**Immigration**

**Reform without National Sovereignty:**

**Matthew Soerens** is an immigration and citizenship counselor for World Relief Dupage, and co-author of *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate*.

“Scripture is at the center of why I and so many American evangelicals have become vocal advocates of immigration reform. The Hebrew ‘ger,’ which most versions of the Bible translate as ‘alien,’ appears 92 times in the Old Testament. The words of Exodus 12:49 are repeated several times throughout the Pentateuch: “The same law applies to the native-born and the alien living among you.” God speaks repeatedly of His special concern for aliens, who are linked with other vulnerable groups such as orphans and widows (Ps. 146:9; Dt. 10:18; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10). God loves the alien, and commands His people to do the same, remembering their own history (Lev. 19:33-34).

That love goes beyond a general sentiment to legislation, which God included in the Law He gave to the Israelites, mandating rules for the harvesting and gleaning of crops and for tithing that were intended to provide for the needs of immigrants (Dt. 14:28-29, 24:19-21).

(In the previous statement, Soerens seems to support the government’s role in regulating immigration) - While the scriptural mandate to care for the immigrant is clear, many Christians wrestle with what to do with those immigrants who have overstayed a visa or entered the country illegally. Romans 13 makes clear that God has established governing authorities and we are called to submit to them.

**Reform with National Sovereignty:**

**Kelly Monroe Kullberg** is an InterVarsity minister to faculty and graduate students, author/editor of the bestselling Finding God at Harvard, and founder of The Veritas Forum.

“Naturally, those who honor God and his Word will love the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. The difficulty comes with the influx of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants into a region whose majority population is neither adequately equipped nor enthusiastic to receive them. In this context, it’s appropriate to explore what is meant, in Scripture, by the usefulness of hedges and fences, the importance of just weights, and the sheer folly and even sinfulness of those who spend what they have not first saved.

Individuals, groups and nations that put themselves in debt, especially severe debt, place themselves in positions of vulnerability and even enslavement to those whom they owe. As the author of the Proverbs tells us, “The borrower is servant to the lender.” At some point, it is neither wise nor right to put ourselves in deeper and deeper debt in order to provide greater and greater benefits to more and more people. We’re first to put our own house in order (Take care of your own – 1 Tim 5:8).

We are to embrace the lawful and well-meaning foreigner, who, like a convert, comes as blessing (e.g. book of Ruth). Elsewhere we find the building of walls to protect from harmful foreigners (e.g. Nehemiah). The breaking down of borders and culture is not a commandment in Scripture, it is a curse.

Let’s leave behind the rhetoric and the easy sloganeering and confront the hard task of discernment. Just as Paul taught the Church to delineate among widows in order to find those for whom the Church would provide, we are called, I believe, to make difficult and principled decisions about stewardship and about providing the conditions for healthy flourishing communities that can welcome many strangers not with hostility but with hospitality. With kindness and grace. Obedience to the whole counsel of Scripture yields sustainable growth and goodness to those in need.”