

Fed Ban on Pastors Demonstrates False 'Deity' of President Obama

Pastors and churches have been banned from helping the thousands of illegal immigrant children housed in border detention facilities run by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, clergy in Texas and Arizona tell me.

"Border Patrol told us pastors and churches are not allowed to visit," said Kyle Coffin, the pastor of CrossRoads Church in Tucson, Arizona. "It's pretty heartbreaking that they don't let anybody in there—even credentialed pastors."

Pastor Coffin even asked if they could provide the children with toys, blankets and food. But the federal government's response was the same—no donations allowed.

A public affairs officer for the Border Patrol confirmed that ministers and church groups have been banned from the Nogales Placement Center.

"Due to the unique operational and security challenges of the Nogales Placement Center, religious services provided by outside faith leaders are not possible at this time," the Border Patrol told me in a statement. "However, CBP's chaplaincy program is supporting the spiritual needs of the minors for the limited time they are at the center."

Coffin and a group of pastors from the Tucson area were hoping to provide spiritual encouragement and friendship to the hundreds of illegal immigrant children housed in a detention center in Nogales.

"It's pretty ugly down there," he told me. "They're packed in there like sardines."

Coffin said he was having lunch with four other ministers when they started tossing out ideas—ways their churches might be able to be an encouragement to the children being held.

One of the other ministers placed a telephone call to Border Patrol and was turned away. So Coffin decided to make a telephone call, too—and what he was told was startling.

“They flat-out said no,” he said.

What about just a pastoral visit to encourage the children?

“They said no,” he said.

What about allowing pastors to pray with the children?

“There was an immediate no,” he replied.

The message was clear—men and women of the cloth were not welcome at the border.

“That frustrates me to no end, to be honest with you,” Coffin told me. “It drives me absolutely nuts that our government would turn us away.”

He said churches are not even allowed bring soccer balls or play ping pong with the illegal immigrant children.

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“We just wanted to go down there and have a presence because we care about people,” he said. “That’s all we wanted to do. For the church to be available sends a message that the church cares.”

Religious folks in San Antonio had a similar experience. One professional counselor at a camp run by BCFS, an organization previously known as Baptist Child and Family Services, said there were no clergy at all.

"The clergy needed to be involved with the children," my source told me. "The children were very spiritual and their spiritual needs were not being cared for."

My source said a group of counselors urged BCFS to consider bringing in a priest or minister.

"We were turned down," my source said.

"We had suggested they bring in a priest on Sunday," the counselor said. "Instead, they had a girl playing a cassette tape of Christian songs. They denied those kids the opportunity to be with a minister."

The counselor said during her entire tenure working at the Lackland Air Force Base camp, she never saw a single minister.

"It was heartbreaking," the counselor said. "The church needs to become involved. The spiritual needs of these children need to be tended to."

BCFS tells me they now provide religious services for the children at Lackland. They also said boys and girls are provided a Spanish-language Bible should they desire one.

Back in Tucson, Pastor Coffin said churches have a responsibility to help the children.

"We have a heart to treat immigrants, whether legal or not, with respect," he said. "It's not our job to judge whether they came here for legitimate reasons."

Coffin describes CrossRoads Church as a conservative congregation that has a "huge heart for the poor in our community."

"I don't politicize," he said. "I just teach the Bible."

That being said, Pastor Coffin believes the government has overstepped its constitutional authority—and is trying to do the work of the church.

“Back in the day, if you were in trouble and poor, the first thing you thought of was going to the church,” he said. “Whether it was for food, clothing, shelter or helping pay bills—the church was the front line. Now, it’s the government who is the front line.”

Pastor Coffin believes it’s time for the church to take back what the government took away.

“We’re not anti-government at all,” he said. “We think the government is equipped to do what they were constitutionally created to do—and not do the church’s job.”

But I’m afraid under this administration, the government believes they are church and President Obama is the deity. Heaven help us all.

Todd Starnes *is host of Fox News & Commentary, heard on hundreds of radio stations. Sign up for his American Dispatch newsletter, be sure to join his Facebook page, and follow him on Twitter. His latest book is God Less America.*