

AG Pastor Behind Bars in a California Detention Center

Assemblies of God Pastor Noe Carias is behind bars in a California detention center.

"I think first my Lord, Jesus Christ, then my wife, my children, my church. I think God is going to make a miracle to release me, set me free from this place," Carrias tells CNN. "I've never been arrested by police. I'm a minister. I have my American citizen wife, being married for 14 years. I have two kids. I support the economy of this country and I [am] paying my taxes. I never commit crime in this country."

Carias crossed the border illegally more than two decades ago after he was kidnapped and held hostage by guerrillas in his native Guatemala. According to his family, he was allowed to remain in the United States as long as he regularly met with immigration officials. Not anymore.

The case has caught the attention of several charismatic leaders, including Rev. Samuel Rodriguez:

I am dismayed to hear of the arrest and impending deportation of Noe Carias, a fellow pastor and father. Beyond that, Noe is a member of my own denomination, the Assemblies of God. By all accounts, Pastor Carias is a law-abiding and productive member of his local Los Angeles community. Beyond that, he is a model father of two children who are both U.S. citizens, and Wednesday will be his 14th wedding anniversary to his wife Victoria—also a U.S. citizen.

Time and again, President Trump has stated his priority would be to deport violent criminals, drug dealers, human traffickers and gang members. Pastor Carias is the very opposite of that description. We should deport pushers, not pastors. We have worked tirelessly with the White House and

the Trump administration precisely in order to avoid this kind of result. To deport any immigrant whose life is so deeply connected to the United States and whose family is comprised of U.S. citizens is an assault on the sanctity of life and the sacredness of the family. We cannot and must not allow families to be ripped apart by an immigration system that is attempting to make up for any real or perceived inadequacies of our past enforcement policies.

Reconnecting Pastor Carias with his family and church community is now the priority of the NHCLC, and I will personally work with the Trump Administration and other appropriate authorities to rescind his deportation order with hopes no other family is forced to endure such unnecessary heartbreak. Please pray for our political leaders as well as our enforcement officers, that they would act justly and compassionately and that we would find a swift conclusion to this case.

Carias and his wife Victoria pastor an Assemblies of God church in Los Angeles. She and their children are U.S. citizens.

"I just tell them, 'Daddy's going to be home soon. Be patient. We have to just pray. We have a powerful God.'" Victoria says.

Asked what she would tell President Donald Trump, she says:

"This is hurting a whole family, my kids and myself. The church, the congregation, we're all hurting. We want to get things right. We've been trying to get it right. Please, have mercy on us."

Ministries like the Christian Community Development Association and Matthew 25 SoCal have picked up the Carias' cause, as well.

Carias himself remains a man of prayer.

“I pray for the president. The Bible say, ‘Pray for our leaders,’” says Carias. “I also want to ask President Trump for compassion. I’m never going to lose my faith. I love my family. I love this country.” {eoa}