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Religion

Neighbor: Christian Encounters with "Illegal" Immigration
Ben Daniel
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"Who is my neighbor?" This is a key question for Christians and is the foundation of one of Jesus' most well-known parables: that of the Good Samaritan. The question is also the impetus for Ben Daniel's *Neighbor*, in which the author explores the attitude and actions Christians should espouse toward illegal immigrants, particularly those who cross the southern border of the United States. Daniel has become deeply knowledgeable about immigrant issues as a result of research, interviews, and his vocation. He is a pastor at a Northern California Congregational Church, which boasts a multitude of immigrant congregants. In addition, he cares for three immigrant children. In short, he is well prepared to offer a well-rounded analysis of the issues surrounding immigration.

The book is organized into three sections. Part I makes the case that Christians' lives are implicitly tied to those of immigrants. Daniel presents illegal immigrants as co-pilgrims on a spiritual journey, and points to biblical and church history, which portray the faithful as aliens in a foreign land. He also addresses the Christian's responsibility to critically think about the justice of current immigration law. The second section serves up an eye-opening historical and political journey through the twists and turns of US immigration law. The book ends with stories of individuals and organizations that are helping illegal immigrants find legal, economic, and educational justice at home and abroad.

One of the strongest aspects of the book is the honesty and intimacy with which Daniel presents the stories of his interviewees. Whether it is a federal judge who deports hundreds of immigrants each month, or a mother of three who is waiting for immigration reform while living in sanctuary at a church, each character is real and complex. Although the book would benefit from hearing from a border patrol agent, a key persona in the immigration drama, the stories included are compelling.

Daniel is successful in his purpose; he aims to not only to open the Christian reader's

mind to the plight of the immigrant, but also to open the reader's heart to the immigrant herself. In a context in which immigrant issues are hotly debated on a macro level, it is refreshing to hear a voice that examines the historical and political conundrums of illegal immigration through the lens of human dignity and a practical love for others who are, in fact, our neighbors.

Gabriela Worrel