

# Film Changing Christians' Attitudes Toward Illegal Immigrants

By [Eryn Sun](#) | Christian Post Reporter

More than two months have passed since the documentary “Gospel Without Borders” was released, a film examining what the Bible has to say about the [immigration](#) crisis currently plaguing the nation.

Within that short span of time, response to the documentary – created by a division of the [Baptist Center for Ethics](#)– has been high, with more than 5,000 DVDs distributed across the nation and a second duplication order en route.

Additionally, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops mailed some 500 DVDs to bishops and other Catholic leaders urging their parishes to view the film, while one United Methodist Church bishop sent a copy of the DVD to every active Methodist bishop.

Public screenings of the faith-based film have garnered an overwhelmingly positive reaction from audiences. The screenings have been held in various cities throughout the United States, including Greensboro, Charlotte, Raleigh, Little Rock, Atlanta, Denver and Georgetown.

The consensus was clear: “Gospel Without Borders” was touching lives and getting to the heart of the highly debated matter – the people affected.

“Viewers praise the quality of the documentary and are moved by the stories told,” Robert Parham, executive director of Baptist Center for Ethics, shared with The Christian Post via email. “Viewers are grateful for a documentary that examines the biblical witness and explores the issues facing undocumented immigrants.”

Putting aside policies and [politics](#), the film encourages Christians to look at immigration from a biblical point of view and be faithful to the biblical witness of loving thy neighbor.

“It separates myth from fact, examines what the Bible says about treatment of the ‘stranger,’ shows the experiences of documented and undocumented immigrants, and provides handles for Christians to advance the common good,” the website notes.

The producers of the film traveled to five different states – [Alabama](#), [Arkansas](#), [Arizona](#), [Iowa](#) and [North Carolina](#) – to document the many personal stories often overshadowed by politics.

[Pastors](#) and churches that had been working on behalf of the immigrants were also highlighted in the film.

In Alabama, producers interviewed the Rev. Ellin Jimmerson, who revealed his tragic story to viewers. Jimmerson’s daughter was killed in a car accident in 2009 when a drunk, illegal immigrant struck her car.

Harboring no ill will towards the immigrant, the pastor later joined a lawsuit against the state’s illegal immigration law, responding to the tragedy with grace and forgiveness.

Stories like these and many more of pastors, bishops, immigration attorneys, and undocumented and documented immigrants make up the film that challenged believers to look at the issue from a biblical perspective, which touted love of neighbor regardless of documentation.

“Our hope is that the documentary will become a moral [education](#) tool in churches on the civil rights issue of the 21st century,” Parham said. “Regrettably, Juan Crow has replaced Jim Crow in the Bible Belt. Now is the time to build the moral capital in our churches on the immigration issue.”

People from all walks of faith worked together on the film to “advance the common good.”

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas funded “Gospel Without Borders” which was produced by [EthicsDaily.com](#), a nonprofit Baptist organization that provided ethics resources to people of faith, and distributed by Catholic bishops.

“While we have different baptisms, biblical interpretations and [worship](#) styles, we have a common calling from God to seek justice for our neighbors,” Parham previously said on [EthicsDaily.com](#).

Anthony Taylor, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Little Rock who urged Catholic leaders to order the documentary, said about the documentary, “By portraying how members of these and other churches are trying to help immigrants who are all victims of the very same injustices, we see that we are all in this together and will accomplish far more if we let our guard down, set aside our differences and work together to establish justice.”

“No single group can solve this problem,” he added. “It is inspiring that the Lord has provided this opportunity.”

Co-producer and director of “Gospel Without Borders” Cliff Vaughn said that while digging deep into the immigration issue, sometimes unbelievable stories were unearthed.

“The stories we’ve found remind us that complex and controversial issues are finally about people who love their families and want to do what God expects.”

The loud and angry voices of hate and fear have been well represented in the debate, Jim Argue, president of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas commented. “We hope this documentary will strengthen the voices of compassion and justice.”

“Gospel Without Borders” is available in two formats: a 31-minute cut ideal for public screenings followed by panel discussions, and a 53-minute cut divided into four chapters best suited for a multi-week study.

The documentary features: John Fife and Gene Lefebvre, Presbyterian pastors and co-founders of the humanitarian aid organization “No More Deaths” in Tuscon, Arizona; Manuel Catalan, contractor and church trustee at Las [Americas](#) Comunidad de Fe in Des Moines, Iowa; Hector Villanueva, pastor of Iglesia Bautista La Roca in Siler City, North Carolina, and someone who is under the threat of deportation, as well as many others.

Free discussion guides are also available for both versions of the documentary [here](#).

Other works by EthicsDaily.com include “Always...Therefore: The Church’s Challenge of Global [Poverty](#),” “Beneath the Skin: Baptists and Racism” and “Different Books, Common Word: Baptists and Muslims.”