

Guest commentary

COLUMN: 'I am my brother's keeper'

By Andrew Crowley Guest column
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I don't know Mike Pflum personally, so I can't speak to his character. But he writes (Letter to the editor, June 24) like a reactionary and a xenophobe.

Of course, every reactionary is a paper tiger.

While it is true there are people attempting to enter the United States from the southern border, the majority are seeking asylum — something that is perfectly legal to do so.

Per the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website, "You may apply for asylum if you are at a port of entry or in the United States. You may apply for asylum regardless of your immigration status and within one year of your arrival to the United States."

Those seeking refugee status wait an average of 18 to 24 months before a decision is made on their case, and only a small portion of applicants end up being resettled in the United States.

Migrants, such as those in the caravan from last fall, fled their homes because of violence in their home countries. The U.S. is directly responsible for that instability, whether it was Elliott Abrams' involvement with the U.S.-backed death squads in El Salvador in the 1980s or then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's support of a coup in Honduras in 2009.

It seems very cruel and not at all Christian to condemn these people to death, to destroy water jugs left in the desert for them or to prosecute those who feel a moral compulsion to aid their fellow man.

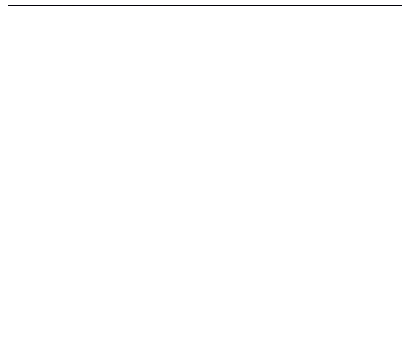
Such actions are not supported by Matthew 25:35-40 — “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

The quote that drives me to help those in need is from Eugene V. Debs.

“Yes, I am my brother’s keeper. I am under a moral obligation to him that is inspired, not by any maudlin sentimentality, but by the higher duty I owe to myself. What would you think of me if I were capable of seating myself at a table and gorging myself with food and saw about me the children of my fellow beings starving to death?” — Eugene V. Debs “The Issue,” speech delivered at Girard, Kansas, on May 23, 1908



I find it rich that he believes the left plans to use migrants to further help their political interests. It wasn’t the Democrats who redrew voting districts to favor them electorally, but Republicans. In general, Republican-governed states try to limit voter turnout as that tends to put them at a disadvantage at the ballot box.

On June 27, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, decided that it was constitutional to draw partisan election maps. Lower courts ruled the practice unconstitutional and these decisions were struck down by this new ruling.

It’s also laughable because the Democratic Party is so inept they lost 1,000 seats nationwide during the Obama years. Not to mention governors’ mansions and state legislatures.

Democrats prefer to govern as the party out of power, which is good for fundraising. And when they run a series of mediocre candidates who don’t do anything to help their constituents,

voting for them just feels pointless. Why vote for a politician if they always roll over to the opposing party or don't offer a voter something beyond, "Vote for us or something bad will happen!"

Regardless of your feelings on the GOP, they generally tend to keep promises they make to voters and understand how politics works. It's a matter of exercising power and exerting will on the opposing side. They don't tend to yield to the Democrats because it's not in their interest nor in the interests of their constituents.

Compromise is certainly possible on many issues. But there are some to which politicians must hold firm. Democrats could learn a thing or two about that.

Sharia law and "no-go" zones are a myth pushed by right-wingers who fear what they don't understand and very often don't care for people who are non-white and/or non-Christian. Not a single reliable news source gives credence to those allegations — just websites gullible people fall for.

The beauty of the nation is that, as citizens, we are free to practice our religion as we sit fit. I've found most Christians to be good upstanding folks who truly care about their communities and fellow man, but there are some who seem hellbent on forcing their views on me.

I prefer to live and let live and find commonalities between belief systems. Bigotry should not be tolerated and should be challenged, whatever the religion may be.

I resent the fact that Mr. Pflum considers me a traitor merely because I am not right wing. I worked for two years in Morgan County, and while the people I worked with and lived around may have had different views, that was never an issue for me. I found them to be kind and decent people, quick to help a stranger and real beacons of Hoosier Hospitality.

Martinsville already has undeserved reputation and letters like Mr. Pflum's just reinforce that untrue and unfair stereotype.

Andrew Crowley is a former education and features reporter for the Reporter-Times.

