

Would Jesus be deported from the United States?

The larger context to this question might actually surprise you.

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December 23, 2016



Image: "[José y Maria](#)" by Everett Patterson

(Note: this post was originally published on the [Do justice.](#) blog)

In Matthew's Gospel, the birth of Jesus is quickly followed by migration under perilous circumstances. Joseph is warned in a dream about a brutal policy soon to be implemented by the political regime in power. Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus flee to Egypt where they find safety until God eventually calls them back to dwell in Nazareth after circumstances have changed. This story always makes me wonder: what if Mary, Joseph, and Jesus had been stopped at the border? What if they were

kept in a detention center? What if baby Jesus was deported from Egypt back into a very dangerous and unstable situation?

I talked about this story at a [rally to support sanctuary efforts at my university](#). It was a diverse crowd. I spoke from my faith convictions as a disciple of Jesus Christ but with great unease about what “Christianity” has become and what “Christians” justify. I was honest with the people in front of me. Would a large number of self-identifying Christians in the U.S. today deport the Holy Family itself if they crossed our border? Probably.

These are scary times. President-elect Trump has continuously promised to build (in reality: expand) a [border wall](#) and [increase deportations](#). Beyond partisan politics, this cuts against the grain of basic biblical teachings about not mistreating or oppressing foreigners (e.g. Exodus 22:21) and loving one’s neighbors (e.g. Matthew 22:36-40). In spite of all of this, a majority of Catholics and an overwhelming majority of white Evangelicals [voted for Trump](#). This represents a huge problem that needs to be addressed. But addressing the problem is far more complex than assigning blame to those who voted for Trump or those who voted for Clinton.

The reality is that the displacement and deportation of migrants has typically received bi-partisan support. President Obama’s administration [deported over 2.5 million immigrants](#) and [expanded detention centers](#) exponentially. The new administration’s proposed wall is an issue but so are the existing border policies which intentionally promote death. Conservatives are not the only ones to blame. The deportation and detention apparatus that the new administration will inherit has been expanded and normalized under the watch of liberals. And still, this only tells half the story.

The narratives we tell of migrants moving globally are often divorced from truthful accounts about the causes of their displacements. It is as if our narrations start with immigrants simply showing up on the doorstep of Western nations with no further context. Yet, a large number of displacements take place because of [foreign policies](#)—whether economic or military ones—that are supported by these very “developed” nations. This is not even going further in depth into longer colonial history. I recently returned from a trip to my motherland of Colombia where I [witnessed](#) first-hand the terrible consequences of U.S. free trade and military policies which have contributed to that country having one of the greatest number of [displaced persons](#) in the world. These kinds of policies have consistently received [bi-partisan support](#).

For Christians who care about justice, I think it is easy for us to romanticize our own love and generosity towards “the immigrant” or “refugee” without further interrogating how we may indirectly contribute to their displacements. We congratulate ourselves for being above the blatant bigotry of some Christians and don’t question how [climate change](#), our own standards of living, our elected representatives, and our tax dollars fuel the crises.

I believe God calls us to denounce not only open hatred against refugees but the causes of their displacement. This is not necessarily a time to focus on blame; this is a time to take concrete actions to shield the most vulnerable and provide sanctuary. Still, it is important to go about this work losing a certain kind of innocence. If Jesus were displaced and deported today, most of us would indirectly contribute to it. His blood would be on all of us.

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