




50

DAYS OF PRAYER

INTENTIONALLY PRAYING
FOR THE UNREACHED AMONG
REFUGEE POPULATIONS

**REACH
BEYOND**

VOICE+HANDS, TOGETHER



"...and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from *every nation*, from all tribes and peoples and languages, *standing* before the throne..."

REVELATION 7:9



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 INTRODUCTION

6 DEFINITIONS

8 WEEK 1: HIS TRAINING

PRAY FOR THE GLOBAL CRISIS

10 WEEK 2: HIS GLORY

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN AFRICA

12 WEEK 3: HIS INSTRUCTIONS

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN ASIA PACIFIC

14 WEEK 4: HIS PROMPTING

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN EUROPE

16 WEEK 5: HIS BLESSING

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

18 WEEK 6: HIS HOSPITALITY

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN NORTH AMERICA

20 WEEK 7: HIS COMPASSION

PRAY FOR YOUR RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

70.8 million

“My house will be *called* a house of *prayer* for all nations.”

- ISAIAH 56:7 (NIV)

WE ARE CURRENTLY LIVING THROUGH AN UNPRECEDENTED REFUGEE CRISIS. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE AGENCY, UNHCR, THERE ARE MORE THAN 70.8 MILLION FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD TODAY – THE LARGEST NUMBERS SEEN IN RECORDED HISTORY. NUMBERS LIKE THIS FEEL UNREAL. IT IS HARD TO COMPREHEND. IN NORTH AMERICA, IT FEELS DISTANT.

WE SEE THE IMAGES ON THE NEWS, BUT DOES OUR HEART BREAK FOR THE SUFFERING WE SEE, OR ARE WE IMMUNE TO IT? WHEN WE SEE IMAGES — OF THE FAMILY FLEEING THEIR WAR-TORN COUNTRY WITH JUST THE SHIRTS ON THEIR BACK, OF THE MOTHER CLINGING TO HER LIFELESS CHILD AT A BORDER, OF THE CROWDED, UNSANITARY CONDITIONS IN A REFUGEE CAMP — WE MAY ASK GOD HOW HE CAN ALLOW SUCH INJUSTICE AND DEVASTATION TO HAPPEN. BUT DO WE HEAR HIM ASKING US HOW WE MIGHT RESPOND?

AS A CHURCH, WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE TO CARE FOR THE POOR, THE NEEDY AND THE STRANGER AMONG THEM. AT TIMES, HIS PEOPLE ARE HOSTING STRANGERS, AND AT OTHER TIMES, HIS PEOPLE ARE THE STRANGERS FLEEING FAMINE, VIOLENCE AND PERSECUTION. EVEN MARY AND JOSEPH HAD TO FLEE TO EGYPT AFTER JESUS' BIRTH. GOD PERFORMS MIRACLES

THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE TO MAKE HIS NAME GREAT AMONG THE NATIONS, AND HE INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE ON HOW THEY ARE TO RECEIVE THE NATIONS WHEN THEY COME TO WORSHIP HIM. GOD POURS OUT HIS BLESSING

ON HIS PEOPLE, BUT WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO IN TURN, POUR OUT THAT BLESSING ON OTHERS.

AS AN ORGANIZATION COMMITTED TO REACHING THE 1900 LARGEST UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS WITH THE GOSPEL, REACH BEYOND MUST INCLUDE REFUGEE OUTREACH IN OUR MINISTRY STRATEGY. MANY OF THE PEOPLE GROUPS REPRESENTED AMONG THE REFUGEES ARE UNREACHED PEOPLE THAT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY, DUE TO SECURITY AND ACCESS. THE REASONS FOR WHY THEY HAD TO FLEE THEIR HOME, AND THE CONDITIONS OF THE REFUGEE CAMPS MANY NOW FIND THEMSELVES IN, ARE HORRIBLE. BUT, AS JOSEPH REMINDS US IN GENESIS 50:20, “YOU INTENDED TO HARM ME, BUT GOD INTENDED IT FOR GOOD TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT IS NOW BEING DONE, THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES.” GOD IS BRINGING PEOPLE GROUPS TO US, AND WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TURN AN EVIL SITUATION INTO GOOD, TO BRING SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALING TO A HURTING PEOPLE.

THROUGH THIS PRAYER GUIDE, WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US OVER THE NEXT 50 DAYS TO INTENTIONALLY PRAY FOR THE UNREACHED PEOPLES AMONG THE REFUGEES. WHY 50 DAYS? THIS GUIDE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED FOR THE 50 DAYS BETWEEN EASTER AND PENTECOST SUNDAY, BUT IT IS JUST AS RELEVANT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR. WE CHOSE THIS TIME WHEN JESUS FINISHED WHAT HE CAME TO ACCOMPLISH, CONQUERED SIN AND DEATH AND

1 billion

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

(50% increase over the past 10 years)

67% OF REFUGEES COME FROM JUST **5** COUNTRIES

AFGHANISTAN
(2.7 million)

SOMALIA
(900,000)

SOUTH SUDAN
(2.3 million)

MYANMAR
(1.1 million)

SYRIA
(6.7 million)

41.3 million

INTERNALLY DISPLACED

25.9 million
REFUGEES

3.5 million
ASYLUM SEEKERS

84%

OF REFUGEES ARE HOSTED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



TOP 5 HOST COUNTRIES

- TURKEY** (3.7 million)
- PAKISTAN** (1.4 million)
- UGANDA** (1.1 million)
- SUDAN** (998,900)
- GERMANY** (1.1 million)



EVERY **2** SECONDS, A NEW PERSON BECOMES DISPLACED



OF REFUGEES WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY

52%

OF THE REFUGEE POPULATION ARE CHILDREN

138,600 are unaccompanied or separated children

*Statistics provided by the UNHCR 2018 Global Trends Report

DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DISPLACED PERSON, A REFUGEE, AN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON, A MIGRANT, A STATELESS PERSON AND AN ASYLUM SEEKER? AS WE FOLLOW THIS PRAYER GUIDE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES AND TO CONFRONT ANY MISCONCEPTIONS OR PREJUDICES ABOUT THE DIFFERENT GROUPS.

DISPLACED PERSON: A DISPLACED PERSON IS SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD TO LEAVE THEIR HOME BECAUSE OF WAR, PERSECUTION OR NATURAL DISASTER. THERE ARE TWO TYPES: REFUGEES (AND ASYLUM SEEKERS) AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 70.8 MILLION PEOPLE FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE.

REFUGEE: REFUGEES ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE FLED WAR, VIOLENCE, CONFLICT OR PERSECUTION AND HAVE CROSSED AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER TO FIND SAFETY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. THEY MUST LEAVE THEIR OWN COUNTRY FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY. THEY HAVE BEEN PERSECUTED BASED ON RACE, RELIGION, NATIONALITY OR POLITICAL BELIEFS. REFUGEES ARE DEFINED AND PROTECTED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW, THE 1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION AND THE 1967 PROTOCOL. THE UNHCR HELPS PLACE REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES, ENSURING THEIR RIGHTS AS REFUGEES ARE RESPECTED AND PROTECTED. THERE ARE MORE THAN 25.9 MILLION REFUGEES WORLDWIDE, AND 84% ARE HOSTED BY DEVELOPING NATIONS.

ASYLUM SEEKER: AN ASYLUM SEEKER IS SOMEONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE A REFUGEE, BUT WHOSE CLAIM HASN'T YET BEEN EVALUATED OR PROVEN. THEY HAVE APPLIED FOR ASYLUM ON THE GROUNDS THAT RETURNING TO THEIR COUNTRY WOULD LEAD TO PERSECUTION ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, RELIGION, NATIONALITY OR POLITICAL BELIEFS. EVERY REFUGEE STARTS AS AN ASYLUM SEEKER, BUT THEY REMAIN AN ASYLUM SEEKER, NOT A REFUGEE, AS LONG AS THEIR APPLICATION IS PENDING. IN SOME COUNTRIES, IT COULD TAKE DECADES FOR THIS PROCESS. THE RIGHT TO SEEK ASYLUM IS A LEGAL RIGHT, BUT DURING THE PROCESS, ASYLUM SEEKERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS REFUGEES. THEY MAY BE DENIED BENEFITS, AND THEY OFTEN CANNOT WORK. THERE ARE MORE THAN 3.5 MILLION ASYLUM SEEKERS WORLDWIDE.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON: AN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON (IDP) IS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN FORCED TO FLEE THEIR HOME BUT HASN'T CROSSED AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER. THEY SEEK SAFETY WHEREVER THEY CAN FIND IT. UNLIKE REFUGEES, IDPS ARE NOT PROTECTED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW OR ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MANY TYPES OF AID BECAUSE THEY ARE LEGALLY UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THEIR

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,”

- MATTHEW 25:35 (ESV)



OWN GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE MORE THAN 41.3 MILLION PEOPLE INTERNALLY DISPLACED AROUND THE WORLD TODAY.

MIGRANT: MIGRANTS CHOOSE TO MOVE, NOT BECAUSE OF A DIRECT THREAT OR PERSECUTION, BUT MAINLY TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES. REASONS CAN INCLUDE POVERTY, NATURAL DISASTERS, DROUGHT OR FAMINE, REUNITING WITH FAMILY OR WORK OR EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES. UNLIKE REFUGEES, MIGRANTS CAN SAFELY RETURN HOME IF THEY WISH. THEY GO THROUGH A COUNTRY’S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM, RATHER THAN THROUGH THE ASYLUM PROCESS THAT REFUGEES GO THROUGH. MIGRANTS AND IMMIGRANTS ARE THE SAME THING.

STATELESS PEOPLE: A STATELESS PERSON IS SOMEONE WHO IS NOT A CITIZEN OF ANY COUNTRY. CITIZENSHIP IS THE LEGAL BOND BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT AND AN INDIVIDUAL, AND IT ALLOWS FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND OTHER RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SAYS THAT “EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A NATIONALITY.” THE ROHINGYA ARE AN EXAMPLE OF A REFUGEE POPULATION WHO ARE STATELESS; THEY HAVE BEEN DENIED CITIZENSHIP BY THEIR HOME COUNTRY. NOT ALL STATELESS PEOPLE ARE REFUGEES, AND NOT ALL REFUGEES ARE STATELESS. CURRENTLY, 3.9 MILLION PEOPLE ARE COUNTED AS STATELESS, BUT THERE ARE THOUGHT TO BE MILLIONS MORE.

REFUGEE CAMP: A REFUGEE CAMP IS INTENDED AS A TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT TO RECEIVE REFUGEES AND PEOPLE IN REFUGEE-LIKE SITUATIONS. THEY USUALLY ACCOMMODATE DISPLACED PEOPLE WHO HAVE FLED THEIR HOME COUNTRY IN LARGE NUMBERS, BUT SOMETIMES THERE ARE REFUGEE CAMPS IN-COUNTRY FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE. BECAUSE IT IS MEANT TO BE TEMPORARY, MOST REFUGEES IN CAMPS ARE UNABLE TO WORK, AND CHILDREN DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION. CONDITIONS

"But you will *receive* power when the *Holy Spirit* has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- ACTS 1:8 (ESV)

WEEK 1:

HIS TIMING

BY: STEVE HARLING

As we stood in the ancient room in Jerusalem, our tour guide announced that this was "the place where the Church started." No one knows for sure, but there's good reason to believe that we were standing on the very spot where the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost and the Church was born.

As we prayed in that room, I imagined the sound of the rushing wind, the sight of the tongues of fire and the wild babble of voices shouting out the Good News of the Resurrection in unknown languages. Whatever happened in that room decisively and categorically transformed the course of human history!

Our Reach Beyond team was in Israel to plan and pray about God's vision for the future of Reach Beyond. Just that morning, we'd dreamed about our role in the expansion of Christ's Church. Here we were...right where it all began.

I didn't grow up in a church that celebrated Pentecost. Even though I attended Bible College and Seminary, it took me a while to appreciate the significance of Pentecost.

In the era of the Old Testament, the feast of Pentecost was celebrated 50 days after Passover. It was a harvest feast, where the people of God offered to the Lord the first-fruits of their grain. Among other rituals, they were commanded to wave before the Lord two loaves of wheat bread (Lev.23:15-21).

In the New Testament era, those two loaves came to represent the union of God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, worshipping the God of Abraham: one Church composed of two peoples.

On the Passover, Jesus offered up His life for us on the cross. Three days later, He rose from the grave and purchased our redemption. Fifty days after Passover, the Church received the first-fruits of her heritage: The Holy Spirit, who binds us together as one.

Between Passover and Pentecost, a lot happens!

Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples after He rose from the grave? He said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4).

Between Passover and Pentecost, we WAIT. Waiting implies praying, reflecting and seeking the Father. What are you "waiting for" today? What are you seeking from the Father? Give thanks for the gift of His Spirit and for the gift of His Church.

PRAY FOR THE GLOBAL CRISIS

More than 70.8 million people in the world today are displaced, the highest numbers since World War II. Whether it is due to war, natural disaster, persecution or poverty, families are having to flee, sometimes with just the clothing on their backs. Every continent, except Antarctica, is a host to a refugee population. Most refugees will not be able to return home. In the midst of the refugee crisis, the church must be in prayer, both for the people affected and for our response.

MONDAY | PRAY THAT GOD WOULD GIVE US HIS HEART FOR REFUGEES. PRAY THAT WE WOULD SEE THEM THE WAY HE SEES THEM: AS MADE IN HIS IMAGE. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD BREAK DOWN ANY PREJUDICES OR FEARS THAT WOULD GET IN THE WAY OF US SERVING AND LOVING ALL PEOPLE.

TUESDAY | PRAY FOR THE CHILDREN WHOSE CHILDHOODS ARE ROBBED AND EDUCATIONS ARE DISRUPTED BECAUSE THEY HAD TO FLEE THEIR HOME. PRAY FOR CHILDREN TO REMAIN CONNECTED WITH THEIR PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND RELATIONALLY. PRAY THAT THESE CHILDREN RECEIVE HEALING FOR THE TRAUMA THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD GIVE THEM CHILDLIKE JOY AND WONDER AND CURIOSITY EVEN IN THE MIDST OF INSTABILITY.

WEDNESDAY | PRAY FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF REFUGEES. OVERALL, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE 5X MORE LIKELY THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION TO EXPERIENCE POOR MENTAL HEALTH, INCLUDING HIGHER RATES OF DEPRESSION, POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, ANXIETY DISORDERS AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE SUPPORT AND TREATMENT. PRAY FOR EMOTIONAL HEALING. PRAY FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO COUNSELING SERVICES,

BOTH IN REFUGEE CAMPS AND ONCE THEY ARE RESETTLED. PRAY THAT THEY WOULD COME TO KNOW THE HOPE THAT CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN JESUS.

THURSDAY | PRAY FOR THE UNDERLYING POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ECONOMIC FORCES THAT DRIVE PEOPLE TO FLEE THEIR HOMES. PRAY THAT THE EVIL PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS WOULD BE TOPPLED FROM EACH OF THESE REGIONS AND THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST WILL BRING IN JUSTICE, TRUTH AND PEACE. PRAY FOR THE LEADERS WHO ARE PERSECUTING VARIOUS PEOPLE GROUPS, THAT THEIR HEARTS WOULD BE RADICALLY CHANGED AND THEY WOULD BE "SAULS TURNED INTO PAULS" IN THEIR REGION.

FRIDAY | PRAY FOR GOD'S WISDOM, LEADING AND TIMING FOR POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS REACH BEYOND CAN BECOME INVOLVED WITH TO BE THE HANDS OF JESUS AMONG REFUGEES. PRAY FOR CONTINUED INSIGHT IN HOW TO USE OUR RADIO BROADCASTS TO ALSO SHARE THE VOICE OF JESUS WITH REFUGEES

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

SATURDAY | PRAY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF REFUGEE CAMPS. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE BUILT AS TEMPORARY LIVING STRUCTURES, SOME CAMPS MAY HOST FAMILIES FOR GENERATIONS. THE AVERAGE STAY IN A REFUGEE CAMP IS 17 YEARS, BUT MOST CAMPS DO NOT HAVE ADEQUATE SHELTER, WATER, FOOD AND MEDICINE. PRAY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CAMPS, BUT PRAY ALSO THAT THE EXPECTED STAY IN A CAMP WOULD BE SHORTENED, AND REFUGEES WOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE ON TO A MORE PERMANENT SITUATION.

SUNDAY | PRAY THAT GOD WOULD BRING CHRISTIAN WITNESSES TO LOVE REFUGEES, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. PRAY THAT THROUGH THESE ENCOUNTERS, NATIONS WOULD COME TO KNOW CHRIST. PRAY THAT NEW BELIEVERS WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN HOME AND HELP SPREAD THE GOSPEL AMONGST

every 2
seconds

A NEW
PERSON BECOMES
DISPLACED

“Declare his *glory* among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.”

- PSALM 96:3 (NIV)

WEEK 2:

HIS GLORY

BY: GARY ROEDDING

When my daughters were young, the question, “Why?” was often a part of our conversation. Anyone with young children or grandchildren can certainly relate. However, as we consider the unreached – whether talking about the 10/40 window or the 2% or the 1900 – I think why is a valid question.

The western evangelical church has been at this a long time. Jesus gave the Great Commission more than two thousand years ago. The modern mission movement launched in the 1790’s and Reach Beyond/HCJB began in 1931. Why keep going? Why be concerned with those who haven’t yet heard the Gospel of Jesus?

There are many valid reasons to continue pursuing world evangelism. The Bible tells us there is only one name by which people can be saved, so without the message of Christ there is no hope for people to know God’s gift of eternal life. Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples, and Paul encourages us to be witnesses, setting a personal example of taking the message of life into new areas and to new peoples.

As followers of Christ, we have been entrusted with hope and a message of Good News, and it would be selfish to keep it to ourselves. But although all these reasons are true, good and important, they are not the ultimate reason to “be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

The ultimate reason and goal for missions is the declaration of the glory of God by reconciled believers of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

From the call of Abraham in Genesis to the amazing scene before God’s throne in Revelation, God’s desire is for his name to be exalted universally. Psalm 96:2-3 (NIV) states, “Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.” The focus is God: His name, His salvation, His glory, His deeds.

John Piper, in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, writes, “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”

The picture we are given in Revelation 7 is a scene of worshippers “from every nation, tribe, people and language” declaring the glory of God and the Lamb. The motivation for our mission isn’t church growth. The motivation for mission is to see God glorified and His name exalted.

By His grace and for His glory alone, we are worshippers and have a part in His plan to fill heaven with worshippers. Why do we want to reach the unreached? To proclaim His salvation and declare His glory among the nations until the whole earth is filled with redeemed worshippers of the one true God.

52%

OF THE REFUGEE POPULATION ARE **children**

138,600 are unaccompanied or separated children

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts more than 26 percent of the world's refugee population, with most fleeing conflict in South Sudan and Somalia. Seven of the top ten largest refugee camps can be found in Africa, including in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Ethiopia. Because many refugees travel by foot, it's not surprising that more than 84% of refugees are hosted by the developing countries nearby. This puts enormous pressure on already fragile water and health care systems. As the western church, we have a duty to help these countries carry that burden.

MONDAY | PRAY FOR PEACE IN AFRICA. WAR IN SOMALIA AND SOUTH SUDAN HAS LED TO MILLIONS BEING DISPLACED. MANY FLEE TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, PUTTING A STRAIN ON DEVELOPING NATIONS ALREADY DEALING WITH POVERTY, DROUGHT, NATURAL DISASTERS AND INSTABILITY. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD BRING PEACE TO SOMALIA AND SOUTH SUDAN AND THAT REFUGEES WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME. PRAY THAT GOD'S LIGHT WOULD SHINE AMONG THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND THAT MANY WOULD COME TO PLACE THEIR TRUST IN CHRIST.

TUESDAY | PRAY FOR HEALING AND REBUILDING AFTER CYCLONE IDAI LEFT DEVASTATION AND FLOODING IN MOZAMBIQUE, ZIMBABWE AND MALAWI. REFUGEES WHO HAD FLED VIOLENCE IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY TO SETTLE IN THESE SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE NOW LEFT WITH NOTHING. ZIMBABWE ALONE HOSTS MORE THAN 20,000 REFUGEES. PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE TONGOGARA CAMP IN ZIMBABWE, WHERE MORE THAN 2,000 REFUGEE HOUSES WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED, AND MORE THAN 600 LATRINES HAVE COLLAPSED. PRAY FOR THE SURROUNDING

COMMUNITIES, MANY OF WHICH HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED. PRAY FOR THE CHURCH TO SHOW UP TO LOVE THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA.

WEDNESDAY | PRAY FOR WISDOM AS NEIGHBORING NATIONS WELCOME IN REFUGEES. ALTHOUGH THEY KEEP BORDERS OPEN, THEY AREN'T ALWAYS ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR THE BASIC NEEDS OF REFUGEE COMMUNITIES. CURRENTLY, MANY DISPLACED PEOPLE ARE LEFT WITHOUT NECESSARY PROTECTION AND SUPPORT. THEY CANNOT ACCESS BASIC PUBLIC SERVICES LIKE HEALTH AND EDUCATION, AND THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WORK. PRAY THAT RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES WOULD OPEN UP, AND THAT THE HOST COUNTRIES WOULD BE ABLE TO MEET ALL THE NEEDS FLOODING THEIR NATIONS.

THURSDAY | PRAY FOR CLEAN WATER, SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN AFRICA. UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS, REFUGEES SHOULD RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF 15 LITRES OF CLEAN WATER PER PERSON PER DAY IN AN EMERGENCY, OR 20 LITRES IN OLDER REFUGEE CAMPS. IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, SOMETIMES WATER

NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT IN BY TRUCK, OR NEW WELLS NEED TO BE DUG. PRAY THAT THE WATER NEEDS OF REFUGEES WOULD BE MET, BUT THAT THEY WOULD ALSO COME TO UNDERSTAND THE SOURCE OF LIVING WATER.

FRIDAY | PRAY FOR THE SAFETY OF WOMEN LIVING IN REFUGEE CAMPS. WOMEN ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO PHYSICAL ATTACK AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE. PRAY THAT THEY WOULD BE PROTECTED AND MADE TO FEEL SAFE. PRAY THAT THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF WOMEN WOULD BE RECOGNIZED AND THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE FAIR ACCESS TO FOOD, RESOURCES AND TREATMENT.

SATURDAY | PRAY FOR SOUTH SUDAN. THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST NATION, SOUTH SUDAN IS FACING A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. THE COUNTRY FACES ONGOING CONFLICTS WITH SUDAN. MORE THAN 4 MILLION SOUTH SUDANESE HAVE FLED THEIR HOMES. HALF THE POPULATION SUFFERS FROM HUNGER. PRAY FOR HEALING AND STABILITY IN SOUTH SUDAN. PRAY FOR WISDOM FOR LEADERSHIP AND PEACE WITH SUDAN.

WEEK 3:

HIS INSTRUCTIONS

BY: STEVE HARLING

The doctor in the refugee camp was at the end of his rope. That day, he'd lost five more Eritrean children. Earlier that morning, the three trucks carrying food and medicine for the refugees had been hijacked by rebels a few miles from camp. Dr. Tesfi was completely disillusioned and disheartened. I felt like I was picking him up off the floor.

He hadn't wanted the assignment. Thinking that it was for a brief interim, Dr. Tesfi had agreed to take the assignment. The weeks had grown into months. No end was in sight. As we talked late into the evening, Dr. Tesfi confessed that he'd had enough. He had no more to give. He was quitting. I pled with him to stay on the job. "You've got to keep going. These people have nothing without you." The conversation quickly stopped when he looked me in the eye and said: "Ok, if you really want to save these people, why don't you move into this camp?" His words were biting.

As I drove away from the camp early the next morning, I couldn't get Dr. Tesfi's words out of my mind. I was pretty sure that God hadn't called me to live in the camps... but what exactly did God want from me?

Dr. Tesfi got me to thinking a lot about God's heart for the refugee. In fact, my experience in that camp motivated me to write a seminary thesis on what the Scripture says about refugees.

**"You shall *love* the
[the stranger] as
yourself, for you were
strangers in the
land of Egypt."**

- LEVITICUS 19:34 (ESV)

The Bible is loaded with commands on how God's people are to relate to refugees (or aliens). Check these out:

"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt."

- **Leviticus 19:33-34 (NIV)**

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner."

- **Leviticus 19:9-10 (NIV)**

"I will come and put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress widows and the fatherless, and deprive foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty."

- **Malachi 3:5 (NIV)**

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"

- **Matthew 25:35 (NIV)**

Every day 37,000 people are forced to flee from their homes. These are real people with real needs. They matter to God. Do they matter to us? Let's ask God to give us His heart for the refugee. Let's not succumb to fear, self-protectionism or nationalism. Let's reach beyond to serve these souls that are dearly loved by our Heavenly Father.

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN ASIA PACIFIC

There are more than 7.7 million refugees throughout Asia and the Pacific, mostly coming from Afghanistan and Myanmar. Included in these numbers are the Rohingya. Denied citizenship by their home country in Myanmar, more than 1 million Rohingya fled intense violence and persecution, most going to neighboring Bangladesh. They live in temporary tarp-covered camps, built into the hillside above already overcrowded areas of Bangladesh. The people have no state and no hope. Over the past couple of years, Reach Beyond has worked with a partner on the ground to provide help where we can. We helped build a much-needed medical clinic, and sent teams to serve, addressing physical and emotional wounds. It is an open door to be the hands and feet of Jesus, but it is for a limited time.

MONDAY | Pray for peace in Myanmar. Pray that the leaders would recognize and value the Rohingya and other minority people groups who currently are being persecuted by military and government powers. Pray that the power of reconciliation and transformation can happen in Myanmar, like it did in places like Rwanda and South Africa.

TUESDAY | Pray that the Rohingya would be recognized again through citizenship and that they would safely be able to return home. Pray for complete healing, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Pray for hope in what feels like a hopeless situation.

WEDNESDAY | Pray for the refugee clinic that Reach Beyond helped build in Bangladesh to serve the Rohingya. Pray for continued funding for the operation of the clinic, as well as the medicine and supplies freely given away to those who need it. Pray for endurance for our partner on the ground, and support through visiting medical teams. Pray that God would give the staff and volunteers compassion, strength and wisdom as they address physical and emotional wounds of the people.

THURSDAY | Pray that the new shortwave radio broadcasts in the Rohingya language would encourage the Rohingya people. Pray that they would find the station, and that the programming would make an eternal impact, giving them a new hope.

FRIDAY | Pray for the children who are being born in refugee camps, without a home or citizenship. Pray for the health of both mothers and babies, despite living in cramped, unsanitary conditions.

SATURDAY | Pray for the hopelessness and boredom that exists in the refugee camps, as the Rohingya are unable to work or attend school. Pray for their self-worth and for opportunities to feel active and useful.

SUNDAY | Pray for the people of Bangladesh, who have opened their doors to host more than 1 million Rohingya refugees. Already one of the most populated countries in the world, Bangladesh has limited land and resources. Pray that they would continue to have compassion on the Rohingya and not grow frustrated with the burden of hosting the camps.

41.3
million
INTERNALLY DISPLACED

WEEK 4:

HIS PROMPTING

BY: MARTIN HARRISON

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 has always aroused my curiosity. As a missionary traveling to many corners of the earth, I sometimes wish I could be transported in an instant just like Philip was – it would be much cheaper than flying, and no more jet-lag, either! But seriously, what I'm curious about is not so much Philip's transport arrangements; rather, the fact that God had, in many ways, brought the Ethiopian to him. This eunuch guy had traveled pretty far, all the way from Ethiopia, to worship God in Jerusalem. Now he was making the long journey home, passing through an area familiar to Philip. God prompts Philip to head south just a short distance to intercept him, hang out with him and help him understand some really good news about Jesus. Talk about God's prompting and divine timing!

This, in many ways, echoes the way God is prompting Christians to respond to the current refugee crisis in Europe. Refugees are making long and perilous journeys, arriving in Europe from war-torn and troubled countries in the Middle-East – places that Christians can't easily go right now. God is bringing people from unreached and difficult places to us! He is bringing them literally to our doorstep! So how should we respond to this? Do we close our doors? Do we keep them at arm's length and fear them? Do we hope they and the whole refugee 'problem' just goes away?

Or, do we need to metaphorically make that short journey like Philip did and actually "go over to that chariot and stay near it." Rather than being obedient to fear-filled media reports and, perhaps, our own inner voices of prejudice, we need to be obedient to the voice of the Holy Spirit! To heed His voice and go and be among the refugees and to stay near them. What does this mean in practice? It means we have to step out of our comfort zones and

understand their refugee realities. It means we go and meet them in their time of need, and as we do so, we get to share the Good News about Jesus.

I experienced this recently in Lesbos, Greece, when God prompted me and four others to go to the Moria camp and see how we could help. We didn't have an agenda or strategy for going. I just had an incredible sense that God wanted us there. Traveling to Greece from England is an easy flight. It doesn't require any special visas or paperwork. We were able to sign up with a partner on the ground, volunteer and talk to people. We were able to love people and understand some of their needs. We learned that many of the women in the camp are afraid to use the toilet in the evening. They were being attacked, and even raped. So, instead, they would go to bed wearing a diaper. The fact that I wanted to hear about their stories and their needs was so touching to them. We now have an idea of how we can help them in practical ways, and the door has been opened to do more.

What about you? In your specific situation, what does it look like to "go over to that chariot and stay near it?" Who might God be calling you to make that relatively easy or short journey towards? It doesn't have to be going all the way to Greece. Maybe there is an opportunity closer. Pray that God would lead you this week towards someone He may already divinely be bringing close to you, so you can share the Good News!

Or do you feel there are places you can't go to share the Good News? Perhaps because of poor health, inner fears, or some other barrier? These don't have to stop you! Reach out to the God who reaches beyond borders. Pray that he breaks down those borders and barriers, opens the doors, and brings that specific person or those people to you. Because when we can't go, He will bring!

"So Philip ... asked, 'Do you *understand* what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless *someone* guides me?'"

- ACTS 8:30-31 (ESV)

ONLY 3% OF REFUGEES WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN EUROPE

As conflict continues in Syria and Afghanistan, refugees continue to flood the borders of Europe, looking for a better life. Spain hosts the most refugees, but it is the situation in Greece that has recently captured the media attention. A country already dealing with high unemployment and inflation, Greece is now seeing a large influx in refugees, especially from Turkey. Moria camp on the island of Lesbos has been called hell on earth. Built to host 3,100 refugees, it has hosted as many as 14,000 at one time. Thousands are unaccompanied minors. The camp is a temporary purgatory between the war-torn home they fled and the future they cannot yet access. And it is just one of many camps throughout Europe.

MONDAY | Pray for improved conditions in the Moria camp in Lesbos, Greece. Refugees face unsanitary conditions, food and medical shortages, and violence. Pray that the physical needs of the refugees would be met above and beyond what they could ask. Pray for physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

TUESDAY | Pray for peace among the different people groups that are seeking refuge in Greece. They are having to live among one another in very close proximity, and not all the groups get along. Traditional enemies and cultural misunderstandings can lead to conflict and violence. Pray that there would be a peace that transcends all understanding.

WEDNESDAY | Pray for the Christian partners on the ground in and outside the Moria camp. The workers have endured hard conditions with no breaks. Pray for relief and support. Pray that God would open doors for Reach Beyond to do more and that He would provide resources to support this work.

THURSDAY | Pray for God's blessing

over Reach Beyond's Millside Centre in Bradford, England. Refugees who have made it to Bradford face new hurdles, as they struggle with bureaucracy, poverty, language and cultural barriers. The Millside Centre tries to be the hands and voice of Jesus among the many refugees coming to their community. Every Tuesday, refugees and asylum-seekers line up to meet with the Red Cross at the Centre and get assistance in their paperwork. Pray as the Millside Centre staff lovingly serve the refugee population who visit, providing not only space for the Red Cross outreach, but also counseling services, English learning programs and other forms of support.

FRIDAY | Pray for the Millside Centre as they become aware of community needs and issues that can have a global impact. For example, immigrant and refugee mothers expressed concern about the potential for their children to be indoctrinated by extremist groups through social media platforms. The Millside Centre offered classes for mothers to educate them about technology, social media

and how to facilitate conversations with their children about their online interactions. Pray for the Millside Center as they look to host more classes for parents.

SATURDAY | Pray for the launch of German Conversation Project (GCP), which is a spin-off of our successful English Conversation Project. Partners in Germany are serving refugees in their country and see GCP as a great tool to not only meet the language needs of the refugees, but also an effective means of having spiritual conversations.

SUNDAY | Pray for the Church in Europe as they seek to follow the teachings of Jesus and serve refugees in their neighborhoods despite political or societal pressures. Pray that the Church will continue to stand for the rights and dignity of the strangers and help them find stability through jobs, friendships and support.

WEEK 5:

HIS BLESSING

BY: KELLY TULLBERG

Have you ever read through the Old Testament and asked why God favored the Israelites? After the Tower of Babel, when God scattered the nations, He could have chosen any of them to bless, but he chose Abraham to be the Father of His nation. He promised Abraham, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:2-3 (ESV).

God didn't bless Abraham because of anything Abraham did. He didn't bless him because he was more worthy than anyone else, or more loved. And He didn't bless Abraham instead of blessing others. God blessed Abraham so that he would be a blessing to others. It was a covenant relationship that was passed down to his descendants. God would bless them, but it would require them to then bless the nations and proclaim the goodness of God. It wasn't a gift for them to selfishly hold on to, but a gift that was meant to be shared. Why? So that God would be glorified and worshipped by all people.

In Romans, Paul reminds us that we, too, share in this covenant, as spiritual children of Abraham. God blesses us so that we will bless others. And not just our family and friends, but "all the families of the earth." We cannot accept the blessing of God without also accepting the obligation to bless others. We cannot accept the gift of salvation without also accepting the obligation to go and make disciples of others.

Blessing refugees requires taking a step outside of our comfort zone. It requires seeing people, not for the way they have been portrayed in media or as the stereotype of their country or religion. It requires seeing people the way God sees them: as made in His image and loved. Helping refugees might mean sacrificing something we want so that we can

give something they need. Visiting a refugee camp might cost us comfort, as we are overwhelmed with sights, sounds and smells that challenge us both physically and emotionally. Working with refugees at home might cost us time and patience as we learn to communicate with a person from another culture and language.

Remember when Jesus promised us a life of comfort, safety and ease if we followed Him? Yeah, I don't remember that, either. I'm pretty sure He said something about the trials of this world. But He did promise to be with us. He promised us the saving grace of salvation, a hope and a future. Let's not forget how undeserving we were of that gift, and how desperate this world is for that same hope.

When we are blessed, we have two choices. We can hold tight to our blessing, living selfishly in fear of what might happen if we open our hand, living in judgment of others, deciding for ourselves who does and does not deserve to share in the blessing, pretending that our blessing was never a gift, but rather something we earned. We can forget that everything we have belongs to Him, anyway.

Or, we can freely give away the love and hope that God gave us.

It's a risk. We could get hurt. We could be rejected. Jesus was. But, guess what? In His goodness, He will refill what we pour out. It's a never-ending supply of love and grace and hope, so long as we stay connected to the source.

How has God blessed you? How is He asking you to be a blessing to others?

**"I will bless you and make
your name great, so that
you will be a blessing."**

- GENESIS 12:2B (ESV)

84% OF REFUGEES ARE HOSTED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East continues to be one of the most volatile and challenging areas for refugees. According to UNHCR, an estimated 40% of the world's 70.8 million displaced population are either in or from the Middle East, even though the region totals 5% of the world's population. The ongoing conflict in Syria has displaced more than 5.6 million refugees, hosted mainly in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Another half a million have fled situations in Iraq and Yemen. Nearly half the refugees are children. The refugee situation has overwhelmed neighboring Lebanon, where 1 in 6 people are refugees. Both Reach Beyond Canada and Reach Beyond USA have been active throughout the region, serving refugees through medical needs, food distribution and media ministries. It is historically difficult ground for missions, but an area that needs hope.

MONDAY | PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. PRAY FOR THE FAMILIES WHO HAVE FLED AFGHANISTAN, NOT WANTING TO CHOOSE A SIDE BETWEEN RIVAL TALIBANS TO TAKE UP ARMS. PRAY FOR AN END TO THE CONFLICT AND THAT FAMILIES WOULD BE REUNITED AND ABLE TO SAFELY RETURN HOME. PRAY THAT THE REFUGEES WOULD MEET CHRISTIAN WORKERS AND TRULY SEE CHRIST IN THEIR WORDS AND ACTIONS.

TUESDAY | PRAY FOR SYRIAN CHRISTIANS TO STAY IN THE REGION SO IT DOES NOT LOSE ITS HISTORIC CHRISTIAN POPULATION AS WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN IRAQ. PRAY FOR SYRIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS AS THEY RECEIVE TRAINING ON HOW TO HELP PROVIDE HEALING AND HOPE FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA.

WEDNESDAY | PRAY FOR REFUGEES STRUGGLING WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD). PRAY FOR COUNSELORS AND/OR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO CAN RECOGNIZE THE

SYMPTOMS OF PTSD AND PROVIDE DIAGNOSIS. PRAY FOR UNDERSTANDING OF PTSD, BOTH FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AFFECTED, AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. PRAY FOR APPROPRIATE TREATMENT AND CARE AS WELL AS STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH PTSD.

THURSDAY | PRAY FOR REFUGEES LIVING IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHO, DESPERATE FOR INCOME, AGREE TO WORK IN CONDITIONS THAT ARE DANGEROUS AND DEMEANING FOR LOW PAY. THEY CANNOT COMPLAIN BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THAT COUNTRY. PRAY THAT THEY GET LEGAL STATUS AS REFUGEES AND THE LEGAL AUTHORIZATION TO WORK IN WHATEVER COUNTRY WHERE THEY ARE RESETTLED.

FRIDAY | PRAY FOR "CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES" FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE FLED THEIR HOMES WHEN ISIS CAPTURED THEIR CITY. PRAY FOR EDUCATION FOR KIDS ABOUT BASIC HEALTH AND SANITATION SKILLS, LIFE SKILLS AND SCHOOL SKILLS. PRAY FOR THIS YOUNG GENERATION WHOSE WHOLE LIFE AND

SCHOOLING HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED AND FUTURES FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ARE SCARRED OR LOST. PRAY FOR EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING AND ACCESS TO CREATIVITY AND RESOURCES TO RESTORE HOPE FOR THEIR FUTURE. PRAY FOR PROTECTION FROM THE THREATS OF RADICALIZATION, AND THAT FAMILIES WOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.

SATURDAY | PRAY FOR DISCIPLE-MAKING MOVEMENTS TO BE LAUNCHED AMONG REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BECAUSE REFUGEES HAVE HAD TO GIVE UP THEIR WHOLE WAY OF DOING LIFE AND MAY BE DISILLUSIONED OR QUESTIONING THEIR PREVIOUS BELIEFS, SOME ARE OPEN TO NEW WAYS OF THINKING. PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST AND THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUFFERING, ETERNITY AND HOPE.

SUNDAY | PRAY FOR EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REACH BEYOND TO SERVE IN THIS REGION. PRAY

WEEK 6:

HIS HOSPITALITY

BY: LINDSEY

Anticipation and uncertainty simmered inside me as I sautéed the beef and vegetable stir fry. With pepperoni pizza and supreme pizza bubbling in the oven, rice warming in the rice cooker, vegetables chopped for the salad, crackers and cheese laid out on the table, the odd conglomerate of a meal was ready to receive my guests. The more options, the better, right?

My guests arrived thirty minutes late, enough time for the stir fry to cool and my uncertainty to boil. Yet, when I saw Aisha's and Sameer's smiles as they walked into my home giving me big hugs as though we had known each other for years, the uncertainty evaporated. We sat at the table and chatted, my tiny Colorado Springs apartment thousands of miles from their hometown in the Middle East which they had fled. Our conversation was full, yet their plates sat empty.

"Would you like pizza? Stir fry? Salad? Crackers and cheese?" The only thing they accepted was the rice. No matter how many times I offered or even pleaded, they simply ate plain rice.

As I cleaned up that evening after they left, I fretted. Am I a bad cook? But they didn't even taste my food! Did they eat before coming even though I had explicitly invited them to dinner? Did I offend them in some way? Is there some cultural thing I completely missed? With the anxiety and self-consciousness baking inside of me, I felt like giving up on welcoming these refugees. I clearly have no idea what I am doing! I am terrible at hospitality!

This was five years ago, and I have since come to learn that as practicing Muslims, Aisha and Sameer do not eat pork. Because I had a couple of dishes containing pork, they were reluctant to eat any food that would violate their religious beliefs. Thankfully, I did not let this mistake stop me from hosting in the future.

There's a thousand reasons that the media, our communities, and our internal voice give for not accepting refugees. On a societal level, it could be that they are

dangerous, they will be a drain on our economy or take our jobs. On a personal level, it could be we are afraid; we feel inadequate, ill-equipped or too busy. Yet Jesus lives and teaches the command to love our neighbors which He elaborated to include the foreigners among us (Luke 10: 25 - 37). The command to "welcome the stranger" is the most often repeated command in the Hebrew scriptures, second only to worship only the One God, according to theologian Orlando Espin. It is not a choice – it is a command. To walk with God means to also walk with the foreigners among us.

The beautiful thing is Jesus doesn't ask us to do something that He hasn't already done Himself. He Himself welcomed us while we were a far off (Ephesians 2:13 - 14) and He welcomes each of us to His table. Each time we partake of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, we not only remember His death and sacrifice that brought us into His family, but we also look ahead to the day that we will be united with Jesus and He will drink the cup again. At that table will be people from every tongue, tribe, and nation, some of whom who may be the foreigner in our very own neighborhood! If Jesus's table is big enough to include people represented from different nationalities and people groups, why not ours? What an incredible opportunity to invite refugees to the table at our home as a foreshadowing of what is coming!

I am so glad that I did not give into my own fear and insecurities five years ago and give up on welcoming Aisha and Sameer. While I no longer serve pork to Muslims, I still rest in the grace that serving with a warm heart is more important than serving the right food. Aisha and Sameer and I have continued to eat many meals together and share life together. My prayer is that one day soon Aisha and Sameer will hear the stranger in their midst, Jesus, inviting each of them into His kingdom and in turn, welcome Him into their lives.

"Do not forget to show *hospitality* to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to *angels* without knowing it."

- LEVITICUS 19:34B (ESV)

70.8

MILLION
FORCIBLY DISPLACED
WORLDWIDE

50% INCREASE OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN NORTH AMERICA

We send missionaries overseas to proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel among the least reached, but a surprising number of these unreached people groups are actually now in the United States and Canada. God is bringing the nations to our doorstep, and it is a whole lot easier to share the Gospel with them here than to share it in their home country. As borders close to missionary activity and visas become harder to come by, God has opened an opportunity for us to “go and make disciples of all nations” closer to home.

Refugees who come to North America are not illegal immigrants. For example, in the U.S., refugees are only placed after going through several layers of the asylum process: interviews with eight U.S. agencies, background checks and medical scans. It is an intense, overwhelming process, that can take years and is just the tip of the iceberg for a new family adapting to life in North America.

Most refugees left their war-torn country because they wanted peace. Many are well-educated and have the ability to contribute to society. In fact, refugees are more likely to start small businesses than the average American. While there are differences in language, culture and religion, most refugees are just like you and me. They love their families and are looking for safety, stability and hope.

MONDAY | Pray that North America would receive refugee families with generosity and love. Pray that God would help us see refugee families as He sees them: made in His own image and worthy of love. Pray that God would break any chains of fear and prejudice that hold us back from fully embracing refugee populations.

TUESDAY | Pray for new refugee families as they arrive in North America. Pray that they wouldn't be overwhelmed by the differences in language and culture. Pray that they wouldn't become discouraged or lose hope as they struggle with expectations and bureaucracy.

WEDNESDAY | Pray for the Church's response to refugees in our own communities. Pray that we would demonstrate the love of Christ among a people who may not have a positive view of Christians. Pray that churches would provide services such as English classes, legal counsel and home buyer assistance, all of which

significantly help refugees become contributing citizens. Pray that God would open doors for sharing the gift of salvation and that lives would be changed.

THURSDAY | Pray for those going through the asylum application process. It can be a long, overwhelming process. Pray for grace and patience, both for the refugee family and for the government workers. Pray for refugees to have continued support with navigating the legal process.

FRIDAY | Pray that the people whom refugees meet in the first few months include devoted followers of Jesus who can be examples of what it means to be Christian. Many refugees expect the people in North America to be Christians and are turned off to the faith when they encounter North Americans who are engaged in behaviors or lifestyles that are destructive or unloving.

SATURDAY | Pray for opportunities for refugees who are believers to participate in ministry projects for their own people group. Pray for the refugees who are currently creating radio programs and apps in their heart language that can be transmitted back to their home countries. Pray for additional partnerships and ideas to come alongside new believers who want to reach their own.

SUNDAY | Pray for North American individuals and families to intentionally welcome the refugees into their homes and churches and to provide a sense of community, especially for the refugees who come from communal cultures. Pray for the North American to be both a learner of the refugees' home culture and background as well as a gracious teacher of North American culture and Kingdom culture.

WEEK 7:

HIS COMPASSION

BY: STEVE HARLING

The weathered old man from Homs thrust the little girl into my friend's arms. "Take her," he vigorously pleaded. "Mother and father no more." He pointed to the ugly blisters on her arms and legs. "Chemical! Chemical," he angrily shouted. We had no idea if he was telling the truth. It was his words against those of the Butcher of Bagdad.

Brian and I had spent several days in the Bek'ka Valley assessing the needs of the Syrian refugees. This was the first time we'd seen wounds like this. I asked the old man to tell us the name of the little girl. He didn't know. Neither did the handful of kids playing on a nearby rubbish pile. The child looked to be about four or five years old. Her little pink dress was filthy and torn. Her hair was red with dirt, or maybe malnutrition. She had no shoes. As we talked, she stared blankly into the distance. I wondered what those precious little eyes had witnessed in the last few days. I could only imagine.

Of course, we couldn't keep the child. We'd get into all kinds of trouble if we'd even tried. As the old man vainly protested, Brian apologized profusely and reluctantly pushed her back into the arms of the old man. My friend was literally shaking with grief and anger. I could see a trail of tears rolling down his cheeks. Brian had been a nationally recognized football coach. At the peak of his career, he'd quit coaching to start a ministry that "goes in when Doctors Without Borders comes out." He'd been to some of the world's worst conflict zones. Brian had seen things that no man should ever have to see. Tough as he was, Brian was breaking down.

There was little more that we could do. We gave the old man some water bottles, a few Lira, and a handful of antibiotics. As we walked away from that hovel of tents on a dump heap, neither of us could say a word. We just wept.

To this day, I wonder if that little girl is still alive. I wonder if anyone has given her a name? I wonder if anyone has taken her in? Maybe she's with Brian.

As soon as we returned from our trip to the Syrian border, Brian was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. With every beat of his heart, cancer cells were being pumped throughout his body. He put up an incredibly valiant fight. Our last visit together was bitter sweet. Brian was one of the closest friends I've ever known. He inspired me to be like Jesus. When I preached at his funeral, I shared the story of our experience in the refugee camp.

I shared how Brian wept over the plight of that little girl. I shared how Brian reminded me of the compassion of Jesus. Jesus wept. He wept at injustice. He wept at the sufferings of the innocent. He wept for the children. I imagine that Jesus was weeping with us as we handed that little girl back to the old man.

"Jesus wept."

- JOHN 11:35 (NIV)

PRAY FOR YOUR RESPONSE

Isaiah 58:6-7 (ESV) describes God's desire for His people, "to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke." He described His expectation of His people, "to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house."

Praying for refugees is a start, but how else is God asking you to respond? How is He stirring your heart? Let's finish out the week, headed into Pentecost Sunday, in prayer for what changes we can make. Maybe it is learning about the plight of refugees in your own community and finding ways to serve. Maybe it is learning more about an unreached people group who has been forcibly displaced and finding ways to support ministry to that area. Maybe it is praying about going and serving overseas. However you are being stirred, pray for discernment, opportunity and obedience.

MONDAY | PRAY FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU AN UNDERSTANDING AND LOVE OF REFUGEES. PRAY FOR GOD TO REVEAL TO YOU LIES, FEARS, AND INSECURITIES YOU ARE BELIEVING ABOUT REFUGEES THAT ARE PREVENTING YOU FROM MINISTERING TO THEM. PRAY THAT GOD WILL HELP YOU TO SEE REFUGEES THE WAY THAT JESUS DOES.

TUESDAY | PRAY FOR GOD TO SHOW YOU WHERE YOU MAY BE CONNECTED TO REFUGEES, WHETHER IT BE A NEIGHBORHOOD IN YOUR CITY OR THROUGH YOUR NETWORK OF FRIENDS, FAMILY AND CHURCH COMMUNITY. EVEN IF YOU DO NOT HAVE REFUGEES IN YOUR GEOGRAPHICAL NEIGHBORHOOD, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY YOU ARE CONNECTED TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT AVENUES FOR HELPING REFUGEES.

WEDNESDAY | PRAY FOR GOD TO REVEAL THE TANGIBLE ACTION STEP HE WOULD HAVE YOU TAKE THIS WEEK – WHETHER IT BE THROUGH MAKING A PHONE CALL, VISITING A CHURCH

OR MINISTRY LEADER, MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURES ABOUT GOD'S HEART FOR REFUGEES, OR JUST WALKING AND INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO THAT PERSON WHO SEEMS OUT OF PLACE AT THE GROCERY STORE. PRAY THAT YOU WOULD BE OPEN TO HIS LEADING AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH OBEDIENCE IN WHAT HE IS ASKING YOU TO DO.

THURSDAY | PRAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE WHAT GOD IS TEACHING YOU ABOUT REFUGEES WITH SOMEONE FROM YOUR COMMUNITY. ASK GOD IF THERE MAY BE SOMETHING HE IS ASKING YOUR SMALL GROUP, CHURCH OR BROADER COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE IN TOGETHER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES.

FRIDAY | PRAY FOR WISDOM ABOUT HOW TO HELP IN WAYS THAT PROVIDE FOR FELT NEEDS OF REFUGEES WHILE AFFIRMING THEIR DIGNITY AND DOES

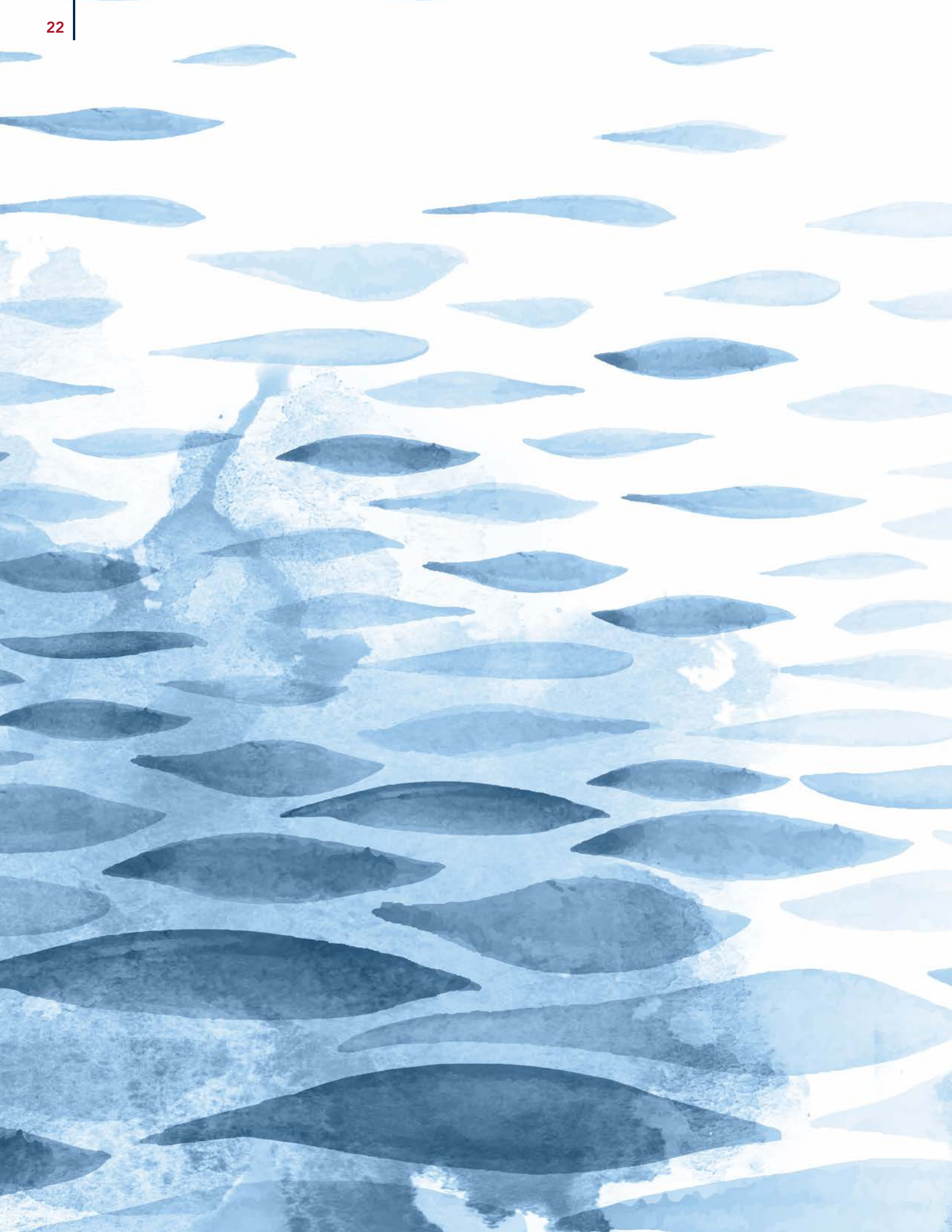
NOT CREATE UNHEALTHY DEPENDENCY. ASK GOD TO SHOW YOU WHERE YOUR SKILLS, GIFTINGS AND PASSIONS MAY INTERSECT WITH THE NEEDS OF ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING REFUGEES AND IF THAT IS WHERE GOD IS DESIRING YOU TO INVEST YOUR TIME AND ENERGY.

SATURDAY | PRAY FOR THE REFUGEE GROUPS LIVING IN YOUR COMMUNITY. PRAY THAT THEY WOULD FEEL WELCOMED AND ACCEPTED. PRAY FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS, FOR WISDOM FOR YOUR LEADERS, AND FOR RESOURCES FOR CHURCH AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SERVING REFUGEE POPULATIONS NEAR YOU.

SUNDAY | PRAY FOR WAYS YOU CAN HELP REACH BEYOND HELP THROUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT OR GETTING INVOLVED IN A SHORT-TERM TRIP. ASK GOD TO REVEAL TO YOU OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE.

3.5

million
ASYLUM SEEKERS



**"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*..."**

- MATTHEW 28:19

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REFUGEE CRISIS OR THE
CHURCH'S RESPONSE, WE RECOMMEND:**

Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis, by Stephen Bauman,
Matthew Soerens and Dr. Issam Smeir

Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission, by J.D. Payne

The United Nations Refugee Agency: www.unhcr.org



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