

Amidst a flurry of disconcerting ~~international~~ events in the news, there is one where national and international meet at our southern border. The issue of immigration seems to be one that worries Americans more than any other. I understand the frustrations ^{many} Americans feel: the sheer magnitude of hearing that we have something north of 10 million people here illegally creates a "knotty problem"—in both senses. Few if any politicians have the wisdom or political will to cut the Gordian knot.

Recently a spate of young people and children have been pouring north from Central America and attempting to enter the USA. The image is enhanced by groups of angry protestors from Arizona and Texas ^{and California} shouting at the teens and children, "Go home. You're not wanted here; You're not our problem!"

SKIP Have you noticed that we have an even longer and less fortified border to our north between the that seldom gets attention? Why aren't the Canadians pouring across? Well, because Canada is a prosperous and safe place to live. I visited Victoria on Vancouver Island last year and pondered migrating north myself!

But, why are all these teens and children ^{flocking} coming here? I'm told they are coming from places like El Salvador, ~~Nicaragua~~ and Honduras. Do they just hate the place they were born so much it suddenly occurs to them, "Hey let's travel hundreds of miles by dangerous means without any money, and see if we can get into the greatest nation on earth?" Not likely. The reason they are migrating north is that they live in constant poverty and fear for their lives. Domestic and political violence in many of the Central American countries is high – very high. E.g. Honduras is the murder capital of the world. In most Latin American countries the police and government are either inept, corrupt or both. Bribery is a way of life, so ~~that~~ those who have little or no money are left on the short end of the justice. In Mexico, for example, 90% of homicides are never solved.

What are we supposed to do about the immigration crisis on our southern border? Some say build ~~and~~ a bigger wall with more firepower to keep the kids from crossing. I understand their reasoning, but as long as there is a huge disparity between north and south, we can build all the fences we want, and the masses will find a way to come north; ~~and~~ they will tunnel under, climb over, or pay exorbitant sums to coyotes to smuggle them across ... So what can we do?

I recently read a book title, ^d *The Locust Effect* by Gary Haugen. ^{He} ~~His~~ book points out a simple fact: as long as there ~~is~~ remains an exceeding amount of violence spawned by corruption of police and the judicial systems in the developing world, no amount of aid ~~or development~~ will pull those countries out of poverty. It's a sobering thesis, and I think it's true. Central American kids are coming here, not because they want to be rich, but because they want to be safe: when your life is threatened daily, not only by criminals, but also by the police, it's time to ["] vamos. ["]

I find it ironic that we are a nation of immigrants, huddled masses yearning to be free, who often seem to hate the wave of immigrants ^{that} come just after us. The kids at our southern border come for many of the same reasons our ancestors came—to find ^{the} hope of a better life.

If we become a people devoid of compassion, we will not for long remain the beacon of hope in a troubled world.

OK → This has been Dan Price for Community Comment