

Make the  Most of Your  
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Magazine

# How to Use *Horizons Magazine*

by Joyce MacKichan Walker

## “Proclaiming Good News in the Midst of Bad” by Mark Adams

When we encounter an issue of justice, it is prudent to approach it by examining biblical stories and teachings that might help us ground our response in our faith. Mark Adams provides exactly that. Here is a way to use his article to explore the biblical teaching yourself, or to lead a small group in an examination of it.

1. Read what the prophets have to say about oppression of the alien:
  - *Jeremiah 7:5–7*
  - *Ezekiel 22:29–30*
  - *Zechariah 7:8–10*
2. Read paragraph one under the subhead “Immigration in Scripture.” Define “alien,” as it was understood in early Israel. Define “alien” for contemporary Americans. What differences do you find? How might these differences influence our response to “aliens”?
3. The author reminds us that Gentiles were once considered “aliens.” Read *Ephesians 2:11–21*. Describe what God has done for us in Jesus and what difference that makes for us. What difference might it make for anyone else who might be thought of as, or called, “alien”? Does it matter if they call themselves “Christian”?

In light of the inclusion of Gentiles in God’s covenant, we are commanded “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (*Deuteronomy 10:19*). What are some possible ways to “love the stranger” when the stranger is a legal immigrant? An undocumented immigrant? What are some possible implications for us of “loving the stranger” in the issue of immigration?

4. Make a list of all the kinds of exile you can imagine. Then make a list of all the stories you can remember from the Bible about individuals or groups in exile. What do these stories suggest to us about reasons for exile, realities of exile, release from exile? Read *Psalms 137:1–7* and listen for the agony of exile for the Israelites who were sent to Babylon. Then read verses 8–9. As shocking as this sounds, what rings true for you in this longing for revenge on behalf of the exiled? How can you imagine that desire for revenge paralleled in contemporary situations of exile and immigration? What does Jesus require of us with regard to seeking revenge?
5. Read paragraph three under the subhead, “Economics and Exile,” which begins “Like the disturbing reality . . . .” Name some of the unjust economic relationships we might be called to repent of. Do you believe there is truly enough for everyone? Why or why not? Read the next paragraph. What are some things Christians can do to insure that the wealth is shared? What are you personally able to do?

6. Consider the question, “Is it Legal to Be a Christian?” Think of some times when trusting God and following God’s law was an issue for Jesus. Then think of some times when acting on our Christian beliefs could be an issue for Christians, and for you personally.

On the issue of immigration, what might the implications be for Christians (and/or for you) of being guided by the principles claimed by Frontera de Cristo? Consider number 5 closely. What conflicts can you imagine this raising? How do we prepare to deal with those conflicts?

7. Read the last paragraph of the article. Picture in your mind the many walls you can see dividing people. Allow the multitude of these walls to overwhelm you for a moment. Feelings of despair and hopelessness sometimes prevent us from doing anything because the task seems so huge.

Now picture Jesus literally turning each of those walls in turn on their side, creating tables that unite those on either side. Picture those people. What does it mean to them to see those on the other side of that table as beloved children of God? Focus on the immigration wall, both the literal walls we build to keep people out and the symbolic walls that divide “immigrant” and “native.” If turned into a table between us, how do you reach across that table and greet, and converse with, and welcome the real persons on the other side?



**“Know Thyself” by Amy Robinson; “We Will Always Remember Morena” by Jean Vieten; and all participant reflections, which are located in beige boxes throughout the magazine**

- Churches often offer mission trips for youth but forget to provide direct, hands-on ways adults can learn about and participate in mission beyond one’s own community. Read all of the participant reflections in this magazine that offer learnings and interpretation from the U.S.A. Mission Experience of Presbyterian Women.

A list of those who participated can be found on the insert in the center of the magazine. If anyone lives close to you, consider inviting them to come and provide a firsthand description of their experience. Challenge women to think about this way to expand the ministry of PW. Maybe your presbytery could offer a trip for women. If that is not feasible, think about how your PW might reflect on and respond to the participants’ reflections you’ve read.



**“Presbyterian Women: A Part of Immigration History,” “The Boundaries of Justice and Love,” and “Ten Things You Should Know About the Immigration Legal System,” all by Julia Thorne**

- Julia Thorne is a person PW’s should know about! A lawyer and advocate for immigration reform, she is available to churches and presbyteries to help them serve as better advocates, support systems, education providers and information dispensers for a multitude of immigration questions, issues and needs. These three articles give you only a taste of the work the denomination is doing and has done over time, and an overview of ways it is currently working on the immigration issue. Think of them as a package, with the following ideas as suggestions only to spark your own imaginative uses:

- Use “Presbyterian Women: A Part of Immigration History” to prepare a mini-presentation on women’s role in immigration history for the next gathering of Presbyterian Women in your church. Invite those present to read the whole issue and consider what place your church might play in ministry to immigrants and in immigration reform. What will “behaving well” translate into for your group?
- Use “The Boundaries of Justice and Love” to educate yourself about the action and advocacy positions of the PC(USA) with regard to immigration. Download or order copies of the denominational action guides and examine the positions presented. Focus on those parts that directly relate to things going on in your part of the country and consider ways you/your PW might get involved. For example, there are immigration detention centers in New Jersey and members of my church and a community action immigration group they formed visit detainees, take basic supplies, connect detainees with support and legal help when that seems right, and generally offer hope and encouragement.
- Use “Ten Things You Should Know About the Immigration Legal System” to educate and empower advocacy and action.
- Put a copy of this issue in the hands of anyone you know who is involved in the immigration issue. The information might spark new ideas and approaches and help them do what they do even better.