

# New Roots Review

September 2018 Edition



**NEW ROOTS  
MINISTRY**

## ***But, What Would Jesus Do?*** by Fred Wilgenburg

WWJD—What Would Jesus Do? That phrase was popular in the 1990s. Some people wore bracelets with the letters, “WWJD;” the point was to ask that question when a moral decision was to be made.

The phrase actually started in 1897, as Topeka, Kansas minister and writer, Charles Sheldon, wrote a popular book titled, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do*. It gained new traction in the 1990’s, but I wonder if it has lost influence since then.

I personally think it is a profound question, which should be asked by all, often. As a Christian, as a believer in Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord, I desire that the Bible—the Word of God—is the main guide for my life. As a Christian, I start there, drinking from the Fountain of the Living Word. However, sometimes, as the Bible was written over a few thousand years ago, teachings on a certain subject can vary some—Moses said..., then Isaiah said..., and then Paul said.... Well, if Jesus spoke to that subject also, I want to know what Jesus—“the Word made flesh” (John 1:14)—said about it. WWJD?

I ask this question—WWJD—more now in certain situations than in the past because I work for New Roots Ministry, whose motto is “a springboard for immigrants & their churches.” As a white American male in my late 40(s), who has always lived in the US, in a Christian home, always having plenty of food, I have had to make some mind-shifts—not easy for one who can have a stubborn mind-set.

So I ask, WWJD, politically? In the US, would Jesus be a Democrat, or a Republican? Would He be some of the best of each, or would He start over on something different, something truly God-ly?

WWJD, economically? I recently heard someone say that we in the US have proven that capitalism is the best system. But not all say that, especially those who work hard but feel stuck near the bottom of the income ladder. Part of working for New Roots Ministry is being the chaplain for Smithfield Foods (pork packing plant). I visit with many former refugees who are employed there. They are thankful for the US, and for their job, but often they are very tired from the typical 6-day work week—capitalism can be demanding. Is capitalism the Biblical way? Regardless, it is the system that is firmly in place, so how can it be made better for those who feel trapped at the bottom? I think Jesus would ask that.

WWJD, with climate change? As we again look at John 1, regarding Jesus it reads, “through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” Based on that, I think we can assume Jesus would be passionate for the care of climate, as I hope we are as His followers. (—>)



When we speak at churches, we usually have guests join us. Derrick (top), originally of Liberia, gave a history lesson on Liberia and about his help for those who became orphans due to the Ebola epidemic. Joshua (bottom), originally of Eritrea, spoke about his love for the Gospel, his desire to go to college to become an engineer, but his present need to work & support family in Africa.



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A unique Service Opportunity for groups of 4-10 people. Groups serve in stores owned by refugees/immigrants, and the merchants take time to share about their lives. It's a good time! Please contact us if interested in learning more.

## Continued...

As someone living far from oceans, I don't worry about my welfare in the face of rising sea-levels due to changes in the climate, but a poor person living in Bangladesh needs to be concerned. Jesus, who gave his life up for every person, and who took time to care for lepers and those disabled, would care deeply about those not in his locale. But **how** would Jesus care deeply for others—produce much food quickly to feed others, or limit certain methods of energy production or food production in seeking to protect the climate, therefore reducing risk of others being adversely affected by changes in the climate, or work through issues together with those adversely affected so they feel valued and are empowered? I'm not sure; we are not perfect reflections of Jesus and we do not have His divine mind. It needs much prayer and careful thought.

What is New Roots Ministry? It's "a springboard for immigrants & their churches." That is done through workplace chaplaincy, Timothy Leadership Training, special educational seminars, and empowering refugee/immigrant pastors, Christian leaders, and their churches.

WWJD, with immigration policy? He would definitely respect and be kind to foreigners among us—"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34). Those are not Jesus' words, but they reflect His heart. What kind of policies would Jesus call for? He and his followers called for being law-abiding (Romans 13:1-7, Matthew 22:21), as much as absolutely possible. When he was told to be

quiet about Jesus, Peter said to the governing religious leaders, "We must obey God rather than human beings" (Acts 5:29). In being called to love others as ourselves, including those struggling in other countries, how would Jesus expect us Christians to address immigration policies and reforms? . . . .

. . . . On the subject of immigration, New Roots Ministry and the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church will co-host an event on Tuesday, October 30 at 7PM, at Sioux Falls Ministry Center (225 E 11th St, Sioux Falls). Hear Dr. Jason Lief of Northwestern College speak about the history of immigration & unpack misconceptions. Hear life stories of Dreamers affected by DACA policies. Not seeking to take political positions, rather we will consider, "but, what would Jesus do?"

