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Nguyen's "What does the Bible say about strangers, migrants, and refugees?" (book review)

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Book Review



Nguyễn, v. (2021). *What does the Bible say about strangers, migrants, and refugees?* Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. 142 pp. \$20.47 ISBN 9781565483767

vănThanh Nguyễn's aim in this book "is to provide a biblical basis and framework to address the issues of migration today" (p.11). He uses many examples from the Bible of people who moved by choice, or by God's guidance, or were displaced (Adam and Eve to John in Revelation) and compares these with trends and challenges in our world today. Nguyễn writes from the point of view of someone who has experienced this. Born and raised in South Viet Nam, when he moved to the United States he was referred to as a "resident alien"; though legally recorded as a resident, he was not a United States citizen (p. 108). He is Professor of New Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union.

Nguyễn includes present-day examples and statistics about migrants and refugees including a wide variety of reasons, forced or voluntary, people leave their home. Migration is increasing due to natural disasters, famine and war. The growing inequalities of wealth are only exasperating the issue.

In suggesting ways to improve the plight of migrants, Nguyễn stresses the importance of solidarity with the millions of people who are displaced all over the globe. He also discusses the importance of language in how people are referred to, using the example of changes in Library of Congress Subject headings from "illegal alien" to "non-citizens" or "unauthorized immigrant" (p. 109).

While there are several recent publications about migrants and refugees, this is the first based on the Bible. It covers the topic broadly, while some other books portray one country or area, or one specific issue. The focus of this book is to learn empathy for people who have been displaced, rather than just reporting on situations.

Strangers, migrants and refugees is part of the "What does the Bible say about?" series. This series covers current themes with explanations from the Old and New Testaments. This book is appropriate for individual or group study and introduces the topic using simple language. The majority of the sources in the Notes section are websites (news, statistics and aid organizations), with only few books and articles listed (including sources by the author).

Reviewer

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