



DESTINATION AMERICA



- ~ Why did (some of) your ancestors come to America?
- ~ When was that?
- ~ And how did they get here?

Does anyone truly understand the difference between legal and illegal immigration?

Scripture:

Matthew 22

Jesus' summary of the Law

7. Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'
38. This is the first and greatest commandment.
39. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
40. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
41. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
42. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied.
43. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord? For he says,
44. 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet." ' ?
45. If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?"
46. No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

John 7

Will we find Him living among the Greeks?

33. Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me.
34. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."
35. The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"
36. What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"
37. On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.
38. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."
39. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.
40. On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet."
41. Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee?"



*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:*

I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

REFORMATION SUNDAY

“Huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” That’s us. Christians have been both immigrants and exiles since the first century. Today we celebrate a religious observance that has been added to the annual calendar of the Presbyterian Church that we call Reformation Sunday. It doesn’t come from the Bible, but it comes from the history of a people of the Bible. It marks a particular moment in the life of our church that gave us our identity.

THE 95 THESES

Reformation Sunday is always the Sunday that is closest to the day that Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. He did that on Halloween, 1517. It was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. At our best, our denomination has been a gang of religious and political reformers ever since.

Who has been to Wittenberg? (With this congregation, it is always fun to ask that.) The documents nailed to the church door are also referred to as “The disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences.” Posting documents on the church door was the customary way of advertising an event on a university campus of Luther's day. Church doors functioned very much as bulletin boards function on a twenty-first century college campus.

The Theses were soon printed on the Gutenberg Printing Press, and were widely read throughout Europe by 1518. They challenged the leaders of the Catholic Church on several points, and the primary one was the selling of indulgences to shorten one’s time in purgatory following death. It was a clever scheme to finance the art, architecture, and ambitious exploration projects of the Roman Catholic Church. It was a clever scheme, but it had no basis in theology.

History remembers the 95 Theses as the flash point that sparked the Protestant Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation was political as much as it was religious. From Germany, to Switzerland, Holland, England, and Scotland, the Reformation spirit spread as the countries that made up the Holy Roman Empire broke into smaller

religious and political states.

SCOTTISH HERITAGE BECOMES PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE

Last year the Church of the Roses celebrated Reformation Sunday with a Scottish bagpiper and Scottish liturgy and music since many Presbyterians have an ancestor or two that can be traced back to the Reformation in Scotland in the 16th century.

But Presbyterians come from every imaginable country. Currently some of the greatest growth in our denomination comes from Korea. It is for the Korean students at the seminary that we are gathering coats this week; they had to pack light to make the trip. So from Scottish Heritage to Presbyterian Heritage Sunday, it is only a small jump.

We have advised you that this would be the appropriate day to wear your family colors or bring the family sword or something that reminds you of something about your family heritage.

As our nation becomes more multicultural with every generation, most of us can trace roots to several ancestors from different places. So when it is your turn, I ask you to select just one part of your heritage, and I want to find out:

- where are your ancestors from,
- why did they come to America,
- when did they come to America,
- how did they get here?

I expect your responses to be very interesting.

And then we will conclude by remembering all those who have died in the last year and who have contributed to the heritage of our own church.

WOULD YOUR ANCESTORS BE WELCOME HERE?

From your heritage, it is only another small jump to immigration in our own county. What if your ancestors wanted to come to America today? Would they still be welcome? That is a question that is right out of the current headlines. What is the difference between legal and illegal immigration? The distinction is not as clear as we had thought; it depends upon what century we are talking about -- particularly when you consider who occupied the United States as recently as 150 years ago when white people came to settle San Francisco and Santa Rosa.

So that is a short outline for the morning.

What is your heritage; what brought you here?

People come to America for many reasons:

- Some come to find work from countries where there is great poverty.
- Perhaps they are brought to America to help build the railroads – the Chinese, the Irish.
- They work the fields – the Asians, and now the Latinos.
- They come as brides or families following foreign wars.
- And there are many, like my own ancestors, who came to America to flee religious persecution during the Protestant Reformation.

FIRST CENTURY IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In the First and Second century, Christians were immigrants to the Mediterranean countries fleeing religious persecution in Jerusalem and Biblical Israel. Some Christians stayed to meet in house churches in Jerusalem and in Galilee after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

But most of the New Testament is about the people who did not stay, and fled to Turkey, Greece and Italy. Just read the names of the books of the New Testament and you will see how Paul, Timothy and others took the church to Ephesus, Turkey, Corinth, Greece, and Rome, Italy, with stops in Cyprus, the Greek Islands.

A large number of early Christians were immigrants to Egypt, and it is likely that Jesus' best friends, Peter and Mary, spent much of their time in Egypt debating the structure of the church that would bear Jesus' name.

A PERSON OF INTEREST -- ROBERT CUSHMAN OF KENT, ENGLAND

My own ancestors are typical of many who came to the United States fleeing religious persecution. For our family, Robert Cushman is a person of interest.

Robert Cushman (1578-1625) was one of the the Pilgrims. He was born in the village of Rolvenden in Kent, England. He spent part of his early life in Canterbury. He was one of a group of Pilgrims who fled to Holland because of differences with the official church over their practice of

religion. From there, he later returned to England and arranged the purchase of the Mayflower for the Pilgrims to use on their voyage to America. He did not complete the trip aboard the Mayflower with the other Pilgrims, because their smaller sister ship, the Goodspeed, experienced a disaster which threatened its survival. He left the Mayflower, which had not proceeded very far at that time, in order to involve himself in saving this vessel.

His expertise in financial matters, which had been valuable in acquiring the Mayflower, was also valuable in arranging for needed repairs for Goodspeed. Cushman sailed to Plymouth in the fall of 1621 on the Fortune, but returned shortly thereafter to England to promote the colony's interests. – I have here a copy of the Mayflower Compact he helped to create.

His son, Thomas Cushman (ca. 1607/08 - 1691), who accompanied him on the Fortune, was raised in the family of Governor William Bradford, and served as Ruling Elder of the Plymouth Church from 1649, until his death in 1691. Robert Cushman was also an ancestor of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A PLACE OF INTEREST – ANGEL ISLAND

Within a few miles of Santa Rosa, we have a fascinating place of interest. It is called Angel Island. Larry Kocher was a docent there; Ted McCarthy was a docent right around the corner at the Point Bonita Light house. And others of you know its history and its importance to the people who immigrated through the station for the decades between the 1900's and 1940's.

Like much of the California coast, Angel Island was subsequently used for cattle ranching; this destroyed most of the native oak woodland and brush cover. In 1863, during the American Civil War, the U.S. Army established a camp on the island (now known as Camp Reynolds or the West Garrison), and it subsequently became an infantry garrison during the U.S. campaigns against Native American peoples in the west. In the later nineteenth century, the army designated the entire island as "Fort McDowell" and developed further facilities there; including what is now called the East Garrison or Camp McDowell. During the Spanish-American War, the island served as a discharge depot for returning troops. It continued to serve as a transit station throughout the first half of the twentieth century, with troops engaged in the

First and Second World Wars embarking and returning there. During World War II, Japanese and German POWs were also held on the island. The army abandoned the island in 1946, but returned in the 1950s when a Nike Missile Base was constructed; this was decommissioned as obsolete in 1962.

From 1910 to 1940, the Angel Island Immigration Station processed approximately 175,000 Asian immigrants entering into the US, serving a similar role to Ellis Island for European immigrants. Angel Island is sometimes referred to as "The Ellis Island of the West." The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 provided tough entry restrictions, so many immigrants waited on the island for as long as two years while they exhausted appeals. The conditions of buildings on Angel Island were poor. Many of these immigrants carved poems in Chinese on the walls of the island's buildings, poems which have been anthologized and studied by scholars.

One unhappy prisoner carved in the wall, "For what reason must I sit in jail? It is only because my country is weak and my family poor."

A fire burned down the administration building in 1940, and all subsequent immigration processing took place in San Francisco.

DO GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS?

(AP) President Bush signed a bill Thursday authorizing 700 miles of new fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. "Unfortunately the United States has not been in complete control of its borders for decades and therefore illegal immigration has been on the rise," Bush said at a signing ceremony.

"We have a responsibility to enforce our laws," he said. "We have a responsibility to secure our borders. We take this responsibility serious."

He called the fence bill "an important step in our nation's efforts to secure our borders."

The measure Bush put into law Thursday, before heading for campaign stops in Iowa and Michigan, offers no money for the fence project covering one-third of the 2,100-mile border. Its cost is not known, although a homeland security spending measure the president signed earlier this month makes a \$1.2 billion down payment on the project. The money also can be used for access roads, vehicle barriers, lighting, high-tech

equipment and other tools to secure the border.

Mexican officials have criticized the fence. Outgoing Mexican President Vicente Fox, who has spent much of his six years in office lobbying for a new guest worker program and a chance at citizenship for the millions of Mexicans working illegally in the U.S., calls the fence "shameful" and compares it to the Berlin Wall.

Others have doubts about its effectiveness.

"A fence will slow people down by a minute or two, but if you don't have the agents to stop them, it does no good. We're not talking about some impenetrable barrier," T.J. Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council, a union representing Border Patrol agents, said Wednesday. Last month, I wrote my column in the Rose Clippings about some people who work in the vineyards and do some of the odd jobs in our community who will be affected by a fence. They are ambitious people; when they are not working, many of them are learning English as a second language in Graton. Building a fence will make their lives more difficult. I will pray for them.

WHO DID YOU COME FROM?

Today is Reformation Sunday in churches all over the United States, and they are thinking about the same questions we are asking this morning. So now, let's hear what you have to say.

DESTINATION AMERICA:

- Why did (some of) your ancestors come to America?
- When was that?
- And how did they get here?

(Dr. Cushman called on Bonnie Barber to speak about her ancestors, and then she went throughout the congregation with a microphone to others who had special thoughts to share about their ancestors.)



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