

Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible. By M. Daniel Carroll R. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. Paper, 174 pp. \$16.99. ISBN:978-0-8010-3566-1.

In contemporary America, immigration is a socio-economic challenge which few politicians wish to face due to the polarization in the population, political and economic pressures, and the amnesia of many who forget that the United States has been from its colonial roots, a nation of immigrants.

Churches and denominations find themselves sometimes captive to the prevailing political or economic view of the issue. The book is a call for all serious Christians to consider in depth the biblical principles and to adopt a stance of evangelical justice, and love.

Professor Carroll of the Denver Seminary, who has lived in two “worlds,” the US and Guatemala, and who demonstrates Christian compassion amid the difficulties of dealing with the subject, provides a brief though articulate middle ground position based on the principles of the Old Testament.

I was deeply moved by the dedicatory page written:

In Spanish: “Al pueblo hispano—peregrinos en tierra ajena, artesanos de una vida nueva, semilla de esperanza—paz y animo para el largo camino.”

And in English: “To the Christian church in the United States: may we never forget that we are sojourners in a strange land, and that among us there is neither Jew nor Greek.”

Empathy, service, and personal experience may slant this review. As an Argentine immigrant, who migrated to the US during my youth, and having been educated in Baptist institutions, naturalized American citizen, and ministered among foreign-born groups in churches, cities, and seminary classrooms, in this review I dispossess myself of academic or political “correctness,” and embrace the “religion of the heart” as exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The path of Professor Carroll life is comparable to mine in reverse and our views about the need for a Christian perspective to the challenge of immigration are compatible.

The book deals with a general discussion about Hispanic immigration and devotes one chapter each for a theological reflection about humans from the Old Testament, “The Law and the sojourner,” and New Testament guidance for welcoming the stranger. The final chapter asks the practical question “Where do we go from here?” The bibliography enlarges the horizon of any interested reader seeking for other works, both secular and religious, about the topic of immigration.

Carroll's suggestions are incisive and worthy of reading. They are valuable to people in churches, both lay and pastoral, especially in areas of the country where immigrant populations abound. Providing a realistic Christian ethic, it can be used as a study guide for congregations interested in ministering to foreign born populations.

David F. D'Amico is a Retired Evangelism and Missions professor and CBF representative to the UN living in Louisville, Kentucky.