

Loving the Refugee: Onerous Obligation or Delightful Duty?

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Not every refugee experience is the same. Some flee because of war while others flee because of persecution. But, deep down, they all feel the sorrow and pain of leaving everything they have known and moving to the unknown. How can the church show universal love to strangers in a new land? Throughout history, the attitude towards strangers fluctuates, from hostility, enslavement, and mistreatment to acceptance, openness, and hospitality. Today, the world is in confusion and chaos with the ongoing fear of a worldwide pandemic, the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan to extremist Taliban, and the violent invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The world faces a grave challenge: how to care for millions of refugees fleeing war and persecution. Understanding the three stages of transition which refugees undergo upon arrival in the United States following their screening and processing, the Church must call Christians to take four practical steps in welcoming and caring for refugees, informed by the Bible's instructions regarding whom they are commanded to love, why they are commanded to love, and how they are commanded to love.