
**EMBRACING THE OTHER:
TOWARD AN ETHIC OF GOSPEL NEIGHBORLINESS**
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Abstract: Xenophobia, or fear of the other, is not new to the human experience; although it is difficult to measure, there seems to be an intensified fear of the other in our recent history. The other includes persons from particular cultures, ethnicities, and the major religious traditions of the world. For specific examples, I will consider LGBT persons, undocumented immigrants, and Muslim Americans. Xenophobia marginalizes each of these groups in American life. Remarkably, our fears originate, in part, in a coterie of Christian leaders whose message stands in tension with the Christian Gospel, a message that includes a broad understanding of neighborliness toward others. A minority within the entire ecclesial community, this prominent and strident group of leaders perpetuates our fears. This small society does not (and must not) speak for all Christianity.

**The Human Condition, the World, and Evil:
Where We are Right Now**

In the United States, the so-called “melting pot,” we nevertheless remain a society of others. Strikingly, much of our culture’s xenophobia originates within the Christian faith community itself. The shifting demographics within and beyond our borders, which are caused by the unprecedented migration and mobility of persons around the globe, demands that we reconsider faith and ministry in ways we have not previously done. The conversation, worldview, and rhetoric among Christians in the United States must change. It must change because what we say and do in the United States is heard and interpreted by many, Christians and otherwise, beyond our borders. Thomas Banchoff observes: