

## **Bigotry From the News-Press: Randy Alcorn's Latest Attack on Mexican Immigrants**

Randy Alcorn is the director of operations and the Chief Financial Officer of the News-Press. His job description does not place him on the editorial or reportorial side of the paper. Yet the News-Press accords him a mast-head column in which he promotes at length racist views. At the end of each column we are disingenuously told “the opinions in this column are Mr. Alcorn’s and not those of the newspaper.”

Alcorn’s column of April 16, entitled “A nation invaded is a nation of immigrants,” displays the usual assortment of misinformation and sloppy reasoning punctuated by insults and ethnic stereotypes. He begins by ridiculing the claim that “America is a nation of immigrants,” asserting that all countries are nations of immigrants because all countries have suffered past invasions. Throughout his column, he equates immigration with invasion; “it is simply burglary on an international scale.” Mexican immigrants are “hordes of desperately impoverished poorly educated” “invaders” and “traspasers.” Immigrants are “problems” that Mexico is being allowed to “push” “onto America.” When immigrants say that they came here to work, Alcorn responds by comparing them to “termites” invading a home to eat wood. In Alcorn’s eyes, almost every problem that California suffers from would be “eliminated or substantially mitigated” if we controlled population by excluding immigrants. “Americans pay for this invasion with higher taxes, lower-wage levels, urban congestion, crowded schools, contagious diseases, higher auto insurance rates, criminal gangs, packed emergency rooms and bankrupt hospitals.”

Strange then, that a few days before Alcorn’s piece appeared, the Wall Street Journal, in a survey of 46 economists found that 44 of the 46 said that illegal immigration represented a net gain to the U.S. economy (4/13/06). Or that numerous academic studies have found little or no effect on American wage rates from immigration. Or that a National Academy of Sciences study estimated a new life-time contribution of \$80,000 per immigrant rather than the usual anti-immigrant claim of a cost. Alcorn also falsely claims that immigrants receive “free medical care for their entire family.” And he speaks of their “prolific procreation” (I suppose that’s part of the termite analogy) although immigrant birthrates are not much higher than those of native Americans and are certainly lower than those of the U.S. during the post-war baby boom when Alcorn came of age.

Perhaps Alcorn actually believes some of the silly things he says, but it is difficult to accept that he really believes that we would help Mexico “realize its great potential” if we were only to prevent immigration (thereby not allowing Mexico to “continually push its problems onto America”). Last in his list of the things Mexican immigrants “take” is “a car, but no insurance.” Doesn’t Alcorn know that undocumented immigrants cannot buy insurance without a driver’s license and we don’t allow them to receive driver’s licenses?

The current immigration situation is a mess that satisfies no one, least of all the underclass of hard-working immigrants—people our local businesses in effect invited here with job offers. And how many of Alcorn’s readers and supporters employ “illegal”

house cleaners and gardeners? I suppose we should say Santa Barbara is full of “illegal” businesses. Intelligent debate over how to resolve a difficult problem is not helped by the ranting of a bigot. And Santa Barbara is ill-served by a newspaper that offers a regular column to broadcast ethnic hatred.