

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 Compassion

SEEKING REFUGE, PART 4

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.



Recap: Guest Speakers

How did this scenario of becoming refugees play out in the lives of our refugee family guests last week?

What were your reactions their story?

Did hearing the personal story of actual refugees change anything for you?

LFAC Global Team

The place we are beginning is cultivating an awareness of the needs of refugees and beginning to care for them.

How does caring for our refugee neighbors here impact the scene of global missions?

- ▶ These are people from the global community in our own backyard
- ▶ By caring for refugees here, we support the struggling nations bearing the vast majority (99%) of the burden
- ▶ How we respond here directly impacts what happens there.
- ▶ We emulate compassion and care for the least to the rest of the world.
- ▶ Immigrants and refugees are not just *objects* of mission, but can also become *agents* of mission

Biblical Hospitality

In the minds of most Americans, what is hospitality?

Biblical Hospitality

- ▶ Hospitality as a biblical idea comes from the Gk. word *philoxenia*, which means “practice loving strangers.” (See Rom. 12:13)
- ▶ Tim Keller says in his book *Generous Justice*, the strangers whom Jesus talked about “were immigrants and refugees, and they were...to be invited in. they were not merely to be sent to a shelter but were to be welcomed into the disciples’ homes and lives and, it is implied, given the advocacy, friendship, and the basics for pursuing a new life in society.”

- ▶ Yet, even hospitality is not the end goal

Theologian Soong-Chan Rah: “We need to move from hostility, to hospitality, and then to household...to becoming family.”



- ▶ Ultimately we hope that these people will be come our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Evangelism vs. Proselytism

What is the difference?

Evangelism vs. Proselytism

- ▶ *Evangelism*
 - ▶ a persuasive appeal and open invitation to a personal relationship with Jesus
- ▶ *Proselytism*
 - ▶ a coercive effort to convert someone, whether by threat, deceit, or incentives
- ▶ Why does the distinction matter?

Evangelism NOT Proselytism

- ▶ We are called to be evangelistic, but to reject proselytism
 - ▶ *Lausanne Movement: "while the nature of our faith requires us to share the gospel with others, our practice is to make an open and honest statement of it, which leaves the hearers entirely free to make up their own minds about it. We wish to be sensitive to those of other faiths, and we reject any approach that seeks to force conversion on them."*
- ▶ Proselytism actually corrupts evangelism
 - ▶ *Anglican Theologian John Stott describes proselytism as "unworthy witness," which occurs whenever our motives, our methods, or our message are unworthy of the God whom we witness about.*

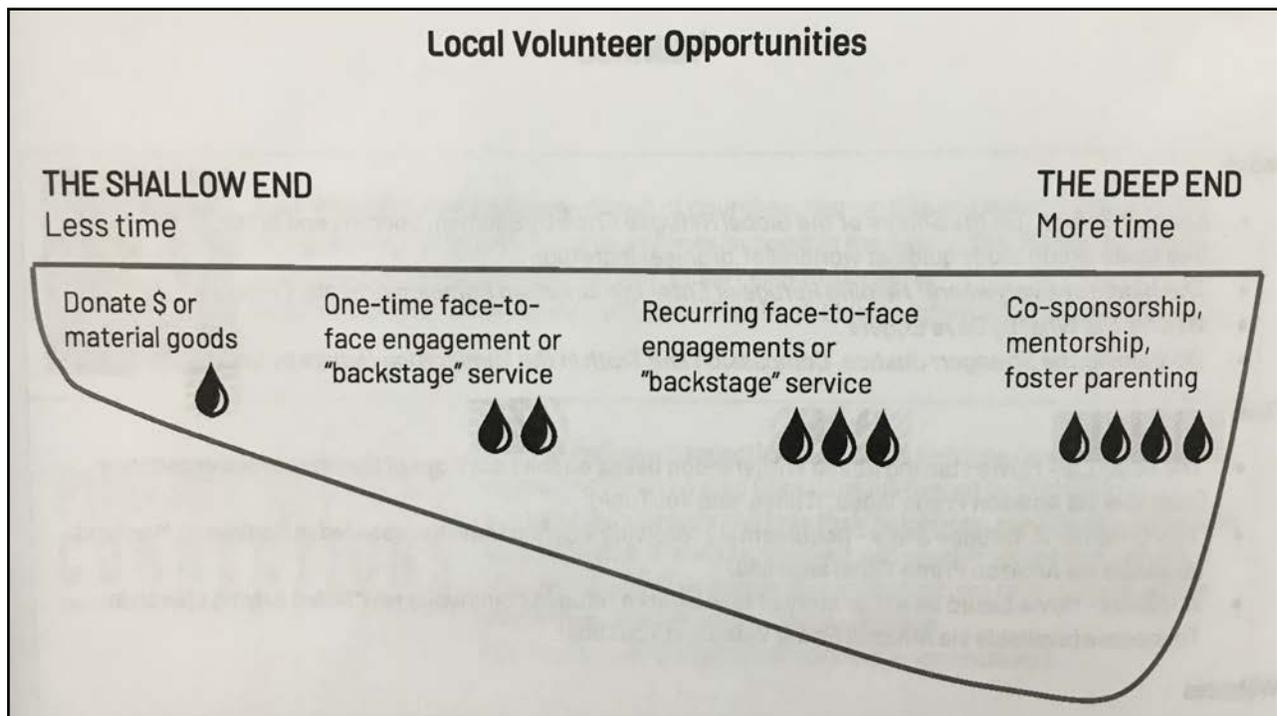
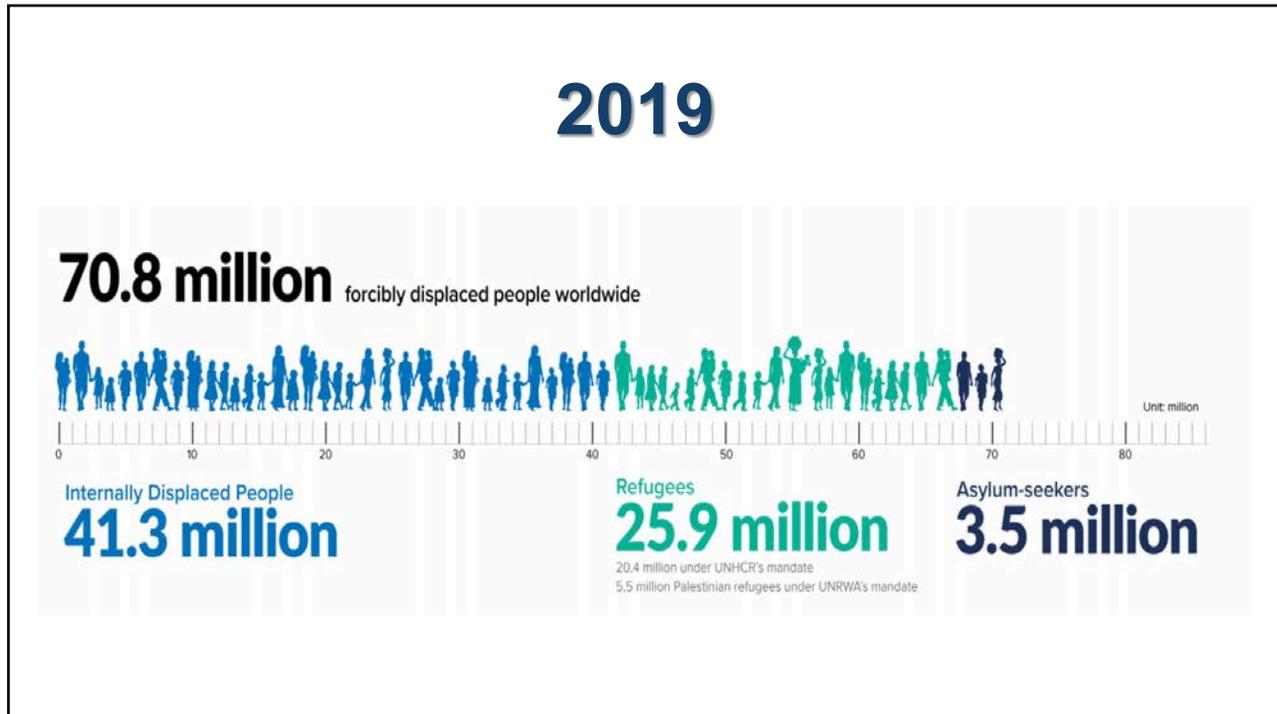
How do we share Christ with refugees without proselytizing?

- ▶ Love them whether Christian or non Christian
- ▶ Serve them as if you were serving Christ
- ▶ Invite them into your life, and your home
- ▶ Talk about Jesus whenever given the chance
- ▶ Never pressure them to accept Christ
- ▶ Never qualify your service to them, acceptance of them, or compassion towards them based upon their response to faith



Practical Opportunities

What are practical opportunities for us to respond to, as individuals and as a congregation?





Welcoming Newly Settled Refugees

- ▶ Working with local agencies like Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services to greet new refugees at the airport
- ▶ Donating household items and resources
 - ▶ Catholic Charities and others
- ▶ Serving with **The Welcome to America Project**



Inviting Refugees into Your Home for Meal

- ▶ Once connections with refugees are made, inviting them into your home is biblical hospitality
- ▶ What happens when someone comes into your home? How does the relationship change?
- ▶ The majority of immigrants and refugees to the US will never enter an American's home, let alone an American Christian





English Language Tutoring

- ▶ Most refugees when resettled here speak no English; only 7% are fluent.
- ▶ The single greatest marker of whether or not a refugee will make it here in the US is whether they can learn the language
- ▶ Organizations like **Abounding Service** and **GoTen** have tutoring centers



Immigration Legal Services

- ▶ Assisting refugees as they go through the legal system
 - ▶ How difficult is it for us as English speaking Americans to decipher and complete governmental paperwork? How much harder for refugees!
 - ▶ 1 year after arrival they need to apply for a Greencard
 - ▶ 5 years after arrival they are eligible to apply to become US citizens
- ▶ Lawyers in a local church are a bonus, but a local church can become authorized to provide legal counsel (apply for recognition from the federal Board of Immigration Appeals)
- ▶ **International Rescue Committee** helps with this





Refugee “Adoption”

- ▶ As a church (8-12 people on a refugee adoption team), sponsor a newly arrived refugee family in order to help them integrate into American society:
 - ▶ Answering questions
 - ▶ Serving as a cultural liason
 - ▶ Assisting with transportation
 - ▶ Going to the grocery store
 - ▶ Practicing English



Care for Unaccompanied Children

- ▶ Become a licensed foster parent in order to provide a home to an orphaned refugee child.
- ▶ Organizations like **Catholic Charities** helps in this area



What Now?

What Now?

- ▶ *Which of these things are you well suited to address?*
- ▶ *Which of these things is our church well suited to address?*
- ▶ *What are two or three things you learned in the course of reading this book that you could share with others in order to help encourage a more biblical, fact-based response to the refugee crisis?*

