

A 4 PART SERIES AT 'THE GATHERING'

SEEKING REFUGE

Living Faith Anglican Church

PARTS

- 1) Introduction to the Refugee Crisis
- 2) Seeking Understanding
Two weeks off w/ individual activities
- 3) Guest Speaker: Mary Kaech, and a refugee
- 4) Seeking Compassion



Seeking Understanding

SEEKING REFUGE, PART 2



Recap: “Refugee”

What do we mean when we say refugee?

Refugee

- ▶ Refugees are displaced persons who cannot return home or are afraid to do so due to war, famine, or violence based upon race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or belonging to a social group.



- ▶ They apply for legal refugee status in another country while they are displaced in another country.
- ▶ In order to be recognized as a “refugee”, an official entity such as a national government or the United Nations Refugee Agency must determine whether they meet the definition of a refugee.
- ▶ Refugees do not enter the destination country until they have legal permission to do so, which often takes months or years.

Biblical Perspectives

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- ▶ Shows up 92 times in the Old Testament
- ▶ Translated: “foreigner, resident alien, stranger, sojourner, or immigrant”
 - ▶ one who is of a different geographical or cultural group, often with less rights than the reference group
 - ▶ of foreigners in Israel, even if conceded rights
- ▶ 36 of those 92 instances of the word have to do with how the people of Israel were obligated by God to treat these “ger” with compassion. *Why might that be?*

Story of Israel (Jacob)

- ▶ **Genesis 37-47** tell the story of how Jacob and his 12 sons and their families came to live in Egypt.
 - ▶ How did that happen? And was their status?
- ▶ **Two Pharaohs**
 - ▶ Genesis Pharaoh saw opportunity
 - ▶ Exodus Pharaoh saw a threat

Israel's Ger History

- ▶ **Refugees:** Jacob and his family in Egypt
- ▶ **Sojourners:** wandering in the wilderness for 40 years
- ▶ **Slaves:** Jacob's descendants in Egypt, Israel/Judah in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
- ▶ The people of Israel new what it was like to be "gerim" (plural)

- ▶ Therefore, so much of how God called his people to treat foreigners had to with:
 - ▶ *Negatively: How they themselves had been treated*
 - ▶ they had been feared, taken advantage of, and even enslaved
 - ▶ *Positively: How God had treated them:*
 - ▶ God had been compassionate, freed them, lifted them up, given them protection and safety

Exodus 22:21-24

- ▶ “²¹ “You shall not wrong a sojourner (“ger”) or oppress him, for you were sojourners (“gerim”) in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, ²⁴ and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.”

Other Refugees of the Bible

- ▶ Examples:
 - ▶ **Jacob** fled Canaan from his brother Esau, and sought refuge in Paddan Aram
 - ▶ **Moses** fled Egypt from the Pharaoh, and sought refuge in Midian
 - ▶ **David** fled Israel from Saul, and sought refuge in Philistia
 - ▶ **Elijah** fled Israel from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and sought refuge in the wilderness
 - ▶ **Jesus**, with his father Joseph and mother Mary, was a refugee in Egypt, fleeing the tyranny of King Herod.
 - ▶ **The early church** was forced to flee persecution, and were scattered around the Mediterranean

Other Relevant Passages

- ▶ **What other passages of Scripture can you think of that might apply to how we treat refugees?**
- ▶ **Luke 10:27:** “...Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - ▶ The lawyer asks a clarifying question of Jesus: “who is my neighbor?”
 - ▶ Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan: our neighbor is anyone who is in need, not just those who share our ethnicity, religion, or zip code.

- ▶ **Leviticus 19:18:** “...you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD....
- ▶ But just a few verses later in 19:33-34: “³³ “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.³⁴ You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

- ▶ **Genesis 1:27:** “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- ▶ The image of God means essential human value and dignity
- ▶ For us as Christians, the sanctity of human life applies to everything from womb to tomb.

From the Authors

- ▶ “The application to the current refugee crisis is clear: by Jesus’ standard, the refugee—whether from Syria, Somalia, or Burma, whether living one mile or ten thousand miles from us, whether Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, or an atheist, and whatever else might distinguish them—is our neighbor. The command of Jesus is to love them. That there may be risk or cost involved is not relevant to the mandate to love.”

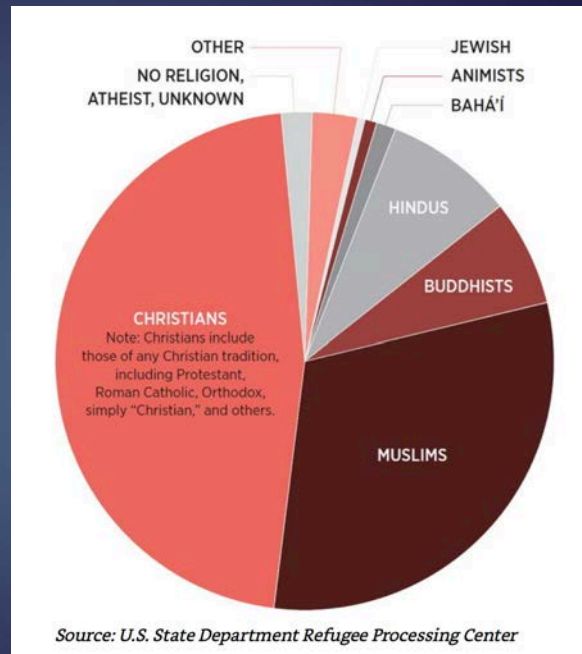
Q & A

Benefits of Welcoming Refugees

1) Protecting the Persecuted Church

- ▶ Open Doors USA's suggests that 2015 may have been the most violent year for Christians in modern history.
- ▶ This persecution comes at the hands of hostile governments, guerilla terrorists, religious radicals, and even ethnic radicals.
- ▶ Welcoming refugees is not just about welcoming our neighbors, but our brothers and sisters in Christ

Refugees Resettled to US between 2006-2015



2) Opportunities for Evangelism

- ▶ The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20: *“¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
 - ▶ How many refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers who come to our country don't know Jesus and perhaps have never heard the Gospel at all?
 - ▶ What message do think they receive from American Christians when either we restrict them from coming in the first place, or after they come we act like we don't care that they are here at all?
- ▶ Welcoming refugees is about expanding God's Kingdom.

3) Migrants Become Missionaries

- ▶ Immigrants and refugees are not just *objects* of mission, but can become *agents* of mission
 - ▶ What happens when a refugee or immigrant accepts Christ in our country, and stirred up with a passion for taking the Gospel to his/her home country decides to return?
- ▶ Welcoming refugees is about taking the Gospel to the nations.

Q & A

The Refugee Resettlement Process

**US REFUGEE
SCREENING
PROCESS** 

The resettlement process in the US is a public-private partnership, with governmental authorities, non-governmental organizations, and individual Americans all playing a role.

Average duration of process before refugee enters US: **18 months - 3 years**

1. Refugee Status



The UN High Commissioner for Refugees determines if the individual qualifies as a refugee.

2. Referral to the US



A refugee is referred to the United States for resettlement by the UN, US Embassy, or NGO.

3. Security Clearance Process



A number of security checks are run by law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

4. In-Person Interview



A US Homeland Security officer conducts a detailed interview face to face with all refugees.

5. DHS Approval



If the US Homeland Security officer finds the individual meets US admissions criteria, the application is conditionally approved for resettlement.

6. Medical Screening



The refugee that has been conditionally approved goes through a medical screening.

7. Matching with a Sponsor Agency



Every refugee is assigned a US partner agency like World Relief that will assist them upon arrival to the US.

8. Cultural Orientation



Refugees approved for resettlement are offered cultural orientation while waiting for final processing.

9. 2nd Security Clearance Process



Prior to departure to the US, a second inter-agency security check is conducted to check for any new information.

10. Airport Check



Refugees are checked again at the airport to ensure the arriving refugee is the same person who was screened and approved for admission.

11. Admission to the United States



Upon arrival in the United States, refugees are met by a World Relief representative.

Sources: Migration Policy Institute, Refugee Council USA, US Department of State

**US REFUGEE
SCREENING
PROCESS** 

Bottom line: the refugee resettlement process is the most rigorous screening process done for any foreign visitors to the US.

Q & A

Instructions for 2 Off-Weeks

