

EDITORIAL: Let's do something about immigration

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Immigration ranks near the top of the list of great moral issues. If it were easy, somebody would have “fixed” it by now. But no matter how you look at it—either concern for the status quo or care for humanity—you see a challenge that needs to be resolved.

An editorial can’t do justice to the complexity of immigration. So, consider this a discussion-starter to accompany the [package of articles on immigration](#) in this paper. Let’s structure our thinking in three categories.



Problems

Immigration problems and the passion they stir swirl around three items:

- **Security.** Since 9-11, America has known it is insecure from terrorism

and external catastrophe. Through the intervening years, many Americans have pointed to our porous borders as a source of that insecurity. So, many people want to shut the borders to keep us safe. To some degree, that is understandable. But folks who want to fence out Latin American workers to protect us from Islamic extremists make a huge leap of logic.

- **Legality.** Most laws, including those that regulate immigration, were made for solid reasons. Society has a vested interest in upholding laws. However, a one-dimensional interpretation that would deport every immigrant whose status is illegal for any reason is insufficient at best and certainly counter-productive.
- **Economics.** This issue cuts both ways. Some citizens want to regulate immigration to protect “American jobs.” But people in the Southwest who pay attention see two problems with that reasoning. Many immigrants come here to take jobs other residents don’t want. And significant portions of the Southwestern economy, particularly agribusiness, depend upon immigrant labor.

Principles

However they resolve the particular issues, people of faith should affirm at least three biblical principles:

- **Care.** Over and over, Scripture admonishes us to care for the alien. These Bible passages have not gotten dusty with age. The Old Testament’s admonitions to care for the stranger and Jesus’ call to minister to “the least of these” find abundant illustration among immigrants. Christians should serve immigrants, whatever their status.

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- **Family.** “Family values” has become a political catchphrase. If you’re paying close attention, you see most immigrant workers put the political speechwriters to shame. They embody “family values” as they labor long and hard in demanding and often dangerous jobs so they can send most of their earnings back home to care for their families.
- **Nation versus kingdom.** Many Americans who are most agitated over immigration talk about “American interests.” And reasonable people understand the importance of national sovereignty and security. But biblically speaking, that’s a moot point. The kingdom of God transcends borders, and God loves all people equally, no matter what flag they wave.

Solutions

Obviously, solutions are difficult and will be hard to come by. But we can

focus on three actions that will make a significant difference:

- **Reform.** As articles elsewhere in this paper note, no reform package is perfect. But giving up is not an option. Congress should start with some version of the STRIVE Act. At least it's a start and will positively impact thousands of lives.
- **Foreign aid.** One way to solve the U.S. immigration crisis is by addressing the economic and political crises that drive good people away from their homelands. If we can help them secure freedom and some level of prosperity in their homes, they won't have incentive to leave for America.
- **Ministry.** No matter where they came from and how they got here, all people are made in God's image and deserve care, comfort and love from God's people. We will determine our legacy by how we minister to them.

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