrow an interpretation as applicable to religion. Such an interpretation excludes the power of the Holy Spirit in speaking to and through men.

Of course we believe in the cultivation of the mind, but the intellect is not the only source of knowledge. There is a promise, given under inspiration from the Almighty, set forth in these beautiful words: “God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost.”

The humanists who criticize the Lord’s work, the so-called intellectualists who demean, speak only from ignorance of spiritual manifestation. They have not heard the voice of the Spirit.

Let us not be trapped by the sophistry of the world, which for the most part is negative and which so often bears sour fruit.

Id. (citations omitted); see also Dallin H. Oaks, Elder, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Remarks at a Latter-day Saint Student Association Fireside: Criticism (May 4, 1986), in ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Feb. 1987, at 68 (cautioning that intellectualism will not provide one with eternal salvation); Glenn L. Pace, Follow the Prophet, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), May 1989, at 25 (warning of “inappropriate intellectualism” that may lead Church members down a spiritually dangerous path). But see Michael K. Young, Legal Scholarship and Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Have They Buried Both an Honest Man and a Law Professor in the Same Grave?, 2003 BYU L. Rev. 1069, 1081–82 (2003) (arguing that anti-intellectualism is a misinterpretation of Church doctrine).


127 Id.
General Assembly of the Church issued a "declaration of belief" regarding the Church's relationship with government: "We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied." Consequently, while the LDS Church does "[r]eserve the right as an institution to address, in a nonpartisan way, issues that it believes have significant community or moral consequences or that directly affect the interests of the Church," it very rarely chooses to do so. For example, in the past thirty-five years, the LDS Church has released official statements on just three social-political issues: the Equal Rights Amendment, the U.S. military's proposed plan to build an MX missile system in Utah, and same-sex marriage.

The confluence of these factors, and perhaps other factors not contemplated here, has resulted in very few Mormon scholars formally examining social issues from a distinctly Mormon perspective.

128 Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 134:9, available at http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/134 (last visited Aug. 10, 2007). "The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of divine revelations and inspired declarations given for the establishment and regulation of the Kingdom of God on the earth in the last days." Id. at Introduction. Members of the LDS Church consider this book to be of equal importance to the Holy Bible and other books of scripture.

129 See Political Neutrality, supra note 125.


132 See First Presidency Statement on Basing of MX Missile, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), June 1981, at 76. For a critique of the Church's involvement in this controversy, see J.D. Williams, In a Democracy, Church Interference in Politics Is Dangerous, SUNSTONE MAG. (The Sunstone Found., Salt Lake City, Utah), July–Aug. 1981, at 36.

133 See Church Supports Call for Constitutional Amendment, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), July 2006, at 74.

134 See Young, supra note 125, at 1069–82 (discussing the discomfort that many
B. The LDS Church's Position on Undocumented Immigration

Following its standard protocol of neutrality in almost all social controversies, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently issued the following statement regarding immigration reform: "The Church... has made no comment so far on the immigration debate, recognizing that this complex question is now before Congress and is already being thoroughly aired in the public square." Thus, no official position on the topic has yet been rendered. Based upon its past track record of rarely providing official statements, it is unlikely that the Church will speak on the issue.

C. My Vision of "Mormon Social Thought" and Undocumented Immigration

Despite the challenges inherent in describing the contours of what could be called a "Mormon Social Thought" tradition, this paper seeks to organize a discussion of just such a perspective, from one individual Latter-day Saint's point of view. In doing so, I will focus particularly on the following official declaration made by the prophet of the LDS Church, Gordon B. Hinckley:

[I] wish to reiterate the divine counsel that members "should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness," while

Mormon scholars have with meshing legal principles and LDS theology); see also Courtney S. Campbell, Social Responsibility and LDS Ethics: How Have Mormons Responded to the Moral Dilemma of Modernity?, SUNSTONE MAG. (The Sunstone Found., Salt Lake City, Utah), Autumn 1984, at 11, 11-18 ("Although some LDS authors have addressed specific social and ethical issues, Mormons generally have failed to reflect on and formulate responses to these problems. Indeed, many appear to deem involvement in social concerns entirely unnecessary."); Nathan B. Oman, Book Review, The Story of a Forgotten Battle: Reviewing the Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America, 2002 BYU L. REV. 745, 746 (2002) ("Law, it seems, has remained a relatively neglected field within Mormon studies, and legal scholars have had little interest in Mormon thought or experience.").

135 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Church and Immigration, NEWSROOM, May 23, 2006, http://www.lds.org/newsroom (search "Newsroom" for "Immigration"; then follow "The Church and Immigration" hyperlink). "The LDS Church has no formal position on illegal immigration. 'We leave those matters to civil authorities,' [LDS] spokesman Dale Bills said. 'This isn't the church's issue,' said Elder Pingree [another LDS official]. 'This is the government's issue.'" Dennis Romboy, Churches Choose to Stay Out of Questions of Status, DESERET MORNING NEWS (Salt Lake City, Utah), Oct. 14, 2005, http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,635153068,00.html.
using gospel principles as a guide. . . . Therefore, as in the past, [I] urge members of the Church to be full participants in political, governmental, and community affairs.136

In the spirit of "using gospel principles as a guide" to achieve the righteous end of being a "full participant in political, governmental, and community affairs,"137 this paper advocates one possible viewpoint on undocumented immigration linked to the history, culture, and doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Based upon this foundation, I believe that a sympathetic approach toward the plight of undocumented immigrants living in the United States is amply justified.138

1. History and Culture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United States

Like the Catholic Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an immigrant church. Throughout the Church's history, Mormons have lived the immigrant experience, resulting in an immigrant-refugee subconscious in the modern-day Church.

Joseph Smith founded the LDS Church in 1830 in upstate New York, but members were soon forced to leave the state due to religiously-motivated violence and discrimination.139 They settled first in Ohio, and then Missouri, but in each location were compelled to leave their homes as harassment intensified.140 By the late 1830s, most Mormons had fled to Illinois, where they lived in relative peace for several years.141 However, in 1843, hostility toward Church members again began to grow, eventually culminating in the martyrdom of the prophet Joseph Smith in 1844.142 Church members realized that they could no longer remain in Illinois, or even within United States territory,
if they wished to freely practice their religion.\textsuperscript{143} Thus, beginning in 1846, the Mormons began to make their great exodus across the American continent.\textsuperscript{144}

In 1847, after traveling thousands of miles on foot and in covered wagons, all the while facing disease, hunger, fatigue, and the harsh elements of the rugged plains,\textsuperscript{145} the Mormons arrived in what would become the state of Utah, then recognized as a territory of Mexico.\textsuperscript{146} Arriving with little more than the shirts on their backs, the Latter-day Saints began to build a settlement at the base of the Rocky Mountains.\textsuperscript{147} Additional waves of Mormon immigrants eventually arrived, and by the 1850s, a thriving society had been established.\textsuperscript{148} Over the next fifty years, tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints from around the world would immigrate to Utah.\textsuperscript{149} LDS leaders openly encouraged members of the Church to leave their countries of origin and "gather to Zion."\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{143} Id. at 69.

\textsuperscript{144} See id. at 69–81.

\textsuperscript{145} See M. Russell Ballard, \textit{Faith in Every Footstep}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 1996, at 23 (detailing many of the hardships suffered by the pioneers as they crossed the plains).

\textsuperscript{146} OUR HERITAGE, supra note 139, at 69–81; Romboy, supra note 135 (quoting Armando Solarzano, a University of Utah ethnic studies professor, as saying, "I can't call [the Mormon pioneers] illegal immigrants because the term didn't exist then . . . but they were certainly trespassing on Mexican territory.").

\textsuperscript{147} OUR HERITAGE, supra note 139, at 81–92.

\textsuperscript{148} Id.

\textsuperscript{149} See Glen M. Leonard, \textit{Westward the Saints: The Nineteenth-Century Mormon Migration}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Jan. 1980, at 7 (outlining the various waves of Mormon immigration to Utah in the 19th century); see also William G. Hartley, \textit{Coming to Zion: Saga of the Gathering}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), July 1975, at 14 (stating that 80,000 foreign immigrants came to Utah between 1850 and 1900).

\textsuperscript{150} See S. George Ellsworth, \textit{Heeding the Prophet's Call}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Oct. 1995, at 30 (stating that members living in foreign countries heeded the Church's call to migrate to Utah; upon arrival to the state they contributed greatly to the building up of the society). Please note that the Church no longer openly encourages individuals to move to Utah after baptism. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, \textit{Christlike Attributes—The Wind Beneath Our Wings}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 2005, at 102 ("Therefore, we wish to reiterate the long-standing counsel to members of the Church to remain in their homelands rather than immigrate to the United States.") (quoting First Presidency Letter, Dec. 1, 1999)).
In the modern era, Utah has continued to build its population through foreign immigration. In the 1970s and 1980s, Utahns welcomed large groups of Southeast Asian refugees into the state. Later, in the 1990s, large groups of Hispanics began to move to the Salt Lake Valley. In 2005, approximately 200,000 immigrants lived within the state of Utah, totaling nearly eight percent of the state’s population. Of those foreign-born individuals, it is estimated that nearly half, or approximately 100,000 persons, are undocumented immigrants.

The citizens of Utah are open and accepting of immigrants from other cultures. This may be connected to the LDS Church’s worldwide proselytizing program, which encourages young Mormons to volunteer for eighteen to twenty-four months in one of over three hundred Church missions worldwide. Currently, the Church sends missionaries to one hundred twenty different countries. While living abroad for these extended periods of time, young Mormons are exposed to different cultures and traditions. They return to the United States with a

---

154 Perlich, supra note 151, at 7–8.
155 Id.
broadened perspective, and as a result, are more open to accepting immigrants and strangers within their communities.\textsuperscript{160}

Utah maintains a reputation as not only an immigrant-friendly state, but as a haven for undocumented immigrants.\textsuperscript{161} In 2005, for example, the Utah state legislature created a driving-privilege card for undocumented immigrants, and all persons, regardless of immigration status, were extended the invitation to attend Utah’s public universities at in-state tuition rates.\textsuperscript{162} In short, Utah has created “an atmosphere in which [undocumented] immigrants say they both have access to key services and feel welcome.”\textsuperscript{163} Because the majority of the population in Utah continues to be affiliated with the LDS Church, it is fair to draw some inferences between the opinions of citizens of Utah as a group and Mormons’ opinions toward immigrants.\textsuperscript{164}

2. Doctrine of the LDS Church

The current doctrine of the LDS Church may be found within the scriptures, official declarations and proclamations, and statements made by Church leaders in the General Conference of the Church or Ensign magazine.\textsuperscript{165} Drawing upon these sources, a compassionate and charitable approach towards immigrants comes into view.

\textit{a. Scriptures}

Latter-day Saints believe the Holy Bible is the word of God.\textsuperscript{166} Latter-day Saints also believe in additional Holy

\textsuperscript{160} See id.

\textsuperscript{161} See Riley, supra note 156 (calling Utah an “immigrant paradise”); see also El Nassar, supra note 159.


\textsuperscript{163} Riley, supra note 156. But see IBER, supra note 153, at 130 (relating several incidents of unkindness directed toward undocumented immigrants in Salt Lake City).

\textsuperscript{164} See El Nassar, supra note 159 (reporting that sixty-two percent of Utahns identify themselves as members of the LDS Church). But see Matt Canham, Mormons in Utah: The Shrinking Majority, SALT LAKE TRIB., July 24, 2005, at A1 (projecting that the Mormon population in Utah will dip below fifty percent by 2030).

\textsuperscript{165} See Millet, supra note 120, at 18–20.

\textsuperscript{166} See Gordon B. Hinckley, Latter-day Counsel: Selections from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

Scriptures, namely the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These books are similar to the Holy Bible, in that they contain the writings of prophets who have been in communication with God. Thus, an LDS perspective on immigration is built upon the same scriptural foundation as the Catholic Church, but expands upon the Catholic understanding through additional passages from LDS-specific Holy Scriptures.

LDS scriptures recognize the intrinsic dignity and value of each member of the human race. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord, speaking to the prophet Joseph Smith, declared: “[T]he worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” LDS doctrine further develops this principle of human dignity in that it recognizes divine potential within each individual; Latter-day Saints believe that all humans have the capacity not only to return to live with God, but also to become like God, someday.

Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Mar. 2001, at 64 (“We are sometimes told that we are not a biblical church. We are a biblical church. This wonderful testament of the Old World, this great and good Holy Bible is one of our standard works. We teach from it. We bear testimony of it. We read from it. It strengthens our testimony.”); The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Basic Beliefs, http://www.mormon.org (follow “Basic Beliefs” hyperlink) (last visited Aug. 7, 2007).

See supra notes 165.

See supra notes 80–84 and accompanying text.


Doctrine and Covenants 88:107 (“[S]aints shall be... made equal with him.”); id. at 93:20 (“[Y]ou shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified... .”). It is the doctrine of the LDS Church that:

God is our Father in Heaven, and we—everyone who has ever lived or will live on this earth—are His children. As the Apostle Paul said, “For we are also his offspring.” As your Father, God loves you and wants you to be happy. He wants you and all of His children to become like Him and to return to live with Him as “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” This is His plan for you. It is a plan of great joy.
When we view the immigrants that live with us in our communities as not only our brothers and sisters, but also “God[s] in embryo,” it is not difficult to treat them with respect and kindness.

Within the Book of Mormon, compassion toward immigrants is a recurring theme. In the Book of Alma, the People of Ammon flee their homeland due to persecution, and immigrate to the land of the Nephites. Not only do the Nephites allow the People of Ammon to freely enter their country, the Nephites provide these refugees with their own tracts of land, protect them from their foreign persecutors, and almost immediately begin to refer to them as “our brethren.” Perhaps due in part to the hospitality provided to them, the People of Ammon became firm in the faith of Christ, forever known as a “highly favored people of the Lord.” A welcoming attitude was also extended when the People of Limhi migrated to the land of the Nephites, where they were received by the king of the Nephites with great joy. Similarly, another group of foreign immigrants, the Mulekites, were later accepted into Nephite society. Time after time, the Nephites made great efforts to assist immigrants transition to life in a new land.

Another important theme emphasized in the Book of Mormon is equality and unity within our communities. The Fourth Book of Nephi tells the story of the recently unified Nephite-Lamanite nation. After accepting the gospel of Jesus...


172 Marion G. Romney, Man—A Child of God, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), July 1973, at 11.

173 For a detailed history of the People of Ammon, also known as the Anti-Nephi-Lehis, see Alma, chapters 21–27 (Book of Mormon).

174 Alma 27:22.

175 Alma 27:23.


177 Alma 27:30.

178 Mosiah 24:25 (Book of Mormon). For a detailed history of the People of Limhi, see Mosiah chapters 21–25.


180 Sadly, the Nephites did not always remain a righteous people. See Alma chs. 45–63; Helaman chs. 1–16 (Book of Mormon); 3 Nephi chs. 1–10 (Book of Mormon).

181 4 Nephi ch. 1.
Christ, this formerly fragmented community erased all distinctions based upon race, class, and wealth:

And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift. . . . And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, . . . neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were one, the children of Christ . . . .

The Book of Mormon also teaches that the poor should not be harshly judged for the state of poverty in which they live. Rather, they should be extended unconditional charity. In his great sermon to his people, the prophet-king Benjamin admonishes the Nephites to

[S]uccor those that stand in need of succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he many not suffer, for his punishments are just—But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this[,] the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God. For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon that same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have . . . ?

Finally, LDS scriptures also highlight the special role that Native Americans, Hispanics, and Polynesians, as descendents of the Lamanite peoples of the Book of Mormon, will play in the

---

182 See 3 Nephi chs. 11–20.
183 4 Nephi 1:3, 1:15–17; see also 2 Nephi 26:33 (“[H]e inviteth [] all [the children of men] to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.”); Selections from the Book of Moses 7:18 (Pearl of Great Price) (“And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”).
184 Mosiah 4:16–19.
185 See IBER, supra note 153, at 26.

Mormons believe that today’s Native Americans (and therefore mestizos as well) are the descendants of Jews who migrated to the North American continent in 600 B.C.E. These people eventually separated into the Nephite
times immediately preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ: "But before the great day of the Lord will come . . . the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose." Specifically, LDS doctrine teaches that before the Lord will again visit the earth, all Lamanites must be converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This Mormon-specific understanding of the special status of Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities, leads to actively compassionate outreach toward these communities.

b. Statements from LDS Leaders

While no official statements have been issued by the LDS Church regarding immigration, a compassionate stance towards immigrants may be extrapolated from various statements made by Church leaders. At the height of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, a Mormon apostle, Hugh B. Brown, issued the following statement:

[I]t is a moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege of citizenship . . . . We call upon all men, everywhere, both within

and Lamanite nations. Through years of turmoil and strife the Nephites (and other groups) were destroyed. Only the Lamanites . . . survived this carnage. Mormons believe that until all of the Lamanites' descendents are converted to the faith, the millennial kingdom of Christ cannot begin. Therefore, it is imperative for Mormons to reach out to the Spanish-speaking people of the Americas.

Id.

187 Spencer W. Kimball, the prophet of the Church in 1975, taught that:
Of immense importance . . . is the work of carrying the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to the Lamanites, for the Lord's work in these latter days can in no wise be complete until these children of great promise are brought back into the fold . . . . The Lamanites must rise again in dignity and strength to fully join their brethren and sisters of the household of God in carrying forth his work in preparation for that day when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to lead his people, when the millennium will be ushered in . . . .

Spencer W. Kimball, Our Paths Have Met Again, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Dec. 1975, at 2.

189 See supra note 135 and accompanying text.
and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God’s children.\textsuperscript{190}

In the 1970s, the prophet Harold B. Lee reminded Church members that “There is no room for discrimination in the Church. . . . We in the Church must remember that we have a history of persecution, discrimination against our civil rights, and our constitutional privileges being withheld from us.”\textsuperscript{191}

More recently, the prophet Howard W. Hunter proclaimed that “[The gospel] is a message of life and love that strikes squarely against all stifling traditions based on race, language, economic or political standing, educational rank, or cultural background, for we are all of the same spiritual descent.”\textsuperscript{192}

Mormon leaders have also urged members of the Church to reach out to the poor and needy. An apostle, Marion G. Romney, stated that, “A Latter-day Saint should abhor poverty and do all in his power to alleviate it.”\textsuperscript{193} Another apostle, Thomas S. Monson, specifically acknowledged the poor living within LDS communities, and passionately testified that “Ours is the opportunity and the sacred privilege to relieve this hunger, to meet this want, to eliminate this poverty.”\textsuperscript{194} Another General Authority of the Church, Elder Glenn L. Pace, elaborated upon this call for compassion when he urged:

We must reach out beyond the walls of our own church. In humanitarian work, as in other areas of the gospel . . . [w]e need not wait for a call or an assignment from a Church leader before we become involved in activities that are best carried out on a community or individual basis.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{190} Hugh B. Brown, President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Address at the One Hundred Thirty-Third Semiannual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Oct. 6, 1963) (transcript available at http://search.ldslibrary.com/article/view/113737).


\textsuperscript{192} Howard W. Hunter, \textit{The Gospel—A Global Faith}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 1991, at 18.

\textsuperscript{193} Marion G. Romney, \textit{Gospel Forum}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Jan. 1971, at 16.

\textsuperscript{194} Thomas S. Monson, \textit{Goal Beyond Victory}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 1988, at 44.

\textsuperscript{195} Glenn L. Pace, \textit{A Thousand Times}, ENSIGN (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah), Nov. 1990, at 8, 10.
D. Competing Viewpoints Regarding the LDS Church and Undocumented Immigration

Similar to the critical attacks launched against the Catholic Church,\textsuperscript{196} individuals both within and without the LDS Church have accused Mormons of encouraging illegal immigration.\textsuperscript{197} Others maintain that it is hypocritical for members of the LDS Church to support measures sympathetic towards undocumented immigrants, given the words of the Church’s 12th Article of Faith\textsuperscript{198}: “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law [of the land].”\textsuperscript{199} According to this position, undocumented immigrants are violators of U.S. immigration law, and should be punished, not rewarded, for their illegal presence in our country.\textsuperscript{200}

Despite these strongly held sentiments, a position of sympathy toward undocumented immigrants can still be justified. First, it has long been recognized that different gospel instructions carry different weight. Jesus announced a “hierarchy” of the importance for the commandments, as recorded in St. Matthew: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”\textsuperscript{201} Given its status as the second greatest commandment, many Latter-day

\textsuperscript{196} See supra notes 69–71 and accompanying text.


\textsuperscript{198} The thirteen Articles of Faith, written by the prophet Joseph Smith, are a concise summary of the foundational doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Articles of Faith, http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,106-1-2-1,FF.html (last visited Aug. 9, 2007).

\textsuperscript{199} Id.; see also de Uriarte, supra note 162 (statement of Arizona State Senator Karen Johnson) (“Obeying the law is a core principle of the LDS Church . . . . This isn’t just a nice thought or a reasonable idea.”).

\textsuperscript{200} Under current U.S. immigration law, undocumented presence in the United States is a misdemeanor. See 8 U.S.C. § 1325 (2000) (“Any alien who (1) enters or attempts to enter the United States at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers . . . [shall] be fined under Title 18 or imprisoned not more than 6 months.”).

\textsuperscript{201} Matthew 22:37–40 (King James).
Saints may believe that treating their undocumented immigrant neighbors with love and kindness is more important to God than punishing individuals who commit immigration misdemeanors, as codified under U.S. laws that are widely-recognized as unreasonable, inhumane, and ineffective.\textsuperscript{202}

Second, the institutional LDS Church, while not willing to speak officially on the topic, might actually view one's immigration status as a non-issue. Recently, an LDS General Authority, Elder John Pingree, stated on the record,\textsuperscript{203} that whether an immigrant is documented or undocumented, is "not a problem for me," and, that, once immigrants arrive in the United States, "we want to make them feel like part of the community, a valued part of the community."\textsuperscript{204} In an effort to extend this warm welcome, the Church has created a "Hispanic Initiative" program to assist immigrants in their transition to living in Utah, which provides free English classes, funds a free health clinic, and facilitates pro bono immigration legal services through Brigham Young University's Law Society.\textsuperscript{205}

Moreover, the Church has actively sought out converts among the undocumented immigrant communities across the United States for decades.\textsuperscript{206} In 1997, there were at least five hundred LDS foreign language congregations in the United States, each staffed with young Mormon missionaries eager to increase the number of immigrants in attendance.\textsuperscript{207} These missionaries are instructed that immigration status should not be discussed with potential converts, as the only requirement for baptism is a "commitment to live the tenets of the religion."\textsuperscript{208} In

\textsuperscript{202} See generally Oven, supra note 76 (discussing the effects and implications of domestic immigration legislation and the ethical concerns associated with current immigration policy).

\textsuperscript{203} While speaking to a reporter does not hold the same weight as an official pronouncement rendered in General Conference or the ENSIGN, the statements that follow were given by an LDS General Authority, and were published in the Church-owned periodical, the Deseret News. See Millet, supra note 120, at 18–20.

\textsuperscript{204} Romboy, supra note 135.

\textsuperscript{205} See id.

\textsuperscript{206} See IBER, supra note 153, at 113, 134 (stating the Church "aggressively" pursues Hispanic converts and has "dramatically increased its Spanish-speaking membership" in the United States).

\textsuperscript{207} See JESSIE L. EMBRY, IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE: MORMON SPANISH SPEAKING CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES (1997) (discussing, in chapter four, the increase of foreign-language speaking congregations in the United States during the 1990s).

\textsuperscript{208} See Romboy, supra note 135.
light of the Church's active involvement in these undocumented immigrant communities, the arguments connected to the 12th Article of Faith begin to pale in comparison.

IV. IMMIGRATION REFORM

It is submitted that CST and "MST" share many common elements with respect to the treatment of undocumented immigrants. Both would be expected to advocate a compassionate, yet pragmatic, approach toward reform of the current immigration laws in the United States. Specifically, both traditions would support legislation focused upon principles of human dignity, equality, alleviating the effects of poverty, and family unity.

The debate over undocumented immigration has been raging within the public square since late 2005, when Congress indicated its willingness to consider repairing our "dysfunctional immigration system." At that time, several dramatically different bills were introduced by the legislature. At the one end of the spectrum, Representatives James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin) and Peter King (R-New York) proposed H.R. 4437, entitled the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act. This resolution included many harsh provisions, such as mandatory detention for immigrants apprehended along the U.S. border, criminalizing all forms of assistance rendered to undocumented immigrants, and limiting relief for asylum seekers. Furthermore, the proposed legislation did little to address the situation of the millions of undocumented individuals currently living in the United States, other than to propose that their unauthorized presence be penalized as a felony instead of a misdemeanor. This bill passed in the House of Representatives with a vote of 239-182 in late December of 2005, but Republicans were unable to garner


212 See id.
enough support for its passage in the Senate in the spring of 2006.\footnote{Id.}{213}

On the other side of the debate, Senators Edward M. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) and John McCain (R-Arizona) presented S. 1033, known as the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act or the Kennedy-McCain Bill.\footnote{National Immigration Forum, The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005: McCain-Kennedy-Kolbe-Flake-Gutierrez Bill at a Glance, http://www.immigrationforum.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=733 (last visited Aug. 8, 2007).}{214} This proposed legislation put forward earned legalization and guest worker programs, addressed immigrant health care reform, and recommended measures that would have reduced the backlogs related to legal family-based immigration.\footnote{Id.}{215} Like the Sensenbrenner-King Bill, this legislation, although flanked by bipartisan support, was not passed in the Senate.\footnote{Id.}{216}

In January of 2007, President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union Address, called upon Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation.\footnote{The White House, President Bush's Plan for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2007/initiatives/print/immigration.html (last visited Aug. 9, 2007).}{217} Specifically, President Bush outlined a plan which would implement a guest worker program, provide opportunities for undocumented immigrants to come "out of the shadows," and increase border security.\footnote{Id.}{218}

Several bipartisan reform measures were introduced in Congress in the late spring of 2007. The most widely publicized bill, S. 1348, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, mirrored earlier efforts to gain bipartisan support for reform.\footnote{Library of Congress, S. 1348 Bill Summary & Status, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:s.01348: (last visited Oct. 1, 2007).}{219} Similar to the Kennedy-McCain Bill previously defeated, this proposed legislation attempted to strike an appropriate balance between enforcement measures and the practical realities of the ever-increasing population of undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Specifically, while substantially enhancing border technology and security, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 would have also created two new visa classifications. The first,
the "Z visa," for which all undocumented individuals living in the U.S on January 1, 2007 would be eligible, would offer unauthorized immigrants the right to "legal presence" in the U.S., a social security number, and a pathway to citizenship, provided they pay a hefty fine and outstanding taxes.220 The second, the "Y visa," would allow temporary guest workers the opportunity to live and work in the U.S. for a maximum period of two years.221 Sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada), the bill was supported by the unusual allies of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) and President George W. Bush.222 Despite these collaborative efforts, the bill was never voted upon. Another comparable bill, H.R. 1645, the Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy Act ("STRIVE Act of 2007"), was proposed, but was similarly stalled before voting.223 Unfortunately, these defeats are not surprising, given that the last time Congress attempted to reform immigration law it took fourteen years of discussion, plus five years of congressional negotiation.224

The proposed reform legislation most in line with the principles of CST and "MST" is that of the Kennedy-McCain Bill or the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007.225 These bills recommended laws that, while pragmatic in dealing with national security and border control concerns, also dealt fairly with undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States. Specifically, such legislation would advocate a compassionate stance towards immigrants who have long been living and working within our country. It would recognize the contributions that these individuals have made to the economy and culture, and seek to treat them as equal to American-born

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

citizens by providing them with opportunities to legalize their immigration status. Furthermore, such legislation would specifically addresses two issues of grave concern to both the Catholic and LDS Churches: providing for the health care of the poor immigrants that live within our communities, and the reunification of families long separated across borders. Looking forward, any immigration legislation that would be consistent with CST and "MST" principles must, at a minimum, be modeled after the Kennedy-McCain Bill and the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007. Moreover, in an ideal world, reform measures would further incorporate provisions calling for increased welfare benefits, living wages, and additional social programs that would ease the transition of immigrants into American society.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the Catholic Church's position on undocumented immigration, a position grounded in the CST principles of human dignity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor. Additionally, this paper has discussed the possibility of a distinct Latter-day Saint perspective on the treatment of unauthorized migrants. It has suggested that, if such an LDS perspective exists, it is established upon the history, culture, doctrine, and practices of the LDS Church.

Perhaps if the common principles of CST and "MST" were embraced by the larger U.S. society, human suffering among the undocumented members of our communities could be alleviated. Then, perhaps, we, as a nation, will finally be able to live up to the words written upon the Statue of Liberty, words that I believe reflect our common heritage of Christian compassion: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me . . . ."226

226 Feagin, supra note 52, at 39 (quoting Emma Lazarus).