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**DISCOVERING  
AND LIVING  
GOD'S HEART  
FOR IMMIGRANTS:**

*A GUIDE TO  
WELCOMING THE STRANGER*



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## INTRODUCTION: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide was **created to help a small group of people** move towards action as an expression of their Christian faith. It is an experiential opportunity—a chance to explore one of the most complex issues of our day from a biblical perspective and to live out the calling God has given his Church.

This guide is meant to be **adaptable to a number of purposes**. It can be used by:

- an informal group of friends or colleagues
- a church small group
- an Adult Education Class
- a group of high school or college students
- a family

Our intention is that this will be more than just a small group curriculum, but rather a tool to launch you—as a group—**on a learning journey together**.

We've provided some information and some cues, but we hope that you'll go **beyond what we've provided**, seeking God's heart as you wrestle with a complex topic.

**We don't know exactly where this guide will lead you, but we hope that it will be life-changing.**

# THE STRUCTURE

**Each session of this guide is designed with five main components:**

## 1. [ WATCH ]

Each session begins with a roughly five minute video introduction to the session's theme featuring Jenny Yang or Matthew Soerens, coauthors of the book *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate*. These video clips are available for streaming or download at [www.WelcomingTheStranger.com](http://www.WelcomingTheStranger.com).

## 2. [ READ ]

Included in each session is a short article on the session's theme, designed to either be read aloud together as a group or individually in advance of your meeting.

## 3. [ DISCUSS ]

There are questions provided to help guide you as you share your own reflections and hear those of others in your group.

## 4. [ PRAY ]

Because this topic is so complex, there are suggestions for how you might pray as you study this topic; we encourage you to close each session in prayer together.

## 5. [ EXPERIENCE ]

To help facilitate further learning and engagement, each session includes an activity. These are generally designed to be done on your own as “homework” before the next group meeting and will help inform the content you’ll discuss in a subsequent session.

This guide is intended to be adaptable and includes six sessions. Your group may decide you’d like to use all six or just three or four that are of particular interest. The study is not intended to be done within a certain time frame, so you can meet at intervals that work best for your group, whether that means meeting once a week, once a month, or once a day.

*\*In Appendix 2 there is a list of recommended resources, books and films, for individuals interested in learning more about a specific topic.*



## THE RULES

This guide is intended to help you learn more about a very complex and controversial topic, one that tends to evoke passion and sometimes disagreement. For some individuals—particularly those who are or whose family are immigrants themselves—this study can be intensely personal and might cause some to feel very vulnerable.

Before you start, as a group agree on some basic rules to create an atmosphere of respect and safety to learn and grow.

**We suggest discussing these three areas:**

### 1. CIVILITY

While you're welcome to disagree with others in the group—or with the content of this guide—please be respectful of others' statements, not mocking or dismissing them.

### 2. LISTEN FIRST

Allow others to fully express their thoughts before interrupting to refute—and focus first on carefully listening to their ideas, before forming your response.

### 3. TRUST

Some group members may want to share personal stories, or stories of friends or relatives, that may be sensitive. All participants should agree in advance that, to encourage vulnerability, any personal information shared within the context of the group will stay in the group and not be shared without explicit permission in any other context.

## SESSION A: MISSION ON OUR DOORSTEPS

### [ WATCH ]

Matthew Soerens introduces the idea that, rather than a problem, immigration may present an opportunity for the church.



### [ READ ]

#### *THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM*

Immigration is one of the most complex and controversial issues of our time. Everyone seems to agree: the United States' immigration system has some problems. No one thinks that the reality that an estimated 11 million<sup>1</sup> immigrants are present unlawfully in the United States is an ideal situation, and everyone agrees that our government should protect American citizens from those who would seek to do harm. But that's sometimes as far as the agreement goes, with discussions quickly devolving into arguments over the best policy solutions.

On one extreme of the cultural and political debates, immigration—particularly illegal immigration, but sometimes also the arrival of refugees or foreign-born individuals in general—is blamed for any number of social woes: unemployment, terrorism, budget deficits, disease, crime, gangs, even global warming. From this perspective, immigrants themselves are often framed as the problem.

From a drastically different perspective, others see a problem because they consider the current situation to be unjust toward immigrants. They blame arbitrary laws and fear-mongering politicians for driving undocumented immigrants into the shadows, dividing families, restricting immigrants' ability to fully participate in the U.S. economy and preventing vulnerable people fleeing persecution from finding refuge.

## THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM (CONT.)

Many Christians feel a tension between these perspectives. Guided by their faith, they want to show love, welcome and compassion to those from other countries seeking a better life in the United States. But they also want to respect the law—which is also a biblical principle—and to be able to protect and provide for their own families.

The issue gets even more complicated because immigration is not just a challenge for our society: it's an issue within the Church, as many immigrants—including many without legal status—have joined local churches across the United States. How are we to sort through this complex issue?

## A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

Many in our society see immigration as a threat. In fact, white evangelical Christians are more likely to take this perspective than Americans as a whole, according to polls.<sup>2</sup> In 2015, LifeWay Research asked self-identified evangelical Christians (of all ethnicities) what they thought about the arrival of immigrants to their community: 57% stated that immigrants presented a “threat” or a “burden” or some kind.<sup>3</sup>

As followers of Christ, though, immigration may actually present a beautiful missional opportunity for the Church. According to Asbury Theological Seminary president Tim Tennent, “The immigrant population actually presents the greatest hope for Christian renewal in North America.”<sup>4</sup> But, according to LifeWay Research’s poll, most evangelical Christians do not see this opportunity: only a minority say that the arrival of immigrants presents an “opportunity to introduce them to Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, we find two contrasting views of immigrants—either as a threat or as an opportunity—exemplified in Scripture itself. At the end of Genesis, we encounter a Pharaoh who sees a great opportunity in Joseph—who had been a victim of forced migration into Egypt after being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. This immigrant, Pharaoh recognizes, is “discerning and wise” and filled with God’s Spirit, and so the Egyptian ruler gives Joseph a great deal of responsibility (Gen 41:38-40). That trust is more than rewarded: Joseph goes on to save the Egyptian society in the midst of a terrible famine.

Made in the image of their Creator, immigrants have the potential to contribute in spectacular ways, and to greatly bless the country that receives them. When Joseph’s famine-fleeing family arrived in Egypt, Pharaoh received them warmly, and “gave them property in the best part of the land” (Gen 47:11). A wise leader, Pharaoh extended hospitality, but his motives were more than simple altruism: he sought the blessing of the newly-arrived elderly immigrant Jacob (Gen 47:7) and put Joseph’s most-skilled brothers in charge of his livestock (Gen 47:5-6). This Pharaoh knew, as evangelical columnist Michael Gerson has observed in the contemporary context, that immigrants are “not just mouths but hands and brains.”<sup>6</sup>



*The immigrant population actually presents the greatest hope for Christian renewal in North America.*



## **A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY? (CONT.)**

A few pages further into the Bible, however, at the beginning of Exodus, we find a very different response to immigrants: one grounded in fear. A new Pharaoh came to power: he did not know Joseph or Jacob (Ex 1:8), but he saw in their many descendants a serious threat. The Israelites had “become far too numerous” and imperiled Egypt’s national security (Ex 1:9-10).

Pharaoh was not willing to deport the Israelites, though, because they played too important a role in the Egyptian economy; he wanted the Israelites’ labor, but did not appreciate them as people—and certainly did not consider, as his predecessor had, that they might present an opportunity. He decided to subject them to hard labor, and then went so far as to destroy families, decreeing that all male Hebrew infants should be killed (Ex 1:11, 16).

Moses was born into this genocidal context; under the law, he should have been killed. His parents did all that they could to subvert this unjust law, though, just as most parents would in a similar situation. In the end, of course, Pharaoh’s hardheartedness cost him and his country dearly, as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and Pharaoh’s army was drowned in the Red Sea.

We are presented with the same choice as the Egyptian leaders of a few millennia ago: to view immigrants as a threat or as an opportunity.

Immigration can present an economic opportunity for the United States—economists almost universally agree that immigration, and even illegal immigration in particular, is beneficial for the United States<sup>7</sup>—but, more importantly for the Church, immigration presents an incredible missional opportunity.

## **A GREAT COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY**

Jesus left his disciples with the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). With immigration, the nations have shown up in our own communities, bringing that mission right to our doorsteps.



*Jesus left his disciples with the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations.”*



Many immigrants come into our country having never heard the good news of a transformational relationship with Jesus Christ, a message that we have the privilege to share as we reach out to our new neighbors in welcome and love.

Other immigrants come into the United States with a vibrant Christian faith—and are able to share the hope of the gospel with others, both fellow immigrants and with the many U.S. citizens in need of the transformation possible through Jesus Christ. Those who study mission observe that this phenomenon—which is happening all over the world, not just in the United States—includes ministry occurring to immigrants, through immigrants, and then beyond the immigrant experience, as some migrants who find faith as an immigrant eventually return to their countries of origin and become extremely effective, culturally-competent missionaries.<sup>8</sup>

## ***A GREAT COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY (CONT.)***

This movement of peoples is not an accident. The book of Acts tells us that God “made every nation...that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17:26 NIV 1984). There is a sovereign purpose in this design: “God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him” (Acts 17:27). While there are economic, social and environmental reasons that people decide to migrate—we will read about these “push” factors in the coming sessions—above them all is God’s hand in the movement of people, so that people he loves will find him.

We have a role in that process, if we choose to accept the mission God has put right at our doorstep. If, like the Pharaoh of Moses’ time, we choose to view immigration as a threat and respond with fear, though, we will miss out on the opportunity and the blessing that God has for his Church in the arrival of immigrants. How will you view this situation: as a threat, or as a missional opportunity? If we have the eyes to see, “the harvest is plentiful” (Matt 9:37).

### **[ DISCUSS ]**

#### ***THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM***

1. What has your perspective, if any, been on the issue of immigration?  
What voices or ideas have most influenced your position?
2. Do you think it is possible to reconcile the ideas of welcoming immigrants and upholding the law?

#### ***A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?***

3. When you think about the arrival of immigrants to your community, is your first reaction to think of this as a threat, an opportunity or something of both?
4. What do you think of the comparison between the two Pharaohs—one who viewed immigrants as a threat, the other who viewed immigrants as an opportunity? Is it fair to apply this idea to our immigration situation today?

#### ***A GREAT COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY***

5. Can you think of examples either in Scripture or in church history of where God advanced his purpose through the movement of people?
6. Missiologists have found that immigrants are one of the most receptive groups of people to believing in the gospel. Why do you think that immigrants might be more open to the gospel than those who do not migrate?

## [ PRAY ]

- **Pray for this group as you learn together,**  
for openness to the voice of the Holy Spirit as you learn, pray and act together.
- **Pray that you would be able to view this issue of immigration**  
first and foremost from a Christian perspective, setting aside politics at least as the group begins.
- **Pray for immigrants in your community**  
and for opportunities to get to know them.
- **Pray that the gospel would go forth all over the world,**  
especially to, through and beyond immigrant communities.
- **Pray for a sense of shared mission with one another**  
as your group works through a series of complex issues over the next several sessions.
- **Pray this prayer together:**  
*O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*<sup>9</sup>

## [ EXPERIENCE ]

### **THE “I WAS A STRANGER” CHALLENGE**

Our challenge this session has been to think about the topic of immigration from a distinctly Christian perspective. If we want to know how, as followers of Christ, we should think about any topic, our first resource should be the Bible.

The Scriptures have a lot to say on the topic of immigration. Before you next meet with your group, we invite you to take the “I Was a Stranger” Challenge, committing to prayerfully read forty different Bible passages that relate in one way or another to the topic of immigration.

A list of forty passages are listed in Appendix 1, or you can print out a bookmark to stick into your Bible as you go through the passages at [EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com/iwasastranger](http://EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com/iwasastranger). If you prefer to read your Bible on your phone, the challenge is also available digitally as a Bible Reading Guide from YouVersion’s Bible app at <http://bit.ly/IWasAStrangerChallenge>.

## SESSION B: THINKING BIBLICALLY ABOUT IMMIGRATION

### [ WATCH ]

Jenny Yang previews some of the many biblical themes that might inform how Christians think about immigrants and immigration.



### [ READ ]

#### ***“YOU MUST ALSO LOVE IMMIGRANTS”: THE OLD TESTAMENT & IMMIGRATION***

Many American Christians do not think of immigration as a major theme in Scripture. It’s not a common subject of sermons, and polls suggest that just 12% of evangelical Christians say that they think of immigration primarily through the lens of the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

Actually, though, immigrants appear throughout the narrative of the Scriptures, and God gives specific and repeated commands to his people about how immigrants (also referred to as foreigners, strangers, sojourners or aliens, depending upon your English translation) are to be treated. In fact, the Hebrew word *ger*—which is one of several Hebrew words for a foreigner, but the one closest to our idea of an immigrant, one not just passing through but residing, at least temporarily, within a foreign nation—appears 92 times just in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup>

The frequency of Old Testament references to immigrants is due in part to the fact that many key characters in the biblical narrative themselves cross borders at one point or another. The patriarch Abraham migrates on multiple occasions: he leaves his homeland following a divine promise that God will make him into a great nation and through him bless many nations (Gen 12:1-5). Later, he travels into Egypt in search of food—and urges his wife to misrepresent their relationship to those at the border (Gen 12:10-13). Repeatedly in the biblical story—as is often the case today—hunger motivates migration, and those in desperate situations often face ethically complex decisions as they try to protect and provide for their families.<sup>12</sup>

## “YOU MUST ALSO LOVE IMMIGRANTS”: THE OLD TESTAMENT & IMMIGRATION (CONT.)

Ruth presents another immigrant story. When famine hits her native land of Moab, Ruth follows her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Israel (Ruth 1:6). Ruth goes to the fields and distinguishes herself by her hard work (Ruth 2:7). Eventually, she finds favor in the eyes of the field owner, Boaz, “even though she is a Moabite, to whom the law was less than favorable.”<sup>13</sup> In God’s divine plan, this immigrant woman of suspect origins goes on to become the grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.

In addition to the many stories of immigrants within the Old Testament, God also has very specific instructions to his people about how to treat immigrants. In fact, he commands the Israelites not to mistreat or oppress an immigrant precisely because they should “know what it’s like to be an immigrant, because [they] were immigrants in the land of Egypt” (Ex 23:9 CEB).

God commands his people to treat immigrants very differently than the way they saw modeled by the Egyptians, who abused and enslaved the Israelites living in their midst. He tells the Israelites that the immigrant living amongst them “must be treated as one of your native-born” (Lev 19:34). As he lays out the law for his people, God repeatedly states that “the same law applies both to the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you” (Ex 12:49). While we think of “equal justice under the law” as an American ideal, God established the principle for his people millennia before the founding of the United States. He commands the Israelites to love their neighbors as themselves and then—as if anticipating the question of whether this means loving even immigrants—specifically mandates that they do so: “Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself” (Lev 19:18, 34 CEB).

Foundationally, God commands the Israelites to love their immigrant neighbors in order to emulate his character and concern.

*The Lord your God is the God of all gods and Lord of all lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who doesn’t play favorites and doesn’t take bribes. He enacts justice for orphans and widows, and he loves immigrants, giving them food and clothing. That means you must also love immigrants (Deut 10:17-19 CEB).*

God’s love for the immigrant is consistent with his concern for those who are vulnerable: repeatedly, immigrants are referenced together with three other groups as what Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has called the “quartet of the vulnerable”: the resident alien, the orphan, the widow, and the impoverished.<sup>14</sup>

“Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor,” God tells his people through the prophet Zechariah (Zech 7:10). “The Lord,” writes the psalmist, “watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow” (Ps 146:9). The prophet Ezekiel condemns Israel’s rulers



*While we think of “equal justice under the law” as an American ideal, God established the principle for his people millennia before the founding of the United States.*



## ***“YOU MUST ALSO LOVE IMMIGRANTS”: THE OLD TESTAMENT & IMMIGRATION (CONT.)***

because “they oppress immigrants and deny the rights of orphans and widows” (Ezek 22:7 CEB), and Malachi lumps those “who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice” with adulterers and sorcerers, saying each will face God’s judgment (Mal 3:5).

God tells his people through the prophet Jeremiah that they will be allowed to live in the land he has promised them only “if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow” (Jer 7:6).

God’s command to care for immigrants and others who are vulnerable goes beyond generic guidance: he also legislates specific rules for his people to ensure that they provide for the needs of the vulnerable. He tells them to go over their wheat, grape, and olive harvests just one time, then to leave what was left over “to the immigrants, the orphans, and the widows” (Deut 24:21 CEB). In many of our churches today, we are appropriately encouraged to set aside a tithe of our income to help compensate pastors and other church staff for their service, but God mandated the Israelites that the tithe of their first fruits be given not only “to the Levites” (the religious officials) but also to “the immigrants, the orphans, and the widows so they can eat in your cities until they are full” (Deut 26:12 CEB).

“Caring for immigrants is a central theme in Scripture...God does not suggest that we welcome immigrants; he commands it—not once or twice, but over and over again.”<sup>15</sup>

## ***“I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN”: THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IMMIGRATION***

A repeated theme in the New Testament is the command to “practice hospitality” (Rom 12:13). While many of us may think of hospitality as making a nice meal for our friends or having a comfortable guest room available for traveling relatives, the biblical concept of hospitality goes far beyond that. The Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*: literally, “the love of strangers.”<sup>16</sup> It’s the exact opposite of xenophobia, the fear of strangers.

*Christ’s call is to love those who are different and unknown to us, even when that radically challenges our cultural norms.*

It’s not particularly difficult to love our friends—even the tax collectors and pagans of Jesus’ time did that (Matt 5:46-47)—but Christ’s call is to love those who are different and unknown to us, even when that radically challenges our cultural norms. In showing kindness and love to immigrants and others who may be strangers to us, we are presented with the possibility that we might unexpectedly find a blessing. Scripture suggests that, by extending hospitality to a stranger, we may be entertaining angels, unaware (Heb 13:2).

Jesus takes the idea even further: he tells his disciples that by welcoming in a stranger who is “one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine,” they have welcomed him, and will thus be welcomed by Jesus himself into his kingdom (and, conversely, by failing to welcome a stranger, they have snubbed him and will face judgment) (Matt 25:31-46). These strangers we are called to welcome, says pastor and author Tim Keller, “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 advocacy, friendship, and the basics for pursuing a new life in society.”<sup>17</sup>

***“LET EVERYONE BE SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES,”  
OR “WHAT PART OF ILLEGAL DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND?”***

The commands to welcome, advocate for, and love immigrants are unequivocal and numerous throughout the Bible. What the Scriptures never specifically address, though, is how to interact with immigrants who have violated the law. How, many Christians wonder, can we reconcile these commands toward hospitality with the equally-valid mandate to obey the government, and how should we respond to the minority of U.S. immigrants whose physical presence is unlawful?

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority,” the Apostle Peter writes to the early Christians, “whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right” (1 Pet 2:13-14). The Apostle Paul sets a similar standard in his letter to the church at Rome: “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” and “do not bear the sword for no reason” (Rom 13:1, 4).

For many Christians, as biblical scholar Daniel Carroll observes, these passages are where a Christian discussion of how to respond to illegal immigration starts—and then stops.<sup>18</sup> Undocumented immigrants have, by definition, violated the law and thus, some would say, should be deported and shown no mercy. But, while Romans 13 and other passages commanding us to submit to the governmental authorities have important ramifications for thinking biblically about immigration, they cannot be viewed separately from the rest of Scripture.

In general, Romans 13 need not particularly concern the U.S. citizen, at least in terms of how they interact with their immigrant neighbors, because none of the activities that a citizen might take part in with his or her undocumented neighbors—sharing a meal, helping them to learn English, teaching a Bible study, helping kids with homework, providing legal advice (with the proper governmental accreditation)—are unlawful (the most notable exception, where a U.S. citizen can violate immigration law, would be by employing someone who is not authorized to work). There is no law mandating that citizens report those present unlawfully. We can—and, as Christians called to love our neighbors, should—minister freely and still be fully in submission to the governmental authorities. As Rick Warren says, “The church must always show compassion, always...A good Samaritan doesn’t stop and ask the injured person. ‘Are you legal or illegal?’”<sup>19</sup>

“

*A good Samaritan  
doesn’t stop and  
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legal or illegal?’*

”

It is also important to hold out the caveat that there are times when civil disobedience may be appropriate: Peter and the other early apostles refused to obey the authorities when they demanded that they cease to preach the gospel, declaring that “we must obey God rather than human beings” (Acts 5:29). Almost anyone would agree that there are certain situations, such as when a government makes it unlawful to read the Bible or share one’s faith with others, when civil disobedience is permissible and perhaps even required of the Christian. Given proposals (though, as of this writing, not passed into federal law) that could be interpreted to make certain elements of ministry to undocumented immigrants unlawful, we should carefully consider the religious liberty implications of changes to immigration law.

**“LET EVERYONE BE SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES,”  
OR “WHAT PART OF ILLEGAL DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND?” (CONT.)**

The undocumented believer reads Romans 13 from a different perspective than the citizen. They are here unlawfully and many undocumented Christians are anguished by this reality. They desperately want to be right with the civil authorities, but they also want to provide for their family, something that many struggled to do and ultimately determined was impossible for them in the impoverished regions of the world from which they emigrated. In fact, providing for one’s family is a strongly-worded divine command: “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim 5:8). Many feel torn between this command and the mandate in Romans 13 to submit to the governmental authorities.

Christians may disagree which is the right decision—to stay and provide for one’s family or leave in order to fully comply with U.S. law—but we all should be able to agree that a system that puts individuals in this dilemma is flawed, and that a better, more just system is needed.

Finally, legislators who are Christians should allow this passage to guide their thinking as well. Their God-given role is to serve God for the good of the governed—for citizens and immigrants alike (Rom 13:4). Many evangelical leaders have come to the conclusions that our current immigration laws are not entirely good: to some extent, they cause harm to our economy, our national security, the social cohesion of our country and immigrants themselves.

*part of submitting to the governmental authorities in a democratic context is actively engaging in democracy, advocating with our legislators to reform our immigration laws in ways that make sense for our economy and security...*

Moreover, the current situation makes a mockery of the rule of law, which is held up for us in Romans 13, because the laws are so out-of-sync with the labor needs of our free market economy that, rather than deal with the economic maladies that would result from enforcing an illogical law, the government only sporadically penalizes either the employers or the immigrants who violate the law—and the law itself begins to lose its meaning. In a democracy like the United States, this reflects poorly on all of us: part of submitting to the governmental authorities in a democratic context is actively engaging in democracy, advocating with our legislators to reform our immigration laws in ways that make sense for our economy and security, putting into place a system that, as pastor and theologian John Piper says, “gives honor to the law and...gives mercy to the immigrants.”<sup>20</sup>

***LAST SESSION'S EXPERIENCE: THE "I WAS A STRANGER" CHALLENGE***

1. What common themes did you find as you searched through the many references in the Bible to immigrants and immigration? Did anything surprise you?

***"YOU MUST ALSO LOVE IMMIGRANTS":  
THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IMMIGRATION***

2. What other individuals in Scripture can you think of who lived as immigrants in a foreign country at one point or another?
3. How do you think that God's commands to the Israelites with respect to immigrants should inform how we, as American Christians, interact with immigrants (if at all)?

***"I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN":  
THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IMMIGRATION***

4. How have you understood the idea of hospitality? How does the biblical idea of welcoming strangers—not just friends—challenge our cultural norms?
5. Tim Keller suggests that hospitality toward immigrants should go beyond a referral to temporary assistance, arguing that immigrants should be "welcomed into the disciples' homes and lives." What would this look like for you and your family? What about for your church?

***"LET EVERYONE BE SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES,  
" OR " WHAT PART OF ILLEGAL DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?"***

6. Do you think that the command to welcome immigrants and the command to be subject to the governing authorities can be reconciled together? How can we best extend compassion to immigrants while seeking to honor the law?
7. Suppose that federal or state laws were changed in such a way that would make your ministry to undocumented immigrants illegal. How would you respond?



## [ PRAY ]

- **Pray that, as your group thinks about this issue, your thinking would always be informed** and governed by the truth revealed to us in Scripture and that we would be able to hear what the Bible says even when it challenges our personal or cultural presumptions.
- **Pray for the vulnerable in your community**, particularly for immigrants, orphans, widows and the poor, that God would provide for them and that local churches would prioritize ministry to the most vulnerable both locally and globally.
- **Pray for elected officials**—including the President, your state’s two Senators, and the Member of the House of Representatives who represents your region—that they would, as Romans 13 says, serve God for the good of the governed.
- **Pray for wisdom** to know how to apply the Bible’s teaching about hospitality in your context.

## [ EXPERIENCE ]

### *IMMIGRATING THE LEGAL WAY*

“Those people should just immigrate the legal way,” is a common, and understandable, sentiment. In reality, though, many Americans have never had any reason to really understand how U.S. immigration law works today, and those whose ancestors immigrated more than a century ago might mistakenly think that the law functions much the same as it did when their family first came to the U.S.

To help understand the current system, we’re going to invite you to play a short game. If you go to [www.welcomingthestranger.com/resources](http://www.welcomingthestranger.com/resources), you’ll be assigned a scenario: the story of someone, somewhere in the world, who for one reason or another would like to emigrate to the United States. With the details provided, you’ll respond to a series of questions to determine your eligibility to migrate under the terms of current U.S. immigration law. The various scenarios—some of which may allow you to eventually reach the U.S. lawfully, others of which may not—are based on real-life situations.

You can discuss the experience with your group when you meet next.

## SESSION C:

# THE MOST VULNERABLE: UNDERSTANDING REFUGEES, UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS, AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### [ WATCH ]

Matthew Soerens explores the facts regarding some of the most vulnerable—and controversial—categories of immigrants.



### [ READ ]

For Christians, our views on immigration issues should be informed, first and foremost, by biblical principles. But it's also important that we're applying the Scriptures to an accurate understanding of the current realities. In an era of "alternative facts" and "fake news," it can be difficult to sort through the competing information we hear or read online or in the media—particularly with an issue as controversial as immigration. As people driven by a belief in objective truth, though, we have the responsibility to verify each claim and avoid—even unintentionally—spreading falsehoods.

While most immigrants in the United States are either naturalized U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents, those with a "green card", the minority of immigrants who fit into a few other categories tend to be the most controversial and prone to misunderstanding: recently arrived refugees, unlawfully present immigrants ("undocumented") and those who are victims of human trafficking. For a variety of reasons, these three groups of immigrants also tend to be the most vulnerable. In this session, we will explore the facts about each group.

### **REFUGEES**

In the past few years, there has probably been no more controversial category of immigrants than refugees, a subgroup of immigrants distinguished by having had a credible fear of persecution that led them to leave their home country.

## REFUGEES (CONT.)

Americans are nearly-evenly split on the question of whether the U.S. has a moral obligation to welcome refugees.<sup>21</sup> As President Trump came into office in 2017, his administration very quickly took actions that dramatically reduced the number of refugees who could come to the U.S., citing concerns over inadequate vetting. Whereas in 2016 nearly 100,000 refugees were admitted to the U.S. In 2018 less than 22,000 are expected to arrive, the fewest since the U.S. Refugee Program was formalized in 1980—when more than 200,000 refugees arrived.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the concerns about refugees, though, are based on misinformation. First of all, refugees who come to the U.S. are thoroughly vetted. In fact, though all who lawfully enter the U.S. undergo some level of screening, the vetting process for those admitted as refugees is the most thorough process which any category of immigrant or visitor is required to undergo. It's a process that usually takes between eighteen months to three years to complete, involving in-person interviews with trained officers of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security abroad and biographic and biometric background checks that are coordinated between the FBI, the Department of Defense, the National Counterterrorism Center and the State Department. The process has a strong record; of the roughly 3 million refugees who have entered through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program since 1980, not a single one has taken an American life in a terrorist attack.<sup>23</sup>

Another misconception is that the U.S. takes a large percentage of the world's refugees. In reality, there are about 22.5 million people globally who meet the international legal definition of a refugee—a person who has been forced to flee their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, political opinion, nationality or social group.<sup>24</sup> In 2018, the U.S. will admit only about one-tenth of one percent of those individuals, but never in recent years has the share of refugees selected annually for resettlement been more than one-half of one percent. By comparison, in Lebanon, roughly one in four residents today is a Syrian refugee.<sup>25</sup>

The relatively small number of refugees who do arrive in the U.S. are usually referred by the United Nations' refugee agency, which identifies the most vulnerable refugees, including those who likely would not survive the difficult conditions in the first country to which they fled. Many of those chosen for resettlement are selected years or literally decades after they initially fled—usually having spent that time unable to work lawfully either in a refugee camp or in an urban context—after it becomes clear returning home may never again be a safe option.

When refugees do arrive, they are assigned to one of a small number of national refugee resettlement organizations. Each organization works through local offices or affiliates that prepare housing for the newly arrived refugee, meets them at the airport, provides cultural orientation, connects refugees to opportunities to study and practice English and helps adults find employment and children enroll in school. Most rely heavily on volunteers. At World Relief, which is one of those national refugee resettlement organizations, we are particularly passionate about equipping teams from local churches to walk alongside newly arrived refugees as they adjust.



*Americans are nearly-evenly split on the question of whether the U.S. has a moral obligation to welcome refugees.*



## REFUGEES (CONT.)

Refugees afforded the rare opportunity to be resettled to the U.S. tend to be extremely grateful. But that doesn't mean their lives are easy once they've reached their new homes. Adjusting to a new language, culture and pace of life can be very difficult. While most do very well economically in the long term—twenty years after arrival, the average refugee adult has actually paid in about \$21,000 more in taxes than the combined cost of the resettlement assistance and any public benefits they've received<sup>26</sup>—most jobs available when they arrive are fairly low-wage, and it can be difficult to make ends meet. Furthermore, many carry effects of trauma from the persecution that forced their refugee status in the first place.

## UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

Whereas refugees who are identified and selected for resettlement have legal status from the day they arrive in the U.S., another controversial and vulnerable category of immigrant are those considered to be “undocumented.” An estimated 11 million individuals are present in the U.S. without valid legal status.<sup>27</sup>

While the primary media focus on illegal immigration has been on Mexican immigrants crossing the border illegally to reach the U.S., Mexican nationals no longer make up the majority of new unauthorized immigrants; over the past several years, about half have come from other countries, primarily in Central America and Asia.<sup>28</sup> Most new undocumented immigrants to reach the U.S. in recent years have not crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, but rather entered on a valid temporary visa—whether at an airport or a land border—and overstayed. For this reason improved border security can address, at most, half of the problem of illegal immigration.<sup>29</sup>

Whatever their mode of entry, most immigrants who end up being unlawfully present in the U.S. are motivated either by economic desperation, fear of violence in their country of origin, the desire to reunite with family or some combination of these factors. Most would have preferred to have entered the country as lawful immigrants, but—as we will explore in detail in the next session—they did not qualify for an immigrant visa, which are tightly restricted to particular categories. And, once they are here unlawfully, there is usually no option under existing law for them to become legal, either.

*About 30 percent of all undocumented immigrants are homeowners.*

Most undocumented immigrants are also not new arrivals. As levels of illegal immigration have slowed significantly in the past decade—impacted by the downturn in the U.S. economy that began in 2007, economic growth in Mexico and significant increases in spending on border security at the U.S.-Mexico border—the share of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who have been living in the country for at least ten years has risen to 66%.<sup>30</sup> Having lived in the country for so long, many undocumented immigrants have put down roots. About 30 percent of all undocumented immigrants are homeowners.<sup>31</sup> Most speak English “well,” “very well,” or exclusively (though a significant minority still are seeking to learn the language).<sup>32</sup> Many have become parents in the U.S.: as of 2014, about 4.7 million U.S.-born children under age 18 lived in families with at least one undocumented parent.<sup>33</sup>

## **UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (CONT.)**

Undocumented immigrants are, by definition, deportable under U.S. law. That does not necessarily mean they will be deported, as Congress has never appropriated nearly enough funding as would be necessary to round up and deport all immigrants present unlawfully in the country—an estimated \$100 to \$300 billion according to the conservative American Action Forum. This figure does not include the much greater cost to the U.S. economy of losing these individuals as workers, taxpayers, and consumers.<sup>34</sup> However, at least 330,000 individuals were formally “removed” from the U.S. under each year of the Obama Administration,<sup>35</sup> a trend that seems likely to continue under the Trump Administration—enough that many unauthorized immigrants live with the fear of deportation, especially when that would mean being separated from family members who are U.S. citizens.

Beyond the risk of deportation, undocumented immigrants are often uniquely vulnerable, precisely because they tend to fear interacting with the government. If they are the victim of a crime, for example, many are wary to call the police because they fear they might be asked about their immigration legal status—which then can make them a target for criminals.<sup>36</sup> If an employer requires an undocumented employee to work “off the clock” without being paid, an experience reported by more than three-quarters of low-wage undocumented workers in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City who participated in a 2009 study—they are often afraid to report the abuse to legal authorities.<sup>37</sup>

Many Americans are under the impression that undocumented immigrants receive public benefits while not paying taxes. For the most part, the reverse is true. Just like anyone else in most states, immigrants present and working unlawfully pay sales and excise taxes—accounting, across all states, for about \$7 billion per year.<sup>38</sup> They also pay local and state property taxes—accounting cumulatively for about \$3.5 billion annually—whether they own their homes or pay rent to a landlord who pays taxes.<sup>39</sup> Many—about half, according to the Social Security Administration—also have federal payroll taxes for Social Security, Medicare and federal income taxes deducted from their paychecks.<sup>40</sup> Those Social Security taxes alone have accounted for \$12 billion annually that these workers will never qualify to benefit from, since they’re usually being contributed by workers using an invented (i.e. false) Social Security number, effectively subsidizing the system for retired U.S. citizens.<sup>41</sup>

The Internal Revenue Service also allows and expects unauthorized immigrants to file and pay their federal income taxes each year, explicitly assuring them that they will not share information with the Department of Homeland Security, an entirely separate part of the federal government responsible for immigration enforcement.<sup>42</sup>

Undocumented immigrants do receive some benefits for their tax contributions, particularly access to primary and secondary education, the safety assured by our national military and by local law enforcement and fire safety agencies and treatment at hospitals in an emergency. But in most states they do not qualify for means-tested public benefits such as food stamps, welfare (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) or Medicaid health insurance for low-income individuals and families. Nor do they qualify, even if they have contributed throughout a full career, for federal entitlement programs for retirees such as Social Security or Medicare.

## **UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (CONT.)**

More than anything, most undocumented immigrants want to step out of the shadows and become fully integrated Americans, but despite various policy proposals that would have allowed them to do so by paying certain penalties, as of this writing, no such option exists for the vast majority of these 11 million people.

## **VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

A final—and often overlapping—category of vulnerable immigrants are those who are victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a newer term for the long standing, sinful practice of slavery; when someone is made to work, whether in the commercial sex industry or in a labor setting, by force, fraud or coercion.

Trafficking does not necessarily refer to the transportation of people, which is why not all victims of human trafficking in the U.S. were moved across a border against their will; many are actually native-born U.S. citizens. But immigrants are disproportionately represented among victims of both sex trafficking and, particularly, labor trafficking in the U.S. In fact, based on Department of Justice prosecution data analyzed by the Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST), 95% of labor trafficking victims have been immigrants, most of them undocumented.<sup>43</sup> When immigrants are wary of law enforcement for fear of deportation, they become afraid to report the abuse they are experiencing to police, becoming uniquely vulnerable to traffickers.

While “trafficking” and “smuggling” are not synonymous, a smuggler who offers to bring an immigrant unlawfully into the U.S. can become a trafficker. Once having guided the desperate individual across the border—often after having made false promises about what the journey would be like and what life would be like upon arrival—a smuggler might force an individual to work for them until they can pay the smuggler’s fees. Often charging exorbitant interest rates on the debt, a smuggler also requires the victim to pay overpriced rates for food and lodging. They end each week more indebted than they started, creating a cycle from which they are forbidden to leave.

## **THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH**

Immigrants, whether refugees, undocumented, victims of trafficking or any other category, are not perfect. Though just like the rest of humanity, marked by sin, they are made in the image of God with inherent dignity and deserving of love. As was the case in the Old Testament, immigrants today are often very vulnerable, due to either the circumstances causing them to flee their homes in the first place or because of their precarious situation in the U.S.

We’ve not yet gotten to the point of analyzing the policy questions of whether these immigrants should be allowed to enter the U.S. or to stay in the U.S., though questions of governmental policy are important because they impact people. But, ultimately, the most important question for Christians is not what the government’s appropriate role is. Rather its whether we are being faithful to our distinct role, as the Church: to love our neighbors, to stand with the vulnerable and to make disciples of all nations.

***LAST SESSION'S EXPERIENCE: IMMIGRATING THE LEGAL WAY***

1. What scenario were you assigned in the game? Were you ultimately able to make it to the U.S. or not? What surprised you about the experience?

***REFUGEES***

2. Were you familiar with how the U.S. refugee resettlement program works before reading this brief summary? What was new information to you?
3. What is your view: does the U.S. have a moral responsibility to take in some of the world's refugees, or not? Why or why not?

***UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS***

4. When you hear the term “undocumented” or “illegal immigrant,” what comes to mind? Did what you read here confirm or challenge your thinking?
5. What do you think the role of the church should be in interacting with our neighbors who are in the country unlawfully?

***VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING***

6. Were you aware of the connection between immigration issues and human trafficking? How might the church be a part of seeking freedom for those in the bondage of trafficking?

***THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH***

7. Assess how you think the local churches in your community are responding to these vulnerable categories of immigrants. How could you be a part of a stronger, thorough and more biblical response?



## [ PRAY ]

- **Pray for undocumented immigrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking in your community**—including any known to you personally—as they face unique challenges and fears.
- **Pray for immigrants who have been separated from their families**, that they might soon be reunited in a safe manner, and for those who do not know Jesus, that he would draw them to himself.
- **Pray for safety and protection** for those around the world facing persecution for any reason.
- **Pray for refugees who have recently resettled to the United States**, that they would acclimate well and find friendly Americans willing to help them in the process of learning English and restarting their lives.
- **Pray for victims of human trafficking** in your local community and throughout the world, for their liberation from captivity and that even in the midst of horrific situations they would know God's love for them.
- **Pray for courage, diligence and protection for law enforcement officers** tasked with disrupting situations of human trafficking and prosecuting traffickers.
- **Pray for the perpetrators of human trafficking**, asking God to change their hearts and draw even these individuals guilty of horrific offenses to repentance, grace and redemption.
- **Pray for churches and individual Christians** to be welcoming and hospitable to the immigrants relocating to their communities, for them to be willing to provide assistance, offer friendship and, ultimately, be enriched by mutually-beneficial relationships with these newcomers.



*“MY FATHER WAS A WANDERING ARAMEAN...”*

Immigration is not a new phenomenon for the U.S. In fact, unless your ancestry is completely Native American, you have a migration story in your own family, whether that was last week, last century, or 500 years ago and whether fully voluntary or forced.

We read last session how God commanded the Israelites to remember their history as an immigrant people. In fact, they were commanded to rehearse their ancestral immigration narrative as part of their religious ceremony, reciting aloud their story: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous...” (Deut 26:5). If they would consistently remember God’s grace in bringing them from where they were—a place of desperation as slaves in Egypt—to the Promised Land, the Israelites might avoid the mistaken boast that they had delivered themselves.

Though each of our stories is different, we too need to remember God’s faithfulness in bringing us and our ancestors from where they were—often places of desperation—to where we are now. For the next session, do a bit of research into your own immigrant story. Who was the first of your ancestors to arrive in the U.S.? When did they arrive? Where did they come from and why? What was their experience like when they first arrived?

If you’re not sure, try asking a parent, grandparent or other older relative who might have a better grasp on your family’s heritage, or consult with genealogical resources at your local public library or online. Plan to come back next session ready to briefly share with others what you’ve learned. To make this more fun, why not also bring along some food next time from your ancestral homeland?



## SESSION D: UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION POLICY, PAST & PRESENT

### [ WATCH ]

Jenny Yang discusses why public policy matters as we seek to love our neighbors.



### [ READ ]

#### *THE HISTORY OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY*<sup>44</sup>

The United States of America is known for being a nation of immigrants, a country in which all but those relative few of entirely Native American ancestry can trace their heritage to another country—whether those ancestors came on the Mayflower or a slave ship, through Ellis Island, JFK Airport, Angel Island off the coast of San Francisco or the U.S.-Mexico border. Immigration is a central theme in the national lore, and many Americans are proud of their own immigrant history. Indeed, as historian Nancy Foner describes, the common American sentiment toward one’s own ancestors’ immigrant experiences has been embellished and glorified by its depiction in literature, film and other popular culture: our ancestors, many Americans would say “worked hard; they strove to become assimilated; they pulled themselves up by their own Herculean efforts;...they had strong family values and colorful roots. They were, in short, what made America great.”<sup>45</sup>

Those romanticized ideas of the nation’s immigrant past, however, do not necessarily translate into warm feelings toward contemporary immigrants. Historian Roger Daniels suggests that American attitudes toward immigration—and immigrants themselves—are marked by dualism, “on the one hand reveling in the nation’s immigrant past and on the other rejecting much of its immigrant present.”<sup>46</sup>

## THE HISTORY OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY<sup>44</sup> (CONT.)

In reality, even from the pre-colonial era, immigrants to the United States have been concurrently welcomed by some and scapegoated by others. Benjamin Franklin expressed concerns about immigrant acculturation to the British colony of Pennsylvania decades before the United States even came into independent existence:

*Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion?*<sup>47</sup>

Despite the concerns of individuals such as Franklin, federal policy remained entirely open to new immigration to the U.S. throughout the first century of the nation's existence.

President Chester A. Arthur signed the first significant federal restriction on immigration—the Chinese Exclusion Act—into law in 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Act, which forbade further legal migration of most Chinese nationals to the United States until it was repealed in 1943, was the culmination of growing anti-Chinese sentiment, particularly in the western United States. Many U.S. citizens believed that the Chinese, who had been recruited to the U.S. by promises of economic opportunity when the region needed laborers, were unable to assimilate and (to quote a racialized finding of a U.S. congressional commission) lacked “sufficient brain capacity...to furnish motive power for self-government.”<sup>48</sup>

Concurrent with growing nativist concerns about Chinese immigrants on the West Coast, public opinion on the East Coast was souring toward the immigrants—mostly Italians, Poles, and Russian Jews—who were entering through New York in unprecedented numbers. Between 1881 and 1920, more than 23 million immigrants entered the U.S., such that the foreign-born percentage of the total U.S. population reached 15 percent, higher than at any other time before or since.<sup>49</sup>

This new wave of European immigration sparked a backlash that eventually inspired more restrictive federal immigration policies. The Immigration Restriction League, founded in 1894, effectively advanced the pseudoscientific theory that these recent immigrants—mostly not from the Protestant, western European countries from which most earlier immigrants had come—were “biologically inferior to, and thus less capable of assimilation than, the races that had populated America in the previous centuries.”<sup>50</sup> Influenced by this rhetoric, a congressional commission published a report in 1911 that found that “certain kinds of criminality are inherent in the Italian race”<sup>51</sup> and that “the high rate of illiteracy among new immigrants was due to inherent racial tendencies.”<sup>52</sup>

Eventually, after a series of incremental restrictions, Congress passed a far-reaching federal immigration policy in 1924 that created a new requirement for a visa for those who wanted to come to the U.S. from across the ocean. Quotas for these visas were based upon the national origin of the

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*In reality, even from the pre-colonial era, immigrants to the United States have been concurrently welcomed by some and scapegoated by others.*

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## **THE HISTORY OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY<sup>44</sup> (CONT.)**

would-be migrant, with preference for Northern European countries such as England, France, and Germany that nativists considered to be capable of assimilation.<sup>53</sup> In effect, it became practically impossible to immigrate to the United States for anyone in the Eastern Hemisphere except for Northern Europeans.

Despite some opposition, this policy continued essentially unchanged until 1965. In the early 1960s, in the context of the Civil Rights Movement that challenged many Americans' ideas about race and nationality, President John F. Kennedy proposed a new federal immigration system that replaced a nationality-based preference system with a system that allowed immigration based primarily on one's family connections and employable skills.<sup>54</sup> While immigration would still be tightly limited, the bill, eventually signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 after Kennedy's assassination, opened immigration to individuals from Asia and Africa. To this day, the 1965 reforms make up the backbone of our current immigration legal system.

## **IMMIGRATING THE LEGAL WAY TODAY**

A lot of Americans have particularly strong opinions about illegal immigration, believing that immigrants ought to come “the legal way” to the United States. That seems like a reasonable expectation—and it means that we need to understand how the American immigration legal system functions.

Under current law, there are four basic ways that a person might become a Lawful Permanent Resident (a “green card”-holder), which is the prerequisite to becoming an American citizen. The two largest categories—family-based immigration and employment-based immigration—have been the center of our immigration legal system since 1965. The other two categories—refugee status and the Diversity Lottery—were codified into law subsequently. Almost all immigrants who are currently Lawful Permanent Residents or naturalized U.S. citizens got their status through one of these four processes (the largest exception would be the formerly-undocumented who were allowed to legalize their status under legislation signed by President Reagan in 1986).

### **- FAMILY -**

Family reunification is one of the primary goals of the U.S. immigration legal system and the most common avenue for legal immigration in recent years. This system works fairly well if you're what's considered an “immediate relative” of a U.S. citizen—a spouse, parent (of a child at least 21 years of age), or a child (under the age of 21). Citizens can petition and, in most cases, expect these relatives to be able to emigrate within six months to two years—as quickly as the paperwork is processed.

The family-based system can take much longer for other family relationships, though. If a Lawful Permanent Resident applies for his or her spouse or minor children, for example, it will likely take at least two years before that relative might be eligible to begin processing their visa, which can take additional time. Since it is very difficult in many countries to obtain a tourist visa, the Lawful

## - FAMILY - (CONT.)

Permanent Resident's spouse and kids are also unlikely to be able to visit during that wait time, meaning a long separation for the family in many cases. The worst backlogs are for siblings of U.S. citizens residing in the Philippines and adult children of U.S. citizens from Mexico: the wait times for these cases are currently more than two decades.<sup>55</sup> Those backlogs are simply a function of the fact that Congress placed tight annual caps on how many immigrants can enter in each family-based category, and the demand (the number of immigrants) is much higher than the supply that Congress allotted decades ago.

## - EMPLOYMENT -

The second major category of immigration is employer-sponsored immigration. If a company in the U.S. cannot find adequate workers, they can petition for an immigrant worker to enter the U.S. to fill a job. At least 140,000 immigrant visas are available under the law each year for employer-sponsored immigrants. The vast majority of these visas are specifically designated by law for “highly-skilled” immigrants with advanced degrees or exceptional professional abilities.

Corporations which rely on highly-educated immigrant workers—such as Microsoft, Google, Apple and Intel—argue that the number of these visas available is insufficient. There is an even more extreme shortage among immigrant workers who are not “highly-skilled.” Employer-sponsored visas for immigrants who do not qualify as “highly-skilled” are currently capped at a mere 5,000 per year.<sup>56</sup>

The effect is that just 5,000 employer-sponsored workers per year can enter lawfully as immigrants to work in jobs that do not require a high degree of education and training. Businesses in vital sectors of our economy like agriculture, hospitality, construction and manufacturing rely heavily on such laborers, and many of these companies believe that 5,000 other-than-highly-skilled employer-sponsored immigrant visas per year is woefully inadequate. To put that figure into context, a century ago, 5,000 immigrants (very few of whom would be considered “highly-skilled” under today’s classifications) could be processed through Ellis Island in a single day.<sup>57</sup>

Because lawful migration is so limited for this vital category of workers—and because those who come unlawfully readily find work in these sectors that do not require a high degree of education or training—unlawful migration has become widespread.

*...just 5,000 employer-sponsored workers per year can enter lawfully as immigrants to work in jobs that do not require a high degree of education and training.*

## - REFUGEES -

An additional number of immigrants enter the United States as refugees: unlike family- and employer-sponsored immigrant visa quotas that are codified in law, the annual refugee “ceiling” is set by the president on an annual basis. That maximum number of refugees was set as high as 231,700 in 1980,

## - REFUGEES - (CONT.)

ranged between 70,000 and 110,000 through the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and was set by Donald Trump at 45,000 for his first full year in office, the lowest level on record.<sup>58</sup>

Under U.S. and international law, refugees are individuals who have fled their country of origin with a credible fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, national origin, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Whereas refugees are identified abroad and resettled to the U.S., asylum-seekers are individuals who arrive in the U.S. without permanent legal status—entering with a temporary visa, entering unlawfully, or requesting asylum at a formal port of entry—and then claim that they fear persecution for the same reasons as a refugee.

Asylum claims can be very difficult to win, but if asylum status is granted, asylees are eligible for Lawful Permanent Resident status one year after their asylum approval. If their cases are denied, though, asylum-seekers are generally deported back to their country of origin: some, for whom deportation could literally mean death, choose to live unlawfully rather than risk applying for asylum and being denied.

It is also important to note the legal distinction between refugees—whose fear of persecution must be for one of the reasons designated by international law—and immigrants fleeing poverty, a natural disaster, or violence directed at them for reasons other than their race, religion, national origin, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

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*...some, for whom deportation could literally mean death, choose to live unlawfully rather than risk applying for asylum and being denied.*

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## - DIVERSITY LOTTERY -

Finally, up to 50,000 individuals each year are admitted to the U.S. as Lawful Permanent Residents after winning the Diversity Visa Lottery, a free online lottery operated by the U.S. Department of State. To be eligible to enter, an individual must have at least a high school education or two years of professional experience, qualifications that exclude many who were not afforded the opportunity to study.

The intention of the Diversity Lottery is to diversify the immigrants who come to the United States. Those from the countries from which the most immigrants have already come in the past five years are excluded from the lottery—in recent years, that has meant Mexico, the Philippines, India, China, Canada, the United Kingdom, Guatemala, Pakistan, Poland, El Salvador and a few others.

## - ADMISSIBILITY -

Even if a would-be emigrant qualifies through one of these categories, they must still convince the U.S. government that they are not “inadmissible.” For example, individuals with certain contagious diseases, those who have committed particular crimes, those who have been unlawfully present in the United States in the past and those who have falsely claimed to be a U.S. citizen all might be found inadmissible, even if they meet other eligibility requirements.

The reality is that, under our current immigration system, we can tell folks to “wait their turn and immigrate the legal way,” but for a great many would-be immigrants there is no legal way to come. If they do not have the right family relationship, are not highly-skilled, are not fleeing persecution (though they may be fleeing poverty) and are from an “over-represented” country, there is usually no line to get into. It does not matter if they wait five years, fifteen years, or fifty years: under the current law, they will probably never be eligible to immigrate to the U.S.

While the U.S. will never be able to take in all of those who might like to migrate, we could take in at least enough to satisfy the needs of our economy, rather than maintaining arbitrary quotas on lawful migration and thus relying on unlawful migration to sustain our economic growth.

## **IMMIGRATION REFORM**

Toward that end, in recent years, many Christian leaders have become increasingly outspoken in calling for changes to U.S. immigration policy. Thousands of denominational leaders, parachurch ministry executives, Christian college, university and seminary presidents and local pastors have signed onto an Evangelical Statement of Principles for Immigration Reform, highlighting particular biblical principles that should guide Congress as they consider changes to U.S. immigration law.<sup>59</sup>

The basic framework for a comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law that many leaders have embraced includes three basic elements:

1. Making it harder to immigrate illegally, by investing in improvements to border security and systems to track those who enter on temporary visas
2. Making it easier to immigrate legally, adjusting immigrant visa quotas to meet the needs of U.S. labor markets, to more quickly reunite families and to continue to serve as a safe haven for some of the most vulnerable individuals who have fled persecution
3. Allow those who are already in the country unlawfully to come forward, admit the offense of having overstayed a visa or entered unlawfully, pay a fine (with exceptions for those brought as children or trafficked involuntarily) and then work toward earning permanent legal status and eventually citizenship if they meet various requirements over a period of several years

While no policy is perfect, policy changes along these lines would go a long way toward restoring order to the U.S. immigration system, maximizing the economic benefits of immigration for U.S. citizens while minimizing any safety risks and reducing immigrants’ vulnerability to family separation, mistreatment and injustice.

***LAST SESSION'S EXPERIENCE: "MY FATHER WAS A WANDERING ARAMEAN..."***

1. From which country or countries do you trace your immigrant roots? What do you know about your immigrant ancestors? (If you're Native American: how do your ancestors' experiences inform your views of immigration?)
2. How do you think your ancestors were similar to contemporary immigrants, and how were they different?

***THE HISTORY OF U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY***

3. Historian Roger Daniels observes a dualistic divide between the way that Americans view the immigrants of a century ago and the way that we view immigrants today. Do you agree?
4. What elements of our country's immigration history do you see repeating themselves in the current national dialogue about immigration?

***IMMIGRATING THE LEGAL WAY TODAY***

5. Did anything surprise you about how our current immigration legal system functions?
6. Has anyone in the group had personal experience with the U.S. immigration system, either recently or a long time ago? What was that experience like?
7. If you've never interacted with the immigration legal system before, what were your presumptions about how it worked before reading this summary?

***IMMIGRATION REFORM***

8. What elements of our immigration system do you think should be changed (if any)?



[ PRAY ]

- **Pray that, as a nation, we would learn the lessons of our history**, living into the best of our national heritage and avoiding the mistakes of our past.
- As appropriate, **thank God for his provision for your ancestors** in coming to this country and the blessings you have inherited by nature of living in the United States, and/or lament any injustices in how they arrived or were treated upon arrival and the generational effects of those experiences.
- **Pray for your Senators, your Representative and the President**, that God would grant them wisdom as they craft the laws that affect so many people (you can find out who they are, if you are not sure, by entering your zip code at [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)).
- **Pray for the individuals scattered around the world** who, due to poverty, conflict, natural disaster or persecution, are desperate to find a safer, healthier situation, but are unable to do so.



### **THE \$3.20 PER DAY CHALLENGE**

Next session, we're going to look at some of the "push" factors that motivate people to migrate—lawfully or unlawfully—to the United States and other countries. While there are a number of factors that influence individuals' decision to emigrate, poverty is often a primary factor. Across the globe, about 2 billion people live beneath the poverty standard of \$3.20 per day, which makes it a struggle to provide their families with food and other basic necessities.<sup>60</sup>

Given that a single individual considered poor in the U.S. lives on about \$33 per day,<sup>61</sup> it's really not surprising that individuals living in poverty globally would consider migrating to a place where their hard work would translate to a better life.

The reality is that most Americans will never be able to really comprehend what it is like to live in the desperation of this sort of poverty, but our experience for this session aims to give you a small, limited taste of what it is like for many others in the world.

**For the next week, if you accept this \$3.20 per Day Challenge, you'll follow three basic rules:**

1. Spend no more than \$3.20 per day, per person on all food and beverages you consume. That's \$22.40 per person for the week, if you want to make a single trip to the grocery store. (If you want to make this more realistic, add to that a day's portion of your rent or mortgage expenses, your transportation costs, etc.—but we think you'll find it challenging enough just to limit what you physically consume to \$3.20 per day).
2. Only eat what you buy during the week of the challenge—stocking up the week before or finding someone else to buy you a meal are cheating.
3. If you spend more than \$3.20 in one day, you have to deduct that amount off of what you spend the next day. If you're out of food by the end of the week, you may experience being hungry. (Consult with a doctor if you have health reasons this might not be a good idea for you).

Consider how you might respond if, while living in this situation, you were aware of opportunities to earn far more money in another country—and be prepared to discuss the experience when your group next meets.

## SESSION E: ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION

### [ WATCH ]

Matthew Soerens addresses why people make the decision to leave their countries and come to the United States.



### [ READ ]

Economists and sociologists who study immigration find they can generally predict when migration will occur based on two primary factors: “push” factors that make reasonable people want to leave their country of origin, and “pull” factors that help attract them to a particular location.<sup>62</sup>

These factors have been at play throughout U.S. history. When unprecedented numbers of Irish emigrants came to the U.S. in the mid-1800s, many were pushed out of Ireland by a severe potato famine; they were pulled to the U.S. in particular because of the opportunity presented by a growing economy with an expanding frontier. Around the same time, Germans who were disappointed and afraid after an attempted revolution failed were pushed out by a harsh government and pulled to the U.S. by the promise of liberty and democracy.

We also see push and pull factors at work in Scripture. Jacob and his family left Canaan because of famine—a common push factor—and were pulled to Egypt, initially, by the rumor that there was grain available (Gen 42:1-2). Ruth was pushed out by widespread hunger in her native land of Moab and pulled to Judah by the desire to stay united to her mother-in-law, Naomi (Ruth 1:6-13)—family unity is a common pull for many immigrants today as well. Jesus, Mary and Joseph fled from Bethlehem to Egypt because of the threat of persecution under King Herod (Matt 2:13-14).

These push and pull factors continue to control migration. Both Christians who believe that the U.S. should warmly welcome as many immigrants as possible and those who believe that our government should tightly restrict immigration should be able to agree that, as the Church, loving our neighbors requires us to try to alleviate situations of poverty and violence that would push people out of their home countries in the first place.

Migration is almost always a very difficult choice. Even when voluntary—not under duress, desperation or compulsion, as is often the case—migration involves not only the reality of displacement, but a profound feeling of displacement as well, the removal of all that is familiar from a person. The psalmist’s lament in exile—“how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?” (Ps 137:4)—speaks to the emotional and psychological trauma that displacement can cause as people naturally long for their homeland. That people willingly leave behind all they know and everything they have speaks to the desperation they feel. While heeding the biblical commands to extend hospitality to immigrants, the Church also has a vital role in addressing these “push factors”: the realities of poverty, conflict, environmental degradation and natural disasters that drive people out of their native countries.

### ***PUSH FACTOR: POVERTY***

If you’ve spent even a short amount of time in the Global South, you may have noticed poverty is a daily reality for many people, with income levels for the majority of residents just a small fraction of what most families live on in economically prosperous countries like the U.S.

Very low income levels are closely correlated to high rates of disease and early mortality, particularly amongst children, and to low levels of educational achievement, which can perpetuate a cycle of generational poverty.

Beyond a lack of material resources, poverty is the result of broken relationships: with God, with neighbors and with God’s creation.<sup>63</sup> It is “the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable.”<sup>64</sup>

Poverty is also defined by a lack of decent options, when people are forced to choose between bad and worse.<sup>65</sup> Poverty is the father who has to decide whether to send his daughter or his son to school, because there is not enough money to pay school fees for both. It is the woman who has to cut down the trees that would become valuable timber within a decade’s time because she needs firewood to keep warm tonight. It is the HIV-infected mother who is forced to choose between life-saving antiretroviral drugs or having enough food to feed her children.

Migration, fleeing to find greater opportunity, is sometimes the most rational choice for those facing such poverty.



*Poverty is also defined by a lack of decent options, when people are forced to choose between bad and worse.*



## **PUSH FACTOR: POVERTY (CONT.)**

Global poverty affects an enormous percentage of the Body of Christ worldwide, particularly as the center of global Christianity shifts from Europe and North America to Latin America, Africa and Asia.<sup>66</sup> Paul challenges the more affluent church in Corinth to give generously for the sake of their impoverished brothers and sister in Jerusalem, saying “our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality” (2 Cor 8:13). Given the incredible disparity between wealthy Christians in the Global North and impoverished Christians in the Global South, we have a long way to go before contemplating equality.



*As Americans, it's also important to recognize that the choices we make...affect our brothers, sisters and neighbors in the Global South as well.*



As Americans, it's also important to recognize that the choices we make—what we consume, the politicians for whom we vote and the policies they enact, the extent to which we give generously of the resources which God has given us—affect our brothers, sisters and neighbors in the Global South as well.

Take U.S. agricultural policy, for example. While there have arguably been many benefits as the result of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed between the U.S., Canada and Mexico in 1994, one group that has generally not benefitted is small corn farmers in Mexico, who have struggled to compete with imported corn from the U.S.<sup>67</sup> Their woes come about not as the result of free trade, per se, but because the U.S. was not willing to actually make trade fully free. Our government subsidizes corn production in the U.S. to such an extent that American farmers grow more corn than the market demands. That excess corn sometimes gets sold at very low prices in places like Mexico.

This may seem very humanitarian, low cost food for the hungry, courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer, but the effect is that many corn farmers in southern Mexico cannot sell their product at a price allowing them to support themselves. Unable to compete, many quit farming and are forced to move to make ends meet. Some go to Mexico City, where they search for alternate means to provide for their families. If that doesn't pan out, they might move north to factory jobs along the U.S.-Mexico (many of which have been created as the result of NAFTA). There, they might earn \$2 to \$3 per hour, probably much more than they were earning farming corn.<sup>68</sup> At that point, the laborer has likely already left behind her family, so when she hears that she can earn \$8 or \$10 per hour if she goes a few miles further north across the border, there is a strong incentive to go. The job in the U.S. that, even without legal status, can be obtained relatively easily, attracts the migrant. The U.S. government, however, has been reluctant to seriously address the “pull” factor of job availability by more strictly enforcing work authorization rules. Because—unless we are also willing to admit more immigrants lawfully—our economy would suffer dramatically without an adequate supply of labor, especially at a time when unemployment rates are very low, U.S. policies on both sides of the border influence the one-time-farmer's decision to migrate.

## ***PUSH FACTOR: WAR AND CONFLICT***

Another major reason people are forced to migrate is when their very lives are at risk as a result of conflict. War, terrorism and political repression force millions to flee their homes each year.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, more than five million people have lost their lives as the direct or indirect result of a cycle of conflict and violence spanning decades.<sup>69</sup> Women are particular targets of violence, and rape is rampantly used as a weapon of war. Desperate to survive, many have felt no choice but to flee—at least 500,000 Congolese refugees have fled the country, with millions more displaced internally.<sup>70</sup> In the particular communities where World Relief works with local churches to establish Village Peace Committees, ninety-five percent of people have been forcibly displaced, often more than once.<sup>71</sup>

Similar stories unfold elsewhere: in Syria, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in South Sudan and throughout the world. Refugees pour into neighboring countries—often under resourced without the capacity to care for a large number of refugees—and often are warehoused in refugee camps. Others are forced to pay rent and make ends meet in an urban context without authorization to work. A fortunate few might eventually make it to Canada, the United States or another resettlement country and be able to rebuild their lives, but most others will simply wait, sometimes for decades, for it to be safe to return home or for their host country to invite them to resume their lives there on a permanent basis.

The Church in the countries that receive refugees can and should extend hospitality to these new arrivals, but we should do all we can to also help stop conflicts from occurring. We can pressure our government—whose influence is felt around the world—to work through diplomacy to keep differing perspectives and disagreements from erupting into violence. Examination of our own consumption patterns may reveal that some of our purchases inadvertently help fund warlords behind conflicts on the other side of the globe: two examples include so-called “blood diamonds” which have helped to fund civil wars in West Africa and cell phones which utilize coltan, a raw material extracted in Congo. We can also make sure that we’re not investing in companies that profit from selling weapons to those who inflict harm. In partnership with organizations like World Relief, we can train local church and community leaders to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation between different tribes and political parties. And we can work to alleviate the poverty that makes conflict more likely to occur.

## ***PUSH FACTOR: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND NATURAL DISASTERS***

Finally, another common reason that individuals feel pushed to migrate is because of natural disasters—hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, wildfires—and environmental degradation. The International Red Cross estimates that as many as 25 million people worldwide have been displaced by environmental disasters (both natural and man-made) in a single year.<sup>72</sup>

When a massive earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, for example, desperate Haitians fled to the neighboring Dominican Republic, to the United States and to as far as Brazil to find security, while many more were displaced internally.<sup>73</sup> While the Church cannot prevent natural disasters from occurring (except, perhaps, through prayer), it can help communities build infrastructure that will minimize the loss of life; this sort of preparedness explains why the loss of life from Japan’s earthquake in 2011,

## ***PUSH FACTOR: ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND NATURAL DISASTERS (CONT.)***

though larger in scale, claimed just a fraction of the number of lives as the earthquake in Haiti, where people were living in desperately unsafe conditions even before the disaster.<sup>74</sup> Churches in the U.S. can also come alongside local churches to provide relief when natural disasters do strike, a process that World Relief has helped to facilitate for decades.

Our collective failure to adequately steward the earth, which God entrusted to us, has also led to situations that push people to leave their countries of origin. In many parts of the world pollution, overuse of natural resources and climate change have destroyed what were once sustainable agricultural and fishing industries, forcing many to find employment elsewhere. Scarcity of natural resources, particularly water, can also lead to violent conflict, as has been the case in the Darfur region of Sudan, where farmers of different ethnic groups have clashed over access to water in the midst of an extended drought.<sup>75</sup>

Just as God created Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden with the command “to work it and take care of it” (Gen 2:15), we are called to care for God’s creation, recognizing that “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Ps 24:1), and we are merely stewards entrusted with its care. Faithfulness to God’s command to care for his creation can also help to minimize the instances when people are forced to emigrate as a result of environmental disasters.

## ***THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT***

While governments and their policies certainly have an important role and responsibility in addressing these root causes of migration, local churches also have a unique role established by God in addressing situations of poverty and injustice. The church is “the largest, most diverse social network on the planet,”<sup>76</sup> and when it functions in unity—across national boundaries, denominational distinctions and ethnic divisions—it can be an unrivaled agent of transformation.



At World Relief, we facilitate this transformation through a unique model called a Church Empowerment Zone. In communities in various parts of the world, we bring local church leaders, some of whom have lived nearby their fellow pastors for years without every collaborating, together to first identify the most vulnerable in their community and then, by recognizing the assets that God has already entrusted to them, to work together to meet human needs in Jesus’ name. The Church Empowerment Zone goes beyond cleaning up surface issues by addressing the harmful beliefs and relationships that perpetuate poverty and injustice.

When local churches in the U.S. come alongside this process, bringing additional resources and their own skills and gifts, the church functions as God intends for her to, as a body, with each part playing its unique role to care for those who are vulnerable, to make disciples of all nations and to address the challenges that might otherwise compel people to have to leave their homes. When the church functions in unity with a focused concern on those who are the most vulnerable, it is a shining city on a hill, a light that draws others to give glory to God (Matt 5:14-16).

***LAST SESSION'S EXPERIENCE: THE \$3.20 PER DAY CHALLENGE***

1. How was eating on \$3.20 a day? Were you able to go the whole week without cheating? Was it harder or easier than you anticipated?
2. What would you do if you were born into a situation where living on \$3.20 a day—not just for food, but for all of your expenses—was your daily experience?

***PUSH AND PULL FACTORS***

3. What other “push” and “pull” factors do you think might influence people’s decisions to migrate?

***PUSH FACTOR: EXTREME POVERTY***

4. The illustration of how corn subsidies have affected small farmers in Mexico demonstrates the complexity of how U.S. policies affect the poor abroad and, as a result, affect migration to the U.S. What other policy issues do you think affect this?

***PUSH FACTOR: WAR AND CONFLICT***

5. What would you do if war erupted in the United States and you came to believe you would be killed if you stayed? Where would you flee to? If you had just a few minutes to get out, what would you take with you?

***PUSH FACTOR: NATURAL DISASTERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION***

6. In what ways might your consumption patterns affect the environment—and the livelihoods—of our global neighbors?

***THE CHURCH AND TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT***

7. How could your local church help to address these great “push” issues of poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation?



[ PRAY ]

- **Pray for the Church**, that we would be united across geographic, socioeconomic, ethnic, and denominational lines to serve a broken world with Christ's love.
- **Pray for those forced to flee their countries** for reasons of poverty, conflict, natural disasters or environmental degradation, that God would comfort them as they recognize all that is lost.
- **Pray for peace in countries long plagued by conflict**, lifting before the Lord particular situations of which you are aware.
- **Pray for World Relief and other Christian organizations** partnering with local churches to respond to natural disasters, to build sustainable livelihoods for the impoverished and to seek peace in areas of conflict.
- **Pray for wisdom for legislators** who set policies that affect both the “push” and “pull” factors that govern migration patterns.



**“KNOW THY NEIGHBOR”**

The second half of the Great Commandment, found in Luke 10:27, is to love our neighbor as ourselves. It’s pretty difficult to love our neighbors if we don’t know them—but many in our society rarely or never interact with immigrants on a deep relational level. So, sometime before your group’s next meeting, our challenge to you is to try to get to know an immigrant.

One idea would be simply to invite someone over for a meal or out to coffee. You likely know someone whom you suspect has immigrated to the United States from another country, even if only as a casual acquaintance. Maybe there’s a family at your church, your work or your school (or your kids’ school). Set a time, prepare some food, and invite them over! We know this seems a bit awkward, but allowing yourself to be uncomfortable is where the deepest learning happens. (If you are an immigrant, you might offer to let someone else in your group take you for a meal, if you feel comfortable).

Don’t make this a project, but a chance to build a relationship with someone who might really be blessed by your hospitality, and from whom you might have a lot to learn. Without being obtrusive or asking anything that you think might make them feel uncomfortable, ask what made them decide to come to the United States, what it took to get here and how their experience has been while in the United States.

Keep an open mind—you’re here to learn, not to judge—have fun as you hopefully make a new friend.

If you can’t think of anyone to invite over—or that just sounds too intimidating—here’s another possibility: visit an immigrant church this next week. Even if they worship in a language other than English that you cannot understand, take the opportunity to observe. We expect that you’ll find some folks who are eager to greet you and to help you understand.

As a third option, you could hear the stories of several immigrants (though not be able to interact with them, which is why this is a less-than-ideal alternative) by downloading or streaming the 40-minute documentary *The Stranger*, produced by the Evangelical Immigration Table. You can access the film at [www.thestrangerfilm.org](http://www.thestrangerfilm.org).

## SESSION F: A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO IMMIGRATION

### [ WATCH ]

Jenny Yang challenges you to think about your response to the challenges and opportunities of immigration.



### [ READ ]

#### *A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO IMMIGRATION*

Over the past several sessions, you’ve learned a lot about immigrants—how God views them, the effect that they are having on the Church, where they come from, why they come and some of the facts about who they are—all of which, hopefully, prepares us to respond.

Information is important, but knowledge is not particularly helpful if it does not compel us toward action. As we seek and understand God’s heart for immigrants, it should motivate a response. “Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says,” the Bible tells us (James 1:22).

We’ve developed an acronym to suggest six ways that we might respond to what we’ve learned: PLEASE—Prayer, Listening, Empowering Churches Abroad, Advocacy, Service and Evangelism.

#### *PRAYER*

Scripture says we should “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17), so prayer should not only be the first response to a tough issue, but an ongoing response that fuels any further action. We hope that the prayer points offered throughout this guide have provided some helpful ideas as you begin to pray through this issue. Certainly we can pray for the physical, spiritual and economic wellbeing of the immigrants in our community. We can also allow our hearts to be opened to those still in the countries from which they emigrated.

## PRAYER (CONT.)

We can pray for the Church, including for our local churches, for our leaders to have God’s wisdom as they wrestle with how to approach a complex, potentially controversial topic and for courage to follow where God calls them. We can particularly pray for the local churches that minister to immigrants directly, and pray, as Jesus prayed in the hours before his crucifixion, for the unity of Christians across ethnic, denominational and legal status lines (John 17:21).

Finally, we are commanded to pray for “kings and all those in authority” (1 Tim 2:2), which in our contemporary context might mean our elected officials such as the President and Members of Congress. While it is up to these elected officials to come up with just policies that affect immigrants, Scripture teaches that, ultimately, these decisions fall under God’s sovereignty: the king’s heart is “in the Lord’s hand” (Pr 21:1). We can plead with our Heavenly Father on behalf of the many affected by the flaws in current policy, trusting in Jesus’ promise that “if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (Matt 18:19). We are commanded to be “faithful in prayer” (Rom 12:12).

## LISTENING

Exploring this guide has, hopefully, begun a process of listening that we think is vital to understanding a complex issue like immigration from a Christian perspective: listening, first and foremost, to the Bible. Our session on “Thinking Biblically about Immigration” provides a start, but the Scriptures have much more to say on this topic than we have had time to cover, and we encourage you to dig in deeper. Several of the resources mentioned in Appendix 2 particularly focus on biblical perspectives on this issue.

As we listen to Scripture, we also would do well to listen to the voices of immigrants themselves, including the many who are our Christian sisters and brothers. It’s very easy to form strong opinions about immigration as an issue without ever hearing the stories of those that the issue affects. Particularly when we have access to individuals who are fellow members of Christ’s body, we need to make a special effort to prioritize their voices as we think and pray through this issue.

Finally, we have a particular responsibility as Christians to ensure that, as we talk about this issue, we are listening to—and speaking—the truth. We’ve included many references at the end of this guide precisely because you can’t, and shouldn’t, believe everything that you read. We encourage you to check our sources to make sure that we’re accurately representing the situation, and check others’ sources as well whenever you read information—positive or negative—about immigrants. Look at a variety of sources and be particularly wary of organizations that have stated agendas that run counter to your values. Many Christians do not realize, for example, that some of the groups advocating tighter restrictions on immigration and issuing reports critical of immigrants do so out of a belief in population control with which many Christians would sharply disagree.<sup>77</sup>

*...we have a particular responsibility as Christians to ensure that, as we talk about this issue, we are listening to—and speaking—the truth.*

## LISTENING (CONT.)

As we understand this issue better on a personal level, we can help to educate others. Most Christians have simply never thought about immigration through the lens of their faith, so we need leaders—both pastors and lay leaders—who will help to educate their congregations. Your group might decide to ask the leaders at your church if they would consider devoting a Sunday to highlighting the biblical call to hospitality toward immigrants. This might be through a sermon focused on one of the many passages related to immigrants, inviting a pastor of an immigrant congregation in your community to share, music that praises God for his love and provision for the immigrant and others who are vulnerable and perhaps the chance to highlight for others ways that they can become involved in ministry with immigrants locally.

Perhaps you want to lead a new group of people at your church through this guide, to lead a book discussion focused on *Welcoming the Stranger* or another book mentioned in Appendix 2 or to innovate your own curriculum based on what you think would best suit your group. Maybe you could bring in a guest speaker to your church, or host a special event open to the larger community highlighting stories of some immigrant neighbors who can help put a human face on this issue. It might be as simple as inviting some friends over to watch a film and then leading a discussion afterwards. Be creative, but don't keep what you've learned to yourselves.

## EMPOWERING CHURCHES ABROAD

In Session E, we focused in on the root causes of immigration, the reasons that so many in our world feel they have no choice but to leave their homelands. The Church—including your local church—has an important role to play in addressing these situations.

One of the most significant ways churches in the U.S. can help, of course, is financial. Compared to most of the rest of the world, churches in the United States and the people that make them up have a lot of wealth, to which we are called to be stewards. Many local churches do so by financially supporting ministries that empower local churches abroad to pursue God's mission in their particular context, including addressing issues of poverty and injustice.

*Empowering churches abroad is more than just financial...*

Empowering churches abroad is more than just financial, though—it's also relational, and it's a two-way street, because the church in the U.S. has so much to learn from our brothers and sisters elsewhere in the world. At World Relief, we have a unique partnership model that connects a particular local church in the U.S. to a group of churches abroad and to World Relief staff in that community, which involves in-person relationships made possible by travel, service opportunities and prayer.

However you decide you can best do so, it's vital that our focus on caring for immigrants not neglect these larger issues that compel many to migrate in the first place.

## ADVOCACY

Scripture commands us to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves” (Pr 31:8). While the immigrants in our community can speak for themselves—and we ought to help amplify their voices—those who are not citizens cannot vote, and that means that most elected officials do not particularly heed their voices.

The Church, though, can be a voice for the many within the Body of Christ whose lives are affected by a broken immigration system—and for the many who do not yet know Christ. While most of the Church’s response to immigrants will be on an individual level—meeting practical needs as an expression of Christ’s love and making disciples—the command to love our neighbors might also lead us to speak up in favor of legislation that would benefit them.

Martin Luther King Jr. once explained it this way:

*We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life’s roadside; but that will be only an initial act. One day the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be beaten and robbed as they make their journey through life. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.<sup>78</sup>*

As we love our neighbors in practical ways, more and more Christians are convinced that the structures of our immigration laws simply do not work well—not for immigrants, not for our economy and security as a whole and not for a society that prides itself on the rule of law. Our current system is also a huge problem for those who recognize the importance of intact families, because, as Focus on the Family president Jim Daly notes, “families are being torn apart” under current policies.<sup>79</sup>

“  
True compassion  
is more than  
flinging a coin  
to a beggar; it  
understands  
that an edifice  
which produces  
beggars needs  
restructuring.”

There are many ways that Christ-followers in the U.S. can advocate for and with immigrants. One very simple way is to affirm the Evangelical Statement of Principles for Immigration Reform, which was launched in 2012 by a broad range of Christian leaders across the country. You can read the principles, see a list of signatories and add your name at [EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com](http://EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com). The depth and breadth of the names who have affirmed this statement communicates to elected officials that this issue really is one that concerns the Christian community.

You can also send specific messages to your Senators and U.S. Representative. The World Relief advocacy portal ([www.worldrelief.org/advocate](http://www.worldrelief.org/advocate)) will help you determine who they are and provide up-to-date information on pending legislation.

Some in your church might have a personal relationship with a legislator and thus not need to set up a formal meeting: they could simply talk to him or her while playing golf or sharing a meal.

## ADVOCACY (CONT.)

Others have submitted Op-Eds or letters to the editor of a local newspaper, expressing why, from the perspective of their faith, they believe that our immigration laws need change.

We'll leave it to you to decide exactly what to advocate and what positions to take, but most evangelicals (about seven out of ten, according to a LifeWay Research poll) have said they want to see reforms that pair improvements to border security with an earned pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who meet certain requirements.<sup>80</sup>

While some commentators consider any policy that would grant legal status to any undocumented immigrants to be amnesty, the reform supported by most Christians is distinct from amnesty—which is a synonym of grace, a free gift of forgiveness—in that it would require the payment of a penalty for those who have violated the law. Reforms advocated by Christian leaders also include criteria by which a once-undocumented immigrant could earn the opportunity to become a lawful permanent resident and, eventually, a fully integrated American citizen.

## SERVICE

The Church has a unique opportunity to extend Christ's love in very practical ways to immigrants, many of whom are amongst the most under-resourced individuals in our country. Many churches provide English as a Second Language classes, recognizing that learning English is a vital skill for those who want to succeed in the U.S. Others provide programs for those facing food insecurity, homework help and tutoring for kids whose parents may not understand English or transportation for those who either cannot afford a car or are ineligible for a driver's license.



*...there are simply not enough authorized non-profit organizations to meet the demand for the many immigrants seeking to understand and, if possible, get right with the complex maze of U.S. immigration law.*



Refugee resettlement provides another unique opportunity to serve.

Though the number of refugees admitted to the U.S. has declined in recent years as a result of policy changes, some still are arriving, and each of them is served by a local affiliate of a refugee resettlement agency such as World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Church World Service, or the U.S. Catholic Bishops. They are generally eager to help train volunteers to walk alongside newly-arrived refugees as they adjust to a new community, culture and language.

One huge need in the immigrant community is for legal services. Immigration attorneys often charge more than low-income immigrants can afford, and there are simply not enough authorized non-profit organizations to meet the demand for the many immigrants seeking to understand and, if possible, get right with the complex maze of U.S. immigration law. With adequate (and fairly extensive) training, though, it is possible for a local church or other non-profit organization (even one without an attorney on staff) to be authorized by the U.S. Department of Justice to provide immigration legal services. The Wesleyan Church denomination, for example, has worked with World Relief to help dozens of local congregations to be recognized by the Department of Justice so it can meet this crucial need and convey the love of Christ in the process.

## **SERVICE (CONT.)**

Perhaps the greatest service that an individual within a local church can provide is simply friendship: for an individual who has left behind his or her family and community, finding someone who will love them, talk to them (and listen to them, patiently, as they learn a new language) and help them to adjust to a new culture can be an enormous ministry. In the process, many American citizens find that they also have a great deal to learn from their immigrant friends, and the relationship becomes one of mutuality.

## **EVANGELISM**

As we advocate with and serve our immigrant neighbors, we have the opportunity to share the transformative hope of the gospel. While many immigrants arrive in the U.S. with a vibrant Christian faith, many others—including many from unreached people groups—will hear the good news of a relationship with Jesus Christ for the first time in the U.S. We have an incredible opportunity to “go and make disciples of all nations” without ever crossing a border (Matt 28:19).



We can most effectively share the gospel by understanding the cultural and religious context from which our new neighbors come, and we would do well to look to the leadership of our brothers and sisters from those regions as we seek to effectively and sensitively present the hope of the gospel. We should also not be surprised to find that many immigrants—who tend to come from the Global South, where the Christian faith is more prevalent than it is here in the North<sup>81</sup>—will preach the gospel to us, too, and to the many native-born U.S. citizens who do not yet know the hope of a transformative relationship with Jesus.

As we seek to see more and more immigrants become followers of Jesus, though, we also have to examine our attitudes. We cannot effectively convey the gospel message that Jesus loves and died for the immigrants we encounter if our words, actions or support for particular policies or politicians lead immigrants to presume that we—the Church—hate them and want them as far from us as possible. Unfortunately, whether intentional or not, the rhetoric that some have used to talk about immigration has sent that message. As Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty president Russell Moore notes, “It’s horrifying to hear those identified with the gospel speak, whatever their position on the issues, with mean-spirited disdain for the immigrants themselves.”<sup>82</sup> Our gospel witness is at stake.

**LAST SESSION'S EXPERIENCE: KNOW THY NEIGHBOR**

1. Without disclosing confidential details that may be sensitive, briefly share with others what you learned from a meal with an immigrant neighbor, from visiting an immigrant congregation or from watching *The Stranger*.

**PRAYER**

2. How can your group encourage one another to be faithful in prayer for the immigrants in your community?

**LISTENING**

3. What steps could you take to find more opportunities to hear the voices of the immigrants within your community?

**EMPOWERING CHURCHES ABROAD**

4. What could your group—and your larger church community—do to come alongside local churches elsewhere in the world who are addressing the root causes of immigration?

**ADVOCACY**

5. What could your group do to influence the way that your Member of Congress and Senators vote on immigration issues?
6. What role, if any, do you think that your local church should take in public policy advocacy?

**SERVICE**

7. What practical steps could you take to serve the immigrants in your community?

**EVANGELISM**

8. How do you think that the tone with which Christians discuss immigration affects the way that immigrants hear the gospel?



## ADDENDUM 1:

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR THE “I WAS A STRANGER” CHALLENGE

- 1. Genesis 1:27-28 NIV**

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...”
- 2. Exodus 12:49 NIV**

The same law applies both to the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you
- 3. Exodus 22:21 CEB**

Don't mistreat or oppress an immigrant, because you were once immigrants in the land of Egypt.
- 4. Exodus 23:9 CEB**

Don't oppress an immigrant. You know what it's like to be an immigrant, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt.
- 5. Exodus 23:12 CEB**

Do your work in six days. But on the seventh day you should rest so that your ox and donkey may rest, and even the child of your female slave and the immigrant may be refreshed.
- 6. Leviticus 19:9-10 CEB**

When you harvest your land's produce, you must not harvest all the way to the edge of your field; and don't gather up every remaining bit of your harvest. Also do not pick your vineyard clean or gather up all the grapes that have fallen there. Leave these items for the poor and the immigrant; I am the Lord your God.
- 7. Leviticus 19:33-34 ESV**

When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. 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.
- 8. Leviticus 23:22 CEB**

When you harvest your land's produce, you must not harvest all the way to the edge of your field; and don't gather every remaining bit of your harvest. Leave these items for the poor and the immigrant; I am the Lord your God.
- 9. Leviticus 24:22 CEB**

There is but one law on this matter for you, immigrant or citizen alike, because I am the Lord your God.
- 10. Numbers 15:15-16 CEB**

The assembly will have the same regulation for you and for the immigrant. The regulation will be permanent for all time. You and the immigrant will be the same in the Lord's presence. There will be one set of instructions and one legal norm for the immigrant and for you.
- 11. Deuteronomy 1:16 CEB**

At that same time, I commanded your judges: Listen to your fellow tribe members and judge fairly, whether the dispute is between one fellow tribe member or between a tribe member and an immigrant.
- 12. Deuteronomy 10:18-19 CEB**

He enacts justice for orphans and widows, and he loves immigrants, giving them food and clothing. That means you must also love immigrants because you were immigrants in Egypt.
- 13. Deuteronomy 24:14 CEB**

Don't take advantage of poor or needy workers, whether they are fellow Israelites or immigrants who live in your land or your cities.
- 14. Deuteronomy 24:17-18 CEB**

Don't obstruct the legal rights of an immigrant or orphan. Don't take a widow's coat as pledge for a loan. Remember how you were a slave in Egypt but how the Lord your God saved you from that. That's why I'm commanding you to do this thing.

15. Deuteronomy 24:19 CEB Whenever you are reaping the harvest of your field and you leave some grain in the field, don't go back and get it. Let it go to the immigrants, the orphans, and the widows so that the Lord your God blesses you in all that you do.
16. Deuteronomy 26:12 CEB When you have finished paying the entire tenth part of your produce on the third year—that is the year for paying the tenth-part—you will give it to the Levites, the immigrants, the orphans, and the widows so they can eat in your cities until they are full.
17. Deuteronomy 27:19 CEB “Cursed is anyone who obstructs the legal rights of immigrants, orphans, or widows.” All the people will reply: “We agree!”
18. Job 29:16 NIV I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger.
19. Psalm 94:6-7 NIV They slay the widow and the foreigner; they murder the fatherless. They say, “The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice.”
20. Psalm 146:9 NIV The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.
21. Jeremiah 7:5-7 CEB No, if you truly reform your ways and your actions; if you treat each other justly; if you stop taking advantage of the immigrant, orphan, or widow; if you don't shed the blood of the innocent in this place, or go after other gods to your own ruin, only then will I dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave long ago to your ancestors for all time.
22. Jeremiah 22:3 CEB The Lord proclaims: Do what is just and right; rescue the oppressed from the power of the oppressor. Don't exploit or mistreat the refugee, the orphan, and the widow. Don't spill the blood of the innocent in this place.
23. Ezekiel 22:6-7 CEB Look, Israel's princes, every one of them, have joined forces to shed blood in you. In you they treat father and mother with contempt. In you they oppress immigrants and deny the rights of orphans and widows.
24. Ezekiel 22:29 CEB The important people of the land have practiced extortion and have committed robbery. They've oppressed the poor and mistreated the immigrant. They've oppressed and denied justice.
25. Zechariah 7:10 ESV Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.
26. Malachi 3:5 NIV So I will come to 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 the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty.
27. Matthew 2:13-14 NIV When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt...
28. Matthew 25:35 ESV 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...
29. Mark 2:27 ESV And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

- 30. Luke 10:36-37 ESV** “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”
- 31. Acts 16:37 ESV** But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”
- 32. Acts 17:26-27 NIV 1984** From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.
- 33. Romans 12:13 ESV** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.
- 34. Romans 13:1-2 NIV** Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.
- 35. Ephesians 2:14-18 NIV** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
- 36. Philippians 3:20 ESV** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...
- 37. Hebrews 13:2 NIV** Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.
- 38. 1 Peter 2:11-12 ESV** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
- 39. 1 Peter 2:13-14 ESV** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.
- 40. Revelation 7:9-10 ESV** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

## ADDENDUM 2: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We hope that, as you complete this guide, you'll be eager to dive deeper into this important issue, understanding immigrants and immigration from the perspective of your Christian faith.

### WEBSITES

This guide is available for free in PDF form at [www.WelcomingTheStranger.com](http://www.WelcomingTheStranger.com), where you will also find A Church Leader's Guide to Immigration as a free PDF download, links to order *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate* as either a printed or e-book, and a variety of advocacy and learning tools.

#### ADDITIONAL WEBSITES WITH HELPFUL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION INCLUDE:

- Evangelical Immigration Table: [www.EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com](http://www.EvangelicalImmigrationTable.com)
- National Immigration Forum: [www.ImmigrationForum.org](http://www.ImmigrationForum.org)
- Refugee Council USA: [www.rcusa.org](http://www.rcusa.org)
- United States Citizenship & Immigration Services: [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov)
- Voices of Christian Dreamers: [www.ChristianDreamers.us](http://www.ChristianDreamers.us)
- We Welcome Refugees: [www.WeWelcomeRefugees.com](http://www.WeWelcomeRefugees.com)
- "Welcome.": [www.WelcomingImmigrants.org](http://www.WelcomingImmigrants.org)
- World Relief: [www.WorldRelief.org](http://www.WorldRelief.org)

### BOOKS

This guide is designed to be a companion resource to the book *Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion and Truth in the Immigration Debate*, written by Matthew Soerens and Jenny Yang (who also wrote most of this guide) and published by InterVarsity Press. If you've not yet read *Welcoming the Stranger*, we hope that you'll pick up a copy. It is also available as an ebook or an audio book.

Matthew also co-wrote (with colleagues Stephan Bauman and Dr. Issam Smeir) a book focused specifically on refugee issues called *Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis* (Moody Publishers, 2016).

#### ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL INCLUDE:

- *A Better Country: Embracing the Refugee in Our Midst* by Cindy M. Wu (William Carey Library, 2017)
- *Assimilate or Go Home* by D.L. Mayfield (HarperOne, 2016)
- *At Home in Exile: Finding Jesus among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors* by Russell Jeung (Zondervan, 2016)
- *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* by M. Daniel Carroll R. (Baker Academic, 2013)
- *Christian Hospitality and Muslim Immigration in an Age of Fear* by Matthew Kaemingk (Eerdmans, 2018)
- *God is Stranger: Finding God in Unexpected Places* by Krish Kandiah (InterVarsity Press, 2017)
- *Love Undocumented: Risking Trust in a Fearful World* by Sarah Quezada (Herald Press, 2018)
- *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* by Soong-Chan Rah (InterVarsity Press, 2009)
- *The New Pilgrims: How Immigrants Are Renewing America's Faith and Values* by Joseph Castleberry (Worthy Publishing, 2015)
- *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission* by J.D. Payne (InterVarsity Press, 2012)
- *You Welcomed Me: Loving Our Immigrant and Refugee Neighbors as Ourselves* by Kent Annan (InterVarsity Press, 2018)

### FILMS

**NOTE: SOME FILMS MAY CONTAIN LANGUAGE OR OTHER CONTENT THAT SOME MAY FIND OFFENSIVE.**

- All Saints (Sony Pictures, 2017)
- Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey (Groody River Films, 2005)
- God Grew Tired of Us (NewMarket Films, 2006)
- The Good Lie (Warner Brothers, 2014)
- How Democracy Works Now (Filmmakers Library, 2013, available at [www.howdemocracyworksnow.com](http://www.howdemocracyworksnow.com))
- McFarland, USA (Walt Disney Studios, 2015)
- The Stranger, directed by Linda Midgett (Evangelical Immigration Table, 2014, available at [www.thestrangerfilm.org](http://www.thestrangerfilm.org))
- Under the Same Moon (Fox Searchlight, 2008).
- Underwater Dreams (50Eggs, Inc., 2014)
- The Visitor (Overture Films, 2008).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

**JENNY YANG:** @JennyYangWR on Twitter or Jenny Yang on Facebook

**MATTHEW SOERENS:** @MatthewSoerens on Twitter or Matthew Soerens on Facebook

**WORLD RELIEF:** @WorldRelief on Twitter or Instagram or World Relief on Facebook

## ADDENDUM 3: REFERENCES

### SESSION A: A MISSION ON OUR DOORSTEPS

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### SESSION C: THE MOST VULNERABLE: REFUGEES, UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS, AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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#### **SESSION D: UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION POLICY: PAST AND PRESENT**

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### **SESSION F: A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO IMMIGRATION**

77. For example, groups like NumbersUSA, the Center for Immigration Studies, and FAIR (the Federation for American Immigration Reform), were each founded or cofounded by a man named John Tanton. Mr. Tanton's primary concern with immigration is one of population control, which is why he has also been a strong proponent of abortion rights, and the organizations he founded, to varying extents, are explicit about their goal to limit not just illegal immigration but all immigration to the U.S. out of population growth concerns. For more information about Mr. Tanton and the organizations with which he has been affiliated, see articles such as "Friend or Foe?" by reporter J.C. Derrick in *WORLD Magazine* (February 22, 2013, [https://world.wng.org/2013/02/friend\\_or\\_foe](https://world.wng.org/2013/02/friend_or_foe)), "Hijacking Immigration?" by Mario Lopez in the *Human Life Review* (October 28, 2012, <https://www.humanlifereview.com/hijacking-immigration/>) and "The Intellectual Roots of Nativism" by Tucker Carlson (October 2, 1997, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB875739465952259500>).
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