



Dale Hanson Bourke is president of PDI, a marketing and communications strategy firm. The author of ten books and numerous magazine articles, she often speaks and writes on international development and women's issues. Previously president of the CIDRZ Foundation and SVP at World Relief, Bourke has also served as publisher of Religion News Service and editor of *Today's Christian Woman*, and was a nationally syndicated columnist. Dale holds an MBA from the University of Maryland and has served on the boards of World Vision US, World Vision International, International Justice Mission, Sojourners, ECFA and Opportunity International. She currently serves on the board of MAP International and the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty.

A Comprehensive Look at Immigration

Why write a book on immigration? How does it fit into your Skeptic's Guide Series?

The Skeptic's Guides are basic books that help readers sort out the facts on current issues. Immigration is one of those issues that is complex and often emotionally charged. Discussions about immigration often become heated and not necessarily constructive. So I'm hoping to offer a book that will give facts, offer perspective and help the readers decide where they stand.

What do you hope this book adds to the conversation?

Everyone agrees that our immigration system is broken. But I believe we really need to look at the issue comprehensively. It's not just about whether we offer those who are undocumented a pathway to citizenship. If we don't begin to address the underlying issues, we could be back to the same place in a few years. There are certainly reasons to be compassionate toward those who are not documented. But we also need to be realistic about the challenges those individuals and the nation will face and be prepared to address them.

I've noticed that people who are against immigration reform argue one set of facts; those who are for it use another set of facts. But there are positives and negatives to whatever action is taken. We need to have a thoughtful discussion that does not react to our last set of laws. We also need to consider the longer-term issues, not just the past or current issues.

How does this book intersect with work you've done previously?

I try to provide a balanced and relatively neutral explanation of issues. That means that I'm not trying to advocate for one side or another but rather I want to give people the facts and let them decide for themselves. My last book, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, discusses one of the most difficult issues in the world. I've received positive reviews from people who have absolute opposite points of view on the conflict but say I have been fair and factual. I love when I speak to church and other groups and people thank me for not trying to convince them but rather to educate them. People in a church may disagree, but I want them to have rational discussions on the merits of the different points of view, not an emotional argument based on something they heard somewhere. Immigration is one of those issues where I hear people arguing and often they don't have the facts correct but they are absolutely sure of their point of view. I'm happy for a person to hold a strong belief, but base it on facts.

Although my books in this series address different topics, they share a common goal: to educate Christians (especially) about controversial topics so we can have open and honest discussions even when we disagree. We should be able to hold different points of view without being polarized.

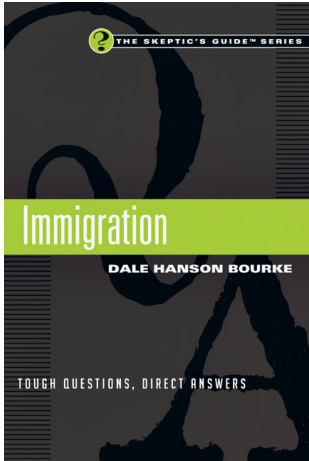
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Immigration: Tough Questions, Direct Answers (SGS)
Available May 2014
\$15, 128 pages, paperback
978-0-8308-4409-8

Praise for *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*:

"The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the flashpoint issue that divides our world in the twenty-first century. Most people have taken sides without really knowing what they don't know. By clearly and simply laying out the history and the facts of the conflict, Dale Hanson Bourke has done much to further the cause of peace."

— Rich Stearns, president of World Vision US and author of *The Hole in Our Gospel*

What groups of people do you hope to have *Immigration* reach? How do you hope this book affects them?

Although the book is not written just for Christians, I hope people in the church will be the primary audience. Surveys show that Christians hold very different points of view on immigration policy and that leaders may have different perspectives than their congregation. This means we need to have these difficult discussions in our churches and begin to understand one another. And we need to decide how faith communities deal with the issues surrounding immigration. How does a Christian employer deal with new laws that may lead to unemployment of undocumented workers? How does a church support a family that is separated by immigration status? What about the clergy who are currently in this country on a special ministerial visa that may be revoked? And what about laws that will make it easier for people from some countries to enter the US but will make it more difficult for others?

In your "Economics of Immigration" chapter, you talk about things like SNAP, Medicare and taxes. Why include those talking points?

Discussions about immigration often include economics. Many people have strong beliefs about how immigrants affect the US economy, and many of those beliefs are not based in fact. But the facts are also somewhat complicated. For example, I've heard people say that undocumented immigrants receive "food stamps" (SNAP). That isn't true, but if a child in a family is a citizen the child's parent may buy groceries on behalf of that child, whatever his or her status. Another common myth is that undocumented workers don't pay taxes. In fact, everyone pays sales tax and in many cases personal property tax, in addition to other forms of tax. Undocumented workers often have taxes withheld by their employer but are not able to receive the benefits or refunds of those taxes. Millions of dollars of social security withholdings are never claimed because a person who is not documented cannot benefit from social security, even if funds have been withheld. Medicare is only available to US citizens or legal permanent residents.

How do you hope your book reassures US citizens? How do you want your book to provide hope to potential immigrants?

America is a country of immigrants. Most of us have relatives who came to this country within a few generations of us. I think most Americans and would-be Americans want to balance compassion with fairness. Most immigrants simply want a chance to make a better life and would be willing to work through a system that was fair, less complex and more equitable. The more we all understand about the problems of the current immigration system, the more we can agree that things need to change. Then we need to address the issues so that those who are trying to enter the country or remain in the country legally have something close to the chance our own relatives had.