

Good Fences

Borders Are Necessary

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Much of the national news we have been hearing over the past couple of years has dealt with our borders, particularly our southern border, due to the influx of immigrants from Central and South America and points beyond. President Donald Trump based a good deal of his campaign on the immigration issue, making all sorts of promises about closing the border. His campaign stops around the country redounded with the chant, “Build that wall! Build that wall!”

As you may know, in response to this, there is a huge field of Democratic candidates that is forming. I think now it is up to about twenty candidates deep, and several of them have already begun to advocate “open borders.” Now, they will say that they are NOT for open borders—that is, they will avoid using that terminology. But like Julian Castro (former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Obama) did just this past week, they will say that they are for “decriminalizing” illegal immigration. Beto O’Rourke has said pretty much the same thing, and others, too, have made hints about that.

On Tuesday, Castro unveiled his “People First” immigration policy. It would give millions of immigrants a path to citizenship and treat illegal immigration as a civil matter, not as a criminal one. When he announced this, he wrote on his blog, “The truth is, immigrants seeking refuge in our country aren’t a threat to national security. Migration shouldn’t be a criminal justice issue. It’s time to end this draconian policy. . . .”

Explaining further, he wrote:

Most notably, the plan would reverse a Bush-era practice that prioritizes treating entry into the United States as a criminal, rather than civil, violation—a provision that has sanctioned many of the most egregious Trump administration immigration practices, such as family separation. This bold vision would change the way the United States government views migrants entering our nation—not as threats to our national security, as prescribed by antiquated policies of previous administrations—but rather as people and families in search of a better life who can contribute tremendously to the fabric of our nation and economy.

Pollyanna, anyone? He's basically saying, “Let’s just let anyone in. These people are

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good—they are not criminals! They won't do us or our economy any harm! In fact, they will actually contribute." Liberals have such open minds that their brains are in danger of falling out! They seem to have no clue about human nature and its proclivities. Of course, with their deeply evolutionary views and their belief that human beings are inherently good, they are bound to make such profound and egregious errors in judgment because they are not seeing things realistically.

Throughout this whole ordeal—this borders controversy—a poem by Robert Frost, called "Mending Wall," has echoed through my mind. It is an engaging poem, if you want to read it—it only takes a couple of minutes. It is about 45 lines or so; not too difficult. It is an engaging poem about two neighbors walking their fence line, walking the wall, between their two properties. As they go, they are repairing what nature and hunters have broken down. It is a New England wall made of rock. They are going along the wall, and as they find some rocks that have fallen off the wall, they put them back in and try to make sure the wall is repaired as well as possible.

The narrator, who is one of the men, scoffs about the need for the wall. He says,

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

The narrator tends to be anti-wall. But the neighbor is pro-wall, and he just replies to this comment, "Good fences make good neighbors." This is repeated as the final line of the poem. It is the last thing you are left with as you finish the poem: "Good fences make good neighbors."

In fact, there are two opposing repeated lines in the poem. The other is the poem's first line, repeated in line 35, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." This is repeated about three-quarters of the way through the poem. But in opposition to it is the repetition of "Good fences make good neighbors." Frost, then, is highlighting the tension in people about walls, about borders, about boundaries, because we love them and hate them. But the final word that Frost leaves you with is that fences, borders, boundaries, walls, are good. "Good fences make good neighbors," he says

What it tells us is that walls or borders are necessary, especially national borders. That is very important, because borders define a nation—not just the area the nation rules over, but also its jurisdiction; anything within those walls is subject to the laws of the land. With borders—with walls, if you will—the nation is sovereign and clearly separate

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from other nations. It is well-defined where one nation starts and another nation ends.

Under that second point of being able to have jurisdiction within those borders, the nation is therefore able to provide freedom and security within those particular borders, and also protect the rights of those people who live within those borders. Without them, there is no definition, no lawful authority, no order. Removing boundaries invites chaos, and chaos invites conflict, because people don't know where the limits are. A staunch defense of one's borders keeps the peace with the neighbors—that is what the poem was saying, or at least it demands their respect. They have to respect those boundaries. Not defending one's borders is surrender.

God establishes boundaries, whether they are those of nations or of morals:

Deuteronomy 32:8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.

God was the one that did it. *He* sets boundaries, and He enforces them, too. He also set clear boundaries between the tribes of Israel. He told Moses, "Their borders are from here to here to here to here. This is where that particular tribe is supposed to go." He also set up rules to make sure that those rules were kept in perpetuity, so that one tribe could not take the land of another tribe. The tribes always had the same amount of land.

Proverbs 22:28 Do not remove the ancient landmark [boundary] which your fathers have set.

A piece of wisdom from Solomon. This refers to a law given in Deuteronomy 19:14:

Deuteronomy 19:14 You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set.

Solomon was just repeating one of God's laws from Deuteronomy. Did you know this injunction against moving boundaries is part of the curses that they were supposed to say when they got into the land? You know, the blessings and the curses on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerezim:

Deuteronomy 27:17 Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.

And Jesus, on a more spiritual and moral plane, said very plainly,

John 14:15 If you love me, keep My commandments.

God knows humanity. He knows we need boundaries because our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, as He says in Jeremiah 17:9. He knows that when given an inch, we will take a mile. That is human nature. He knows, as Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 1:8, that people are never satisfied with what they have and will always seek for more, thinking that they will be satisfied, but they always want more. There is always just one more thing. He knows good fences make good neighbors.