

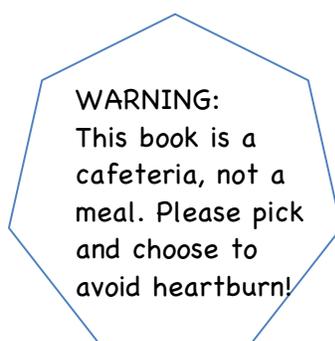
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INTRODUCTION

Immigration will continue to be one of the major realities facing our church as we walk through the 21st century. But more than this, learning how to welcome the immigrant is a ministry into which God clearly calls us and to which the Bible points us at every turn. Throughout this century our churches in the United States will find themselves face to face with some monumental tasks, such as:

- Understanding and confronting the causes of global migration and developing a theology of migration.
- Re-thinking their ministries around rapid demographic changes.
- Advocating for just and fair U.S. immigration laws.
- Engaging in ministry with the poor, more and more of whom will be immigrants or their immediate descendants.

For the past two four-year periods or quadrennial, The United Methodist Church has declared its support for a comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law, and it has called all its agencies, annual conferences, and local churches to become actively involved in this ministry. The reasons outlined in these resolutions, go to the heart of what it means for us to be United Methodist Christians in this century.

The overall work of our denomination in this regard is coordinated and directed by the denomination's Interagency Task Force on Immigration, chaired by Bishop Minerva Carcano, who has been tasked by the Council on Bishops to coordinate the Council's ministry in the area of immigration. In collaboration with these General Conference declarations, the church's general agencies develop programs and resources to involve and aid the entire church in this ministry. *

**From the Southwest Conference UMC website*

We would value your feedback regarding how you used these resources. Please let us know what additional resources you have discovered in your studies. Please contact Rev. Dee Ivy at deecharlie@msn.com or 505-265-4123.

RESOURCES

Bible Studies

1. Stranger in the Land

This is a six week devotional guide on immigration, the Church, and the Bible and is based on the book: Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church and the Bible, by M. Daniel Carrol. A suggested resource to accompany this bible study:

<http://www.kairoscomotion.org/2003/presentations/sample.html>

2. Give Me Your Tired Your Poor

Immigration policy has leaped from the back pages to the front pages of newspapers in recent years. The debates are often intensely heated. Almost everyone agrees, however, that the current immigration system is not working and needs to be changed. This study seeks to provide an explanation of what is happening currently, including proposals for immigration reform. Session two will consider the theological and ethical views that Christians can bring to bear on policy choices.

<http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/Products/TC0106/give-me-your-tired-and-poor.aspx>

UMC Teachings

1. United Methodist Book of Resolutions, 2001, Resolution 6028 pp.754-63

2. *Immigration: A United Methodist Perspective*. Prepared by the Desert Southwest Conference and Board of Church and Society.

www.desertsouthwestconference.org/churchmembers/issues/immigration

BOOKS

1. Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church and the Bible, M. Daniel Carrol (Review from Amazon)

Daniel Carroll's book provides much needed information and inspiration to motivate and impassion the American church to heed the Biblical mandates of the Father to love the exile, stranger, sojourner, alien and foreigner.

In the way of legitimate introduction to the subject of immigration, Daniel Carroll is short on divisive statistics (thankfully) and long on presenting scriptural precepts to love the foreigner among us. He moves us into the immigration debate as Christians first, then as Americans; into our neighborhoods and communities to love the foreigner, then to

advocacy on their behalf.

Carroll's inspiration for Christians to affect immigration is a result of his attempt to deepen our understanding of Yahweh, not only as Creator of all human beings, but also as righteous, omniscient provider and defender of strangers and aliens throughout history. In *Christians at the Border*, we come to a place of hope as we recognize the omniscience of God's design through the movement of people in the Old and New Testament. In HIS hands are man-made borders as well as the people who cross them, often in obedience to His call.

2. Neighbor: Christian Encounters with Illegal Immigration, Ben Daniel, (Review from TheThoughtfulChristian.com) Using a blend of travel narrative, interviews, theological insight, and biblical scholarship, Daniel tackles the controversial issues that surround undocumented migration in the United States by taking the reader to the spiritual, legal, and geographical front lines of the immigration debate. Here, the political becomes personal and talking points have a human face. The result of this journey is a compelling argument that encourages Christians to meet undocumented migrants as neighbors and as friends. Study questions are included.

3. THE DEVIL'S HIGHWAY: A True Story by Luis Alberto Urrea
(Review from Booklist) So many illegal immigrants die in the desert Southwest of the U.S. that only notorious catastrophes make headlines. Urrea reconstructs one such incident in the Sonoran Desert, the ordeal of sun and thirst of two dozen men in May 2001, half of whom suffered excruciating deaths. They came from Vera Cruz; their so-called guide came from Guadalajara. Jesus Lopez Ramos was no master of orienteering, however, just an expendable bottom-feeder in the border's human-smuggling racket. Tracing their lives and the routes to the border, Urrea adopts a slangy, surreal style in which the desert landscape shimmers and distorts, while in desiccated border settlements criminals, officials, and vigilantes patrol for human cargo such as the men from Vera Cruz. The imaginative license Urrea takes, paralleling the laconic facts of the case that he incorporates into his narrative, produces a powerful, almost diabolical impression of the disaster and the exploitative conditions at the border. Urrea shows immigration policy on the human level. *Gilbert Taylor*
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4. Into the Beautiful North: A Novel by Luis Alberto Urrea,
(Review from Publishers' Weekly)
Nayeli, the Taqueria worker of Urrea's fine new novel (after *The Hummingbird's Daughter*), is a young woman in the poor but tight-knit coastal Mexican town of Tres Camarones who spends her days serving tacos and helping her feisty aunt Irma get elected as the town's first female mayor. Abandoned by her father who headed north for work years before, Nayeli is hit with the realization that her hometown is all but abandoned by men, leaving it at the mercy of drug gangsters. So Nayeli hatches an elaborate scheme inspired by *The Magnificent Seven*: with three friends, she heads north to find seven Mexican men and smuggle them back into Mexico to protect the town. What she discovers along the way, of course, surprises her. Urrea's poetic

sensibility and journalistic eye for detail in painting the Mexican landscape and sociological complexities create vivid, memorable scenes. Though the Spanglish can be tough for the uninitiated to detangle, the colorful characters, strong narrative and humor carry this surprisingly uplifting and very human story. (*May*)

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5. Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border, Luis Alberto Urrea (Review from a border patrol agent written on Amazon)

I am a former United States Border Patrol Agent and I read this book while working the fixed positions we often manned along the Arizona-Mexico border. I was so moved by this story, I cried. I cried as I read this book, right there in my Border Patrol vehicle on the very line separating two very different worlds! This book is an easy read and can be taken a little at a time. Its impact is incredible and your heart will be broken. It is a must read! I am not compromising my stance on immigration laws here, I am just expressing my heart-felt pain for some of what the beautiful people of Mexico must face in their lives. God bless!

6. Honoring Our Human Dignity: Separating Fact from Fiction about Immigrants in the U.S American Friends Service Committee has produced an excellent little booklet that gives brief “Did You Know?” statements.

Order from: Project Voice National Office, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102-1403 or www.afsc.org/immigrantsRights

FILMS and VIDEOS

1. Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (28 minutes, \$20) <http://www.nnirr.org/shop/video.php>

This is a compelling documentary about how the global economy has forced people to leave their home countries.

Suggested Questions for discussion after viewing:

1. Do you see immigration as having any impact on poverty in America?
2. Do you agree or disagree with what these stories say about the role that politics and corporations play in human migration and poverty today?
3. Why do you think the U.S. would give Maricel a tourist visa but not a work visa?
4. What were you feeling when Jaime told the story of her son being lost in Mexico for 3 days?
5. Do you agree with what the narrator said corporations do to maximize profits (favor the rights of corporations over the needs of people)?
6. As Christians, how can we respond to human migration, poverty, and suffering?

2. ***EL NORTE*** (1983), Gregory Nava, Director, 140 minutes

This is an old but considered “classic” film about a brother and sister from Guatemala who come to Los Angeles to escape the violence and poverty of their home country. (Available for purchase on Amazon.com for \$23.49.)

Websites

1. *Desert Southwest Conference*. Throughout this century our churches in the United States will find themselves face to face with some monumental tasks like understanding and confronting the causes of global migration, advocating for just and fair immigration laws, engaging in ministry with immigrants in our midst and developing a theology of migration.

If you are curious about the United Methodist Church’s position on immigration reform, wanting to connect with national groups involved in ministry with immigrants or wanting to learn more about the issues of immigration and how they affect you this is a must visit website. www.desertsouthwestconference.org/churchmembers/issues/immigration

2. *The Dream Act*. This site describes what The Dream Act is about and why we should consider it. Read about it together, and then discuss, from a faith perspective, where one falls on this issue.

<http://blog.sojo.net/2010/12/02/for-the-dreamers-the-waiting-must-end-today/>

3. This *United Methodist Women* site shares information on a seminar on human trafficking that was held in October (2010) - Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is truly difficult to fully understand the violence that human trafficking victims face, but we can learn more at this site about how to keep our eyes open for those in our midst that have been forced to illegally immigrant for the profit of others! <http://new.gbgbm-umc.org/umw/news/articles/item/index.cfm?id=284>

4. *BorderLinks* is an international leader in experiential education which aims to raise awareness and inspire action around global political economics. It’s educational programs focus on issues of immigration, community formation, development, and social justice in the borderlands between Mexico, the U.S. and beyond.

BorderLinks envisions a world in which people, within and across social borders, respect and care for each other, value and celebrate differences, and build healthy and just communities where everyone has equal opportunity for a full and dignified life. www.borderlinks.org

5. *Friends Journal* is a site to serve the Quaker, as well as the wider, community of spiritual seekers through the publication of articles, poetry, letters, art, and news that convey our contemporary experiences.

The article “Seeing That of God in Our Immigrant Neighbors” is one of many testimonies at this website sharing Friends concern about the exploitation and dehumanization of workers. This particular testimony tells us that by ignoring our broken immigration system, we contribute to human suffering, and that Quakers, having a long history of challenging unjust laws, have a responsibility to develop a shared public witness in regard to immigration. We can learn a lot from our Quaker brothers and sisters. www.friendsjournal.org/immigration-and-friends-testimonies

LOCAL SPEAKERS/EXPERTS

1. Rev. Max Cisneros, member of El Buen Samaritano United Methodist Church. Rev. Cisneros can speak first-hand of the experience of immigrants, both legal and illegal, in our state and what the church’s response has been.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

New Mexico Center on Law & Poverty
720 Vassar Drive NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 255-2840

The Center provides information on public benefits for immigrants as well as information for those wanting to advocate for immigrant rights. www.nmpovertylaw.org