

Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy

Steve Monsma

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"A balanced, thoughtful perspective." *Charles W. Colson*


"Urgent, compelling, readable." *Ronald J. Sider*

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES
ON PUBLIC POLICY

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Steve Monsma : Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Less about issues and more about how to think about issues By L. Staley I really enjoyed this book. First, he laid a biblical foundation as background for how to think about political

issues and decide for yourself the answers. Then, he gives specific examples. I found it really refreshing to read a book that talks about how to decide issues for yourself instead of presenting a specific case. This book helped me figure out why I felt so uneasy with the leadership of many of the Christian voices in politics today. He also built a case for deciding issue by issue what you think instead of applying a litmus test to all the issues to come to a position. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Second Book Beside Bible By odah This book should be a mandatory reading for every elected official in America. This book is not one of partisan book full of unrealistic ideas. Mr. Steve Monsma should be advising our next President and giving lectures to members of Congress who live out of touch. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Thoughtful Treatment of Intense Political Issues By Trevin Wax I knew I had to buy this book when I saw that both Chuck Colson and Ron Sider were recommending it. Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy (Crossway, 2008) by Steve Monsma helps evangelicals consider how our Christian faith influences our view of politics and public policy. Monsma calls us to a biblically-informed view of public policy. He writes: "The truly important thing is that we approach public-policy issues humbly and with our minds shaped by biblically-based principles, not by the various political idols of our day." (11) Monsma warns us of the traps awaiting well-intentioned evangelicals who participate in the political sphere. Some evangelicals fail to prioritize the right issues. Others may have a narrow goal of seeing Christianity recognized in public life instead of seeing freedom for all religions as a civic responsibility. A few evangelicals throw up their hands in despair, convinced that political solutions to our country's problems are too complex. In order to help us avoid these traps, Monsma lays a foundation of biblical principles that should undergird all our political involvement. Three principles are key: justice, solidarity, and civil society. These principles frame the rest of the book, but Monsma concentrates on the principle of solidarity when he is speaking of specific political problems. Monsma writes about abortion, immigration, religious freedom, human rights, the environment and other hot-button political issues. Readers might be frustrated that Monsma does not always come down forcefully with regard to specific political proposals. He sees how Christians might disagree as to how justice, solidarity and civil society are best preserved. Monsma seeks to offer a framework to help us think about these issues rather than taking a "This is the Christian approach" position that silences healthy discussion. The chapter on poverty helpfully steers between the call to full responsibility and full dependence. He is right to see that the poor need help at a deeper level than a mere handout. My only quibble with Monsma's treatment of poverty is that he accepts at face-value the government's definition of poverty. Perhaps it is my experience in Romania with people who are truly destitute that makes me question the government's poverty line. The chapter on church and state is thoughtful in its approach to the role of the Church in civil society. But surprisingly, Monsma never deals with the issue of Muslim Law. The growth of the Muslim population in Europe and the United States has led to a resurgence of interest in Muslim Law that is not at all separate from the State. Monsma helps us understand the issues at stake in Church/State debates, but does not address the growing concern about Mosque/State relations. The chapter on the environment is biblically sound. But there is no discussion about whether or not global warming is man-made. I find this omission unfortunate, since determining the cause is key to how evangelicals decide how to address climate change. The chapter on human rights is terrific. The principle of solidarity frames the discussion. Monsma peppers the chapter with good stories that are designed to shake us out of complacency and lead us to action on behalf of the persecuted in our world. Overall, Healing for a Broken World is a much-needed book. I appreciate Monsma's treatment of these political issues. He manages to bring more light than heat to these issues - a true feat indeed in our polarized political climate today. I suspect that some may be disappointed in this book, having expected more concrete expressions of political passion. But I, for one, think we could use a few more cool heads.

Do today's believers know how to be not simply good citizens but good Christian citizens? Are they ready to respond to contemporary public policy issues such as genocide, global AIDS, global warming, and human trafficking according to Scripture rather than any particular political agenda? A growing segment of them are, even if they aren't quite sure how to accomplish it. This book is for them. With American evangelicals having more political influence today than ever before, this book is especially important. The opening chapters establish the foundational biblical principles that are relevant to our lives as Christian citizens no matter the topic. Author Steve Monsma next highlights crucial global issues in which believers are called to live out their faith. Forgoing ready-made answers, Monsma encourages a reflective, thoroughly biblical response via a lively writing style. His book will equip all believers to make godly, humanitarian choices rather than purely political ones. A DVD featuring a 10 minute introduction to each chapter of this book is available from Crossway at www.crossway.org or from the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at www.calvin.edu/henry. It is ideal for use in classes and discussion groups.

"Steve Monsma avoids the modern-day tendency to believe that the kingdom of God will arrive on Air Force One. Instead he offers a balanced perspective on how Christians should engage in the political process. His solid biblical grounding, as well as his concrete applications of Christian principles to public policy, provides wise guidance." Charles Colson, founder, Prison Fellowship and the Colson Center for Christian Worldview "Urgent, compelling, readable. An important book on a crucial topic. Monsma's entire life-as a successful politician and a gifted

professor of political science-has prepared him to write this clear, compelling book. Every Christian with any interest in politics should read it."Ronald J. Sider, Senior Distinguished Professor of Theology, Holistic Ministry, and Public Policy, Palmer Theological Seminary "If you need to know in advance whether the author is a conservative or a liberal, you may not like Monsma's approach. He asks you to set aside such simplistic labels and ask instead what the Bible says about each of a dozen key public policy issues. And then if you disagree with some of his personal conclusions-just as he expects you to-you will appreciate his candor and honesty."Joel Belz, Founder, Worldmagazine"An important introduction to issues arising at the intersection of faith and politics, written from a disciplined Kuyperian/Calvinist theoretical stance and resulting in a nuanced centrist-evangelical perspective. This book is reader-friendly, biblical, holistic, and wise."David Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University"Monmsma is one of the most important scholars writing on church-state issues today. This latest contribution is perhaps his finest work. It brings together his wide-ranging knowledge of the history of politics and jurisprudence with a theological seriousness that is often lacking in church-state scholarship."Francis J. Beckwith, Professor of Philosophy and Church-State Studies, Baylor University; author of *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice*About the Author Steve Monsma (PhD, Michigan State University) is a senior research fellow at the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College and professor emeritus of political science at Pepperdine University. He was a Michigan state legislator from 1974 to 1982 and has published widely in the fields of church-state relations and faith-based nonprofit organizations. Steve lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with his wife, Mary. They have two adult children and four grandchildren.