



Moderator's Message

Refugee Sunday

"Every two seconds someone in the world is forced to leave their home and everything they know. With the threat of violence, persecution or disaster knocking on their door they make the only choice they can to find safety—they run."
- CWS website

The biblical narrative tells of a similar tale. It has many accounts of people dislocated from home and land. The biblical text consistently calls for justice, mercy, and hospitality towards people so dispossessed. That call has never been so urgent. There are more displaced people in the world today than at any other time in history.

This fact has been dramatically thrown in our faces with the war in Ukraine where more than 14 million people have fled their homes since the Russian invasion - almost 7 million having left for neighbouring countries. Add that to the 6.7 million Syrians who have sought refuge in other countries, the 2.6 million refugees who are Afghan by birth, the 2.6 million South Sudanese who live in host communities abroad, the 1.1 million Rohingya refugees who fled violence in Myanmar, plus other affected peoples around the globe, and a deeply shocking picture of many millions living with displacement, poverty, and in huge vulnerability emerges.

What can we do? Understand our biblical mandate to be informed and care about this crisis.

Churches around the world will focus prayer on this issue at services around Refugee Day 20 June, and Refugee Sunday 26 June.

Prayer is needed but let us also be motivated to work for a better and more just world that sees this crisis diminish rather than escalate. In countries close to the borders where people are in refugee crisis, that work is real, obvious, and urgent. I am hearing stories of compassionate actions taken by churches in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

For far away countries like ours, help can take the shape of giving through the likes of Christian World Service. It can also mean developing friendships with people in our streets who have had to flee their homeland. We have a number of people in our neighbourhood for whom this is true. Engaging with them to build friendship and understanding, listening to their stories, sharing food together ... this is deeply biblical, this is hugely rewarding, this is gold!

The people who are victims of the refugee crisis need empathetic and aware, interested and activated Christians - may that be so. Amen.

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