

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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The Kingdom of Our Lord #5.

February 3, 2009

The Law of the Alien & Stranger

It is a good thing to be reminded that the heart of the kingdom of our Lord is love, for God is love, and this love must be manifested through the Lord's body on earth in this day and in the oncoming eon as the kingdom begins to take root in the nations.

Now, there are many ways to present this matter of the manifestation of love, and these will be taken up in subsequent issues. In this issue, let us look at one specific area that deals with aliens and strangers within a nation.

We don't hear much about it lately due to the economic crisis of the day, but over a year ago there was much talk about illegal aliens in the United States. As with any political matter, there were two major camps divided over how to deal with the millions of illegal aliens in our country. *Illegal alien* means that a citizen of another country illegally came upon our soil and blended in with the population. One camp is adamant that all illegal aliens should be rounded up and kicked out of the country. The other camp is just as adamant that most (perhaps, all) illegal aliens should be granted amnesty.

All sovereign nations have a right to dictate what constitutes a legal citizen of their country, as well as what constitutes a legal alien, including how aliens are to legally enter the country, what rights they will have while there, even how long they can remain in the country. Of course, if a nation wants to ensure that no one enters illegally, then they must protect their borders in order to prevent illegal entry.

The openness of borders is the root of the whole illegal-alien question. The US government is woefully negligent, even complicit, in allowing our borders, especially the southern border, to be open in order to allow the flow of illegal aliens, solely for economic purposes. For too many years, the government, at the behest of business, has turned its head to this problem because certain industries, in particular the agricultural or farming industry, need low-wage workers to keep their costs down and profits up. They ignored the influx across our borders in order to ensure the labor pool that these industries claimed they needed. Only recently has there been serious talk and action to close the southern border, but this has been slow in coming. To this day, all the money has not been allocated to deal with it.

Undoubtedly, the debate will continue over what to do with those who are now on our soil illegally but are working and being assimilated into our society, utilizing all the services that are offered to legal citizens and aliens. But what should our attitude be as Christians? I get the impression that there are many in the camp with those who want to treat illegal aliens as criminals and deport them. There seems to be a famine of mercy among some Christian groups, and I believe it is because they do not understand the operation of the kingdom. So, how does the kingdom of our Lord view the alien? To answer this question, let us put aside the matter of one being in a country illegally and let us assume that the country has placed adequate controls at its borders to control movement in and out. How is a kingdom nation to treat all aliens residing within?

(33) "When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. (34) The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God."
(Leviticus 19:33-34 NASB)

(17) "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. (18) He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving

him food and clothing. (19) So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NASB)

We could call this **the law of the alien**. As a side note, the above passage deals with more than the alien; these will be taken up separately. However, the key to this law is **the law of impartiality**. The Lord does not show partiality to any who are in His kingdom nations. It is a matter of justice that is based on God's love. Consequently, the alien or stranger, another way to describe a non-citizen, is to be loved just as if he or she were a citizen of the nation. In fact, the Lord goes beyond this to even protect the stranger, for He knows how hearts can be hardened to one in a strange land.

The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, but He thwarts the way of the wicked. (Psalm 146:9 NASB)

The genesis for all of this is not only based on the royal or kingly law of love but also on the law of the land. As the Creator, all things in God's creation belong to Him, especially the land.

“The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.” (Leviticus 25:23 NASB)

“You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 22:21 NASB)

“You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 23:9 NASB)

The land is the Lord's and all that dwell on it are under His kingdom authority and as such shall be treated according to the same laws that are undergirded by the royal law. The Lord spoke these words to the sons of Israel that had been under bondage in Egypt as aliens and strangers. In other words, they knew what it was like to be an alien under bondage in a foreign land, and they were exhorted not to do likewise to aliens among them once they came out of Egypt. They were to remember their plight and the lack of love extended to them by the Egyptians. They were to be different because the God of love extended His heart of love to them to deliver them out safely, and they must do likewise. For this reason, the Lord reminded them not to harden their hearts toward the alien or stranger among them.

As a reminder, when the sons of Israel were delivered out of Egypt, a mixed multitude went with them. In other words, they left with aliens and strangers that assimilated into their tribes.

A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock. (Exodus 12:38 NASB)

It is a truth that citizens of nations often become very parochial in their attitude and harden their hearts to aliens and strangers as if they do not belong. However, in the nations of the kingdom of our Lord, they are welcomed and encouraged to join themselves to the Lord, to become a part of His kingdom, even to enter New Jerusalem (see Revelation 21:24).

(6) “Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath and holds fast My covenant; (7) even those I will bring to My holy mountain [kingdom] and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer [New Jerusalem] for all the peoples.” (Isaiah 56:6-7 NASB [added by writer])

Under kingdom government, aliens, strangers, or foreigners are to experience the love of God, and as they do, they too will desire to know the God of love and come under the reign of His Son. This is why love is extended to the alien in the kingdom of our Lord.

So, Christians today should apply the law of impartiality to aliens and strangers in our respective nations. Our governments are responsible for controlling our borders. We are responsible for loving all, including the aliens. Let us extend every measure of love to them that we would to our neighbors and brothers and sisters. Let us prepare the way for the Lord by extending love to all.