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Amstutz's "Just immigration" (Book Review)

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Book Reviews



Amstutz, Mark R. (2017). *Just immigration*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 258 pp. \$25.00. ISBN 9780802874849

Just Immigration is the result of political science professor Mark R. Amstutz's investigation to better understand the "growing cry from American churches and Christian organizations for comprehensive immigration reform." He uses a rich bibliography of landmark works on the topic to objectively present various facets of the discussion before assessing Christian perspectives. Amstutz ultimately argues that "the most important contribution churches can make to policy debates is at the moral level... by illuminating biblical norms, identifying key ethical issues, and showing how proximate justice can be advanced."

The early chapters provide a brief historical overview and introduce the two most influential paradigms used to evaluate global politics, cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. The following chapters go on to describe key laws and institutions involved in the US immigration system and current strengths, weaknesses, and impediments to effective policy-making. Amstutz contrasts communitarianism and cosmopolitanism before weighing each against Christian thought and then examines what role Scripture should play in political policy development. He explains, "the Bible is not a manual on politics.... To be sure, Scripture calls on people to be compassionate, merciful, and kind to strangers. But biblical principles cannot be translated directly into public policies."

Amstutz studies how Catholics, Evangelicals, and Mainline Protestants have historically addressed immigration. The last chapter describes the shortcomings of Christian initiatives on immigration reform and offers suggestions for how groups can develop a Christian perspective on immigration, including a list of key questions and themes that should be addressed in the process. Amstutz also offers guidance on how churches can teach immigration ethics effectively.

This book will be a fantastic resource to both scholars and general interest readers, particularly church leaders, who seek to understand our current immigration system from a Christian perspective.

Reviewer

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