



Q & A

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## ***Refuge Reimagined*** *Biblical Kinship in Global Politics*

February 16, 2021 | \$28, 272 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5381-6

**Mark R. Glanville** (PhD, Bristol University) is associate professor of pastoral theology at Regent College, Vancouver, and an Old Testament scholar. He is the author of *Adopting the Stranger as Kindred in Deuteronomy* and *Freed to Be God's Family: The Book of Exodus*.

# The Biblical Invitation into Kinship with Refugees

## What led to your interest in studying and now sharing about biblical kinship and refugees?

**Mark R. Glanville and Luke Glanville:** We write this book because we feel an urgent need for a biblically grounded Christian perspective on our present global crisis of forced displacement, and an outline of how this biblical ethic might be applied faithfully and creatively at the levels of the church, the nation, and the globe. This is a big task, requiring an argument with many moving parts. But there are good reasons for attempting to tackle these many parts in a single book.

We have found that *biblical* arguments for compassionate welcome of strangers are often met with rebuttals: But you misunderstand politics. It is all very well for individuals to be open-hearted and open-handed toward strangers, but you have not grappled sufficiently with the conceptual limits, the large-scale practicalities, and the sheer imprudence of applying this to countries and their governments.

Likewise, *political* arguments offered by Christians for a more compassionate approach to refugees are often met with different rebuttals: But you misunderstand the Bible. You're bringing political ideology to your reading of Scripture. Biblical injunctions to welcome the stranger are not as straightforward as you think.

In this book we aim to drive a biblical stake in the ground, by displaying an unassailable argument for an ethic of welcome for people who are seeking a home. This task requires engagement with a variety of fields of scholarship: biblical, missional, and political theology; as well as history, political theory, and international relations.

## What is your main thesis in *Refuge Reimagined*?

**Glanville and Glanville:** In *Refuge Reimagined*, we offer a new approach to compassion for displaced people: a biblical ethic of kinship. God's people, we argue, are consistently called to extend kinship—a mutual responsibility and solidarity—to those who are marginalized and without a home.

We note three distinctives about our approach in this book. First is the biblical ethic of kinship, itself. Those advocating for greater compassion and generosity toward refugees and other migrants in recent years have grounded their arguments in a variety of theories, concepts, and traditions. Two examples are human rights and hospitality. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. In this book, however, we offer a new approach, one that is arguably both more demanding for Western nations and more transformative: a biblical ethic of kinship. The deep narrative structure of Scripture, we argue,



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**Luke Glanville** (PhD, University of Queensland) is associate professor in the department of international relations at Australian National University. He is the author of *Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect: A New History*.

urges the people of God to embrace and enfold refugees and other displaced people as kin. This call to kinship is a pattern of thought that runs from the beginning to the end of the biblical story. God's people are urged again and again to extend kinship to those who are marginalized, to welcome into the protective center of the community those who are without clan, without family, and without home.

A second distinctive is that we apply this kinship ethic to the current mission of the church, to national identity and sovereignty, and to possibilities for a cooperative global response to the refugee crisis. Into these three spheres of human society, we challenge the fear-based ethic that often motivates Christian approaches; we envision a more generous, creative, and hopeful way forward.

Third, drawing on our respective expertise in Old Testament studies and international relations, we engage a range of disciplines to demonstrate how this ethic is consistently conveyed throughout the Bible and can be practically embodied today.

#### **What do you hope your book contributes to the study of and discussions regarding biblical ethics and refugees?**

1. Unfolding a biblical ethic of kinship. This is the second book to do so. The first is an academic Old Testament monograph authored by Mark R. Glanville that is relatively inaccessible for most readers (*Adopting the Stranger as Kindred in Deuteronomy*).
2. Constructing a highly robust biblical and political-theological argument for welcoming people who are seeking a home that is strengthened by a multidisciplinary approach combining the strengths of two authors.
3. Thoughtfully applying biblical ethics of welcome to the witness of local churches, to national communities, and to the global community.



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## TALKING POINTS



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Mark R. Glanville and Luke Glanville offer a new approach to compassion for displaced people: a biblical ethic of kinship. Challenging the fear-based ethic that often motivates Christian approaches, they demonstrate how this ethic is consistently conveyed throughout the Bible and can be practically embodied today.

## New Approach to Compassion for Displaced People Pairs Biblical Theology with International Relations

*"This volume offers a unique synthesis of biblical theology, political science, and missional practice. In the face of the 'wicked problems' of forced migration, the maintenance of academic boundaries is manifestly unhelpful, but rarely have we seen such a detailed integration of all the key issues. The Glanville brothers offer us an inspiring model of both intellectual and practical engagement, and their book will become essential reading for all who are concerned with the plight of refugees and asylum seekers in an age of displacement."*

—**Mark G. Brett**, Whitley College, author of *Political Trauma and Healing: Biblical Ethics for a Postcolonial World*

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- COVID-19 has meant that borders have all but closed to refugees and immigrants. As nations adjust to a new normal, are we able to become imaginative about welcoming people seeking a home, during this strange time?
  - The COVID-19 period has displayed our commonality with people from other nations, including people who are on-the-move and seeking a home. Can we lean into our common human experience of COVID-19 to recognize our affinity? Can we care for one another as family when fellow humans need a home?
  - A significant proportion of refugees and immigrants are Christians. Today, around one-half to two-thirds of Christians live in the Global South and East. Diasporic communities are being used by God to revitalize the church in North America, Australia, and Europe. What does that mean for the future of the church?
  - When we as the church are living into our missional identity as a sent people, we will have a natural affinity with people who are on the move, refugees, and migrants. God's people have always been on the move throughout salvation history. When Christians are tempted to see people on the move as the other, whom we should keep out, this is likely because we have become settled, being mindless of own identity as aliens who are called to serve others in weakness. How does the Bible specifically support this?
  - God calls us into covenant solidarity with people who are seeking a home (Deuteronomy 10:18-19). What does that look like in our world today?



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