

Refugees

Forcibly displaced people, asylees, aliens, sojourners. “Home” is somewhere else.

It started with Adam and Eve. John, penning Revelation, speaks of his exile on Patmos. Between, we learn of the “displacement” of Cain, Noah, Abraham & Sarah, Lot, Hagar, Hagar & Ishmael, Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Moses, all of Israel, Naomi, Ruth, David, Elijah, all of Israel again, Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther & Mordechai, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack & Abed Nego, Jonah, Jesus, Mary & Joseph, the early Church, Philip, Peter, Aquila & Pricilla.

- Genesis 12:10; Deuteronomy 26:5: Abraham; Genesis 23
- Exodus 12:37-39: the Jews
- Deut. 24:17-22; God sees the “alien” as he does the “widow” and the “orphan”
- 2 Chronicles 2:17-18: abundant in the Jews’ land
- Ecclesiastes 4:1: sojourners have long been without earthly advocates
- Luke 4:16-21: the poor, captives, blind, and oppressed are the intended recipients of the gospel; are we only talking about those who are physically like this? Are we not all refugees wandering in hope for our time to enter the Promised Land? Compare Ephesians 2:11-12
- Psalm 146:9: will we not do what God does?
- Jeremiah 7:5-7: judgment came to Israel because they oppressed the refugee
- Romans 12:13: we owe many
- We are but sojourners, though not usually “forcibly displaced”: Phil. 3:20, I Pet. 2:11, Heb. 11:13

“God used migration throughout Scripture to accomplish his purposes and bring his people to a greater understanding of his will for creation. God, who used migration so vividly throughout the Bible, works today to move (his) people from one place to another.” (*Welcoming the Stranger*; p 86; Soerens & Hwang, IVP 2009)

Kurds, Iranians, Afghans. Scattered by God? Because God cares about those scattered?

The 1951 Refugee Convention establishing UNHCR spells out that a refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Refugees and migrants, even if they often travel in the same way, are fundamentally different, and for that reason are treated very differently under modern international law. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects for themselves and their families.

Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom. They have no protection from their own state - indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death - or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights.

One local “receiving agency” reports; “Since 1996, we have have settled more than 1,500 refugees from 36 countries. Currently we are settling Bhutanese from Nepal, Iraqis, Montagnards, Burmese, Liberians and Somalis.”

The other major “receiving agency” in Charlotte “resettles between 300 – 350 refugees annually. Since 1975, the agency has resettled approximately 11,000 refugees representing 27 nationalities.”

<http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/arrivals>

Matthews Refugee Resettlement 2007-2012

Country	NC City	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	Cumulative Total
Bhutan	Matthews	0	0	0	6	0	7	13
Cuba	Matthews	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Eritrea	Matthews	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Iraq	Matthews	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Moldova	Matthews	0	2	15	5	7	0	29
Ukraine	Matthews	12	4	0	0	0	0	16
Vietnam	Matthews	3	0	4	0	0	0	7
Totals		17	6	23	11	7	8	72

Charlotte Refugee Resettlement 2007-2012

Country	NC City	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	Cumulative Total
Afghanistan	Charlotte	0	14	0	3	0	0	17
Azerbaijan	Charlotte	6	10	7	0	0	0	23
Belarus	Charlotte	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Bhutan	Charlotte	0	24	173	225	332	328	1,082
Burma	Charlotte	25	234	182	196	153	195	985
Burundi	Charlotte	13	1	0	0	0	0	14
China	Charlotte	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Cuba	Charlotte	18	32	28	33	19	0	130
Dem. Rep. Congo	Charlotte	2	0	0	21	0	3	26
Eritrea	Charlotte	20	15	5	16	9	3	68
Ethiopia	Charlotte	1	0	0	0	2	1	4
Iran	Charlotte	14	9	2	9	2	0	36
Iraq	Charlotte	0	4	44	61	17	4	130
Kuwait	Charlotte	0	0	0	9	0	0	9
Laos	Charlotte	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
Liberia	Charlotte	44	27	14	2	0	0	87
Moldova	Charlotte	30	17	0	0	4	5	56
Russia	Charlotte	10	11	4	0	7	4	36
Rwanda	Charlotte	0	6	0	0	0	0	6
Sierra Leone	Charlotte	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Somalia	Charlotte	39	41	29	14	5	8	136
Sudan	Charlotte	0	0	8	0	0	7	15
Uganda	Charlotte	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ukraine	Charlotte	5	0	4	0	0	0	9
Vietnam	Charlotte	180	103	84	55	22	0	444
Totals		412	550	584	646	580	558	3,330