



# UNDOCUMENTED



RISKING **TRUST** IN A FEARFUL WORLD



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**HERALD**  
P R E S S

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### **Chapter 1: Stairwells and Bunkers**

1. Sarah Quezada mentions in the opening of her book that when she moved to an urban neighborhood in Los Angeles, she had “never felt more like an outsider” and had no idea what was happening (p. 16). Have you ever been in a place or situation where you were the other, the stranger, the outsider? What feelings did you experience?
2. How have you been affected as the fear and distrust of immigrants surges in the U.S. and the Western world? How have you responded to it?
3. The author cites a study revealing that only one in five evangelical Christians said their church has encouraged them to reach out to immigrants (p. 19). How has your church engaged conversations about immigration, if at all? If it hasn't, how could you start such conversations?
4. As fear becomes the default response when it comes to the unknown and uncertain, including the immigrant, how can we as Christians address our fears?

### **Chapter 2: Coffee with a Rock Star**

1. Most of us prefer what's familiar and form friendships with those who are like us and share our interests. With that in mind, consider your own friendships. How diverse are they?
2. What steps could you take to make friends with those who are not like you?
3. How did Jesus model “radical friendship”? Cite examples of Jesus' reaching “across the human barriers that divide people” (p. 28).
4. Have you ever taken a risk and built a friendship across societal divides? What was the experience like for you? Were you surprised by the connections and similarities? Were you surprised by some of your differences? How did you handle it?

### **Chapter 3: Illegal**

1. Sarah cites a study that shows many people don't know where their knowledge of immigration comes from. Reflect on where you learned about immigration. Are your views primarily informed by the Bible and the witness of the Gospels? The news? Your family? Your social media friends?
2. Sarah points out that to “interact with” someone is different than to “have a relationship with” them (p. 37). Do you have relationships with immigrants, or do you have interactions with them? What kind of relationships?
3. The reasons that people migrate are varied and complicated, but Sarah summarizes them in “blood [family relations], sweat [work], and tears [fleeing violence]” (p. 41). What are some of the reasons Americans currently migrate to other places, whether permanent or temporary? Do you know any citizens of your country living abroad?
4. If your country were to suffer an attack or a natural disaster, and you had to flee, where would you go? What would you be willing to do to keep your family safe? What if the country you fled to wouldn't grant you asylum?
5. Sarah built a friendship with Billy and through it heard his immigration story. Have you ever heard a friend's immigration story? How did you respond? How can you be sure that you are a safe and welcoming presence to immigrants willing to share their story with you?

## Chapter 4: Coyote Inn

1. Sarah learns that when migrants opt for the use of a *coyote*, or human smuggler, for their trip across the border, they can spend up to \$3,000 or \$4,000 (p. 48). If needed, would you be able to come up with that much money quickly to secure your family's future?
2. Consider what the migrants Billy met had seen and experienced while crossing the desert with or without a human smuggler. How do you think they coped with the trauma of migrating that way? How does this situation speak to the resilience of immigrants?
3. Billy's coworkers and roommates experienced something akin to human trafficking. Is this situation generally what we think of when we talk about human trafficking? Why do you think they stayed in such a situation? Why wouldn't they run away? What would you do in their situation?
4. On p. 52, Sarah reflects on who is hiring undocumented immigrants. Why do you think the U.S. government doesn't pursue and prosecute employers but instead targets undocumented immigrants?
5. Billy had a middle-class upbringing and had no experience doing manual work, yet he was forced into this type of work by necessity. Would you be able to endure ten to twelve hours or more of manual work? What kind of work would you do? What does Sabbath rest mean to undocumented immigrants working long hours, seven days a week?
6. The church Billy started attending affirmed the image of God in him and treated him as a friend, not an undocumented immigrant. How can your church come alongside immigrants to affirm their humanity as image-bearers of God? How could you be more welcoming to immigrants in your community?

## Chapter 5: Red Flags

1. Sarah says that often Christians and other people struggle with immigrants and their breaking of civil immigration laws (p. 65). How do you respond to the fact that immigrants do break the law and migrate unlawfully? Does the reason they choose to migrate affect your views?
2. "[A]s Christians, we must hold the laws of the state under the light of God's laws," the author writes (p. 66). In what ways do some of the laws of the United States or the country in which you live conflict with your allegiance to God? What examples come to mind?
3. There seem to be two signs at the border. One says "Help Wanted," and the other says "Keep Out!" How can we reconcile our labor needs with our immigration needs? Did it surprise you to learn that there were essentially no limits on legal immigration from Latin America before 1965 (p. 65)?
4. Sarah reminds us that from the moment Jesus came on the scene, he advocated for the vulnerable, and he challenged his followers to be "present and active on behalf of the most vulnerable" (p. 69). Practically speaking, what does it look like for you to be "present and active" on behalf of those who are marginalized?
5. "We open our arms to immigrants, documented or not, not on the basis of their purity or deservingness but because of Christ's love for us in our undeservingness" (p. 70). How does this statement challenge you or resonate with you?

## Chapter 6: Cough Syrup and Sandwiches

1. Billy's parents show Sarah warm and generous hospitality when she visits them in Guatemala (pp. 75–79). When have you experienced lavish hospitality? How did it make you feel?

2. How does the Greek definition of hospitality *philoxenia* (love to strangers) challenge mainstream understandings of hospitality? Can you think of situations where you have welcomed and shown Christian love to strangers?
3. Sarah states that a study revealed that only one in ten immigrants had ever been invited to the home of a U.S. citizen (p. 81). Have you ever hosted an immigrant in your home for a meal or gathering? Why or why not? If you have, what was the experience like?
4. Sarah and her friend had awkward and embarrassing experiences interacting with strangers at times (p. 82). Have you had similar experiences? How could you overcome your fear and discomfort and pursue relationships and encounters with strangers anyway?
5. When you consider opening up your home, space, and life to others, what barriers keep you from doing so? Do you feel pressured to have a squeaky-clean, well-decorated house or apartment? What are ways that you can practice the kind of simple hospitality that Sarah showed to Billy when she offered him a sandwich?

### **Chapter 7: Garment of Destiny**

1. Sarah is confronted with a situation that means breaking the law but also preserving Billy's livelihood (pp. 86–87). What would you have done in her situation?
2. The U.S. government seems to send immigrants conflicting messages: one part (the IRS and Social Security Administration) collects taxes and payments from undocumented immigrants, while another part (the Department of Homeland Security) seeks to deport them. Were you surprised to learn this information? Why do you think this two-prong system exists?
3. Sarah's relationship with Billy made her aware of the injustices of the U.S. immigration system (p. 89). What relationships in your life have made you more aware of injustices and ignited your passion for justice? How could you be more engaged and mobilized to action?
4. Sarah tells us that "Relationships are key for sustaining justice work long-term" (p. 92). How does the example of Ruth in the Scriptures illustrate that simple truth? In what ways could your relationships with those who are marginalized lead to intentionality and solidarity with them?
5. Sarah speaks of her own privilege as a U.S. citizen and her awareness that Billy could not engage in the same activities that she could do freely because of his immigration status (p. 95). Consider how being undocumented would change your life. What could not do as easily? How would it change your view of law enforcement?

### **Chapter 8: Mountains of Paperwork**

1. Have you ever been in a situation or a country where you did not know the language or understand the culture? How did you handle the ambiguity and uncertainty?
2. Sarah is faced with the possibility of having to move to Guatemala for up to ten years (p. 105). Would you be willing to move to another country long-term for someone you loved? What considerations would you have to make? How would your family and friends respond?
3. Sarah's dilemma opens up larger questions for her about love versus safety and fear versus trust. "I valued standing in solidarity with immigrants harmed by an outdated immigration system, but I was also afraid to lose something in the process" (p. 107). Have you ever evaluated how much you could lose if you stand up for those on the margins? How can the work of justice put us at risk? Is the risk acceptable to you? Why or why not?

## Chapter 9: Celebration

1. When her future in-laws don't get their tourist visas to travel to the U.S. for Sarah and Billy's wedding, Sarah realizes that doing things "the right way" in our current immigration system doesn't guarantee good results (p. 114). How have you experienced this basic truth of following the rules but not getting what was promised if you did?
2. "It is a true testament to the resilience of people and the faithfulness of God that the suffering of this world does not shut down the block parties" (p. 116). How have you felt the tension of celebration in the midst of suffering and uncertainty?
3. After Billy's experience with wage theft, Sarah discovers that the work of justice and standing firm with the marginalized can be discouraging and painful (p. 120). How does her experience speak to resilience and how we persevere in the work of justice?
4. Sarah learns: "...I am convinced that people living on the margins have so much more to teach us than shallow gratefulness for material things. They can teach us how to hope. They can teach us how to anticipate justice while maintaining our dignity in the waiting. They can teach us how to fight" (pp. 120–21). Do we usually approach those on the margins with a learning posture? What else might people on the margins have to teach those who come from more privileged backgrounds?

## Chapter 10: Alien Relative

1. Damaris, Sarah's friend, notes that the language we use to speak about immigrants can conjure up problematic images (p. 123). Consider other terms that we use to describe immigrants, particularly undocumented ones. Are they humanizing? How does language shape our views on immigration and our interactions with immigrants?
2. How do we reconcile our immigration system's insistence that no one become "a public charge" with the Bible's command to care for the poor?
3. An estimated 83 percent of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants are Christians (p. 129). How do you respond to this information? Do our relationships as Christian sisters and brothers change our responsibility to them?
4. Sarah and Billy are prepared to answer intimate and intrusive questions at their immigration interview, something Sarah refers to as a "high-stakes version of *The Newlywed Game*" (p. 131). Think of the closest relationships that you have. Would you be able to answer such detailed questions about your loved ones and your relationship? How might this process undermine the dignity of immigrants?

## Chapter 11: Hiding in Plain Sight

1. Has there ever been a time in your life that you practiced civil disobedience for your faith (for example, the breaking of a law based on your conviction that it was an unjust law)? If you haven't, can you imagine such a scenario?
2. What did you know about the New Sanctuary Movement?
3. Alexia Salvatierra's definition of sanctuary has to do with protecting those who have committed a crime but whose punishment is cruel and unusual (p. 136). Given this definition, what do you think about the church engaging in the movement?

4. Consider Sarah's concern: "I worry about the ways that, if I stand up for someone else, I might suffer consequences in my own life" (p. 138). Do you share that concern? What might some of those consequences be?
5. How do we hold these two things in tension: addressing injustices to protect the vulnerable, and risking our own security by doing so?

### **Chapter 12: Fences and Walls**

1. Unlike Sarah and Billy, most of us have never visited the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Based on what hear on the news and the rhetoric of politicians seeking election, did you imagine it was anything like what Sarah described?
2. Fences and walls are barriers erected by human beings to prevent migration, but what are the root causes of migration? How does the polarized rhetoric around "Build the Wall" distract from these causes?
3. Some groups, like Sarah and her students, visit the border to learn about the complexities of immigration. How might your church benefit from such a visit?
4. Sarah notes that Friendship Park is ironically named because there isn't much evidence of friendship between the U.S. and Mexico at the border (p. 154). What would you call it if you were to rename it? \_\_\_\_\_ Park.

### **Chapter 13: Bed Quota**

1. Given Billy's experience with Derek, how does the outdated immigration system in the U.S. contribute to the dehumanization of both immigrants and the citizens who employ them? What do you suppose was at the root of Derek's anger?
2. Immigrant detention is a lucrative business, and though, on the surface, everything is legal, how might conflicts of interest arise under the current system? What justice concerns exist around detention centers?
3. How is detention visitation an act of Christian love and obedience?
4. Would you or your church community consider getting involved in visitation ministry? Prayerfully consider this possibility and learn more about [Detention Visitation](#).

### **Chapter 14: Citizenship Without Borders**

1. What are the benefits of citizenship over permanent residency?
2. Sarah notes that "Laws are designed from the perspective and for the interests of those in power" (p. 178). Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. Sarah's journey with Billy through U.S. immigration teaches her that "God has welcomed us into an expansive family and offered us citizenship in a kingdom that knows no borders" (p.180). How can you and your church community function out of a theology of abundance and embrace rather than poverty and exclusion? How do the witness of Scripture and the words of Jesus encourage us to choose trust over fear?
4. *Love Undocumented* ends with a reminder that there are multiple ways that Christians can respond to immigration (p. 182). Now that you have finished reading this book, how might God be leading you to respond?