

"Escalation Reflection"
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Growing up, I knew that Spanish was my first language. I knew that my skin color was different. I knew that my eyes weren't the color of the blue sky and my hair didn't beam gold when struck by light. I knew that I was not to tell anyone that I was born in Mexico, and I was not to share the journey that my parents took to get to this country. I knew that I couldn't be entirely myself in spaces where such information could be used against my family, and I remember growing up with what at the time seemed to be the coolest privilege any little kid would want--which was a phone.

My parents had bought me a phone at a very young age, and in this phone were preprogrammed games that I would play on the bus on the way home from school. In that phone were also the phone numbers of my parents, close friends and family members who lived close by. It wasn't until later in my life that I discovered that having a phone wasn't a luxurious privilege of a young child. Instead, it was a meticulous system of protection and communication that was set in place in case of an emergency. Such emergencies would include the detention or deportation of either of my parents. In such a case, I would receive a call from a family member or friend, who would provide me with specific directions that I would follow if this ever happened.

I can vividly recall the many table conversations we would have as a family, regarding the multiple strategies we needed to maintain protected and secure. Still to this day, we discuss simple ways of protection such as driving with caution, making sure that we are careful to prevent a potential traffic stop, always being good citizens, not doing things that will draw us attention, and so many more tactics of security.

But what happens when enough isn't enough? What happens when you spend your whole life preparing and securing as many fields as possible, for the safety of yourself and your family, and that's not enough? How can one prepare for or be cautious enough about atrocities such as the recent shooting in El Paso, TX?

We have escalated to such a time, where we need to prepare for things that before were not a worry. Now, I must continue to have these table conversations and add a multitude of reinforcements of security for the protection of my brown family.

How can we prepare for this? How do we prepare to live like this? How do we act as the church that God has called us to be? We do so by standing with our fellow brothers and sisters, by extending not only grace and love but by extending action. We can no longer prepare with just thoughts and prayers. We must prepare in such a way that when tragedies hit, we can truly BE the church, by welcoming the immigrant; our neighbor whom we are called to care for and to love.