

## **American Evangelicalism Repudiates Torture**

The American faith narrative repudiates torture under all circumstances and without exception. To acquiesce our moral underpinning in the name of security renders in the hands of our enemies the very victory they yearn. Our nation's faith community stands committed to a value system authenticated via mores and standards which stand without reproach, unconditionally and in all circumstances. No other community embodies prophetic and moral standing against torture as does the faith family.

As a result of religious convictions, many suffered imprisonment, torture, and death. Correspondingly, the faith body in the 21st century American experience must contextualize the moral narrative against such an egregious assault on civility and above all, morality. From both a prophetic and justice platform, the practice of torture does not coalesce with the ethos of the American heritage.

Prophetically, evangelicals must, in lieu of our Life thread, address this issue in the same framework of life preservation as we address other relevant items in the social political cultural landscape. As a member of the steering committee of Evangelicals for Human rights, I am troubled by evangelicals who embrace a Pro-life platform yet refuse to address life issues outside the womb such as torture and cruel punishment.

In addition, some argue that water boarding and other techniques applied to non Americans does not violate the aforementioned commitment. Christians must disagree. Our values do not carry an American centric disclaimer. Application of our ethos must transcend boundaries and cultures.

From a practical perspective, the great biblical Golden rule and popularly embraced dictate tells us to do unto others what we would want done unto us. Such simplicity should guide us in our domestic, foreign and justice policies. Is torture ever justified? Are there any moral absolutes? Our some of our values beyond compromise?

Let the oracles of righteousness and justice articulate a message that protects our nation from terrorism. Not just physical but spiritual, moral and intellectual.

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez is the President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, America's Preeminent Hispanic Christian Organization serving 15 Million Latino Born Again Believers by providing Leadership, Fellowship, Networking, Partnerships , Public Policy advocacy and the national representative voice for Latino Christians.