

## **World Focus for January Migrants & Displaced Persons**

### Distribution:

Please can the whole file be sent to service leaders, preachers and intercessors.

### Friday email text for 5<sup>th</sup> January and Notice Sheet text for 7<sup>th</sup> January

World Focus for January: **Migrants & Displaced Persons** a reminder that Joseph, Mary and Jesus fled as refugees to Egypt and Jesus lived an itinerant lifestyle during his public ministry

### Article:

The Christmas story includes the flight of Joseph, Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape a massacre in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. Their's was a forced displacement – leave or one member of the family will be killed.

The number of Biblical characters who experience forcible displaced is high. The following is a partial list: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph (trafficked to Egypt), Moses, Naomi, David, Daniel, Joseph with Mary and Jesus and Paul. There are numerous others including (according to church tradition) most of the apostles who migrated as missionaries.

Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden by God, whose next act was to meet with them on the other side of the fence. It is the first glimpse in Scripture that God is with people when they migrate.

Likewise today, God is meeting people on the move. There are copious stories of people finding faith in Jesus in camps, in deserts, on trucks, or whose prayers for deliverance when boats flounder is part of their journey to faith. Several such stories are included in Last Resort – Migration and the Middle East which was launched at our church in October 2017. In many places, God's people, the Church, are acting with generosity, compassion, wisdom and transparency to meet the needs of the displaced. Immediate needs include shelter, food, health care and post trauma support. Longer term needs include education for children, employment opportunities, assistance in starting new businesses and proper infrastructure as camps become de facto towns.

Christians are also active in many areas endeavouring to change the conversation and language surround forcibly displaced people. We need to be trendsetters in being welcoming, hospitable and inclusive of people, as well as hot on the injustice underlying many of the causes of displacement. In addition, keep being positive about the opportunities for the Gospel. The displaced need welcome, acceptance, healing, a sense of peace and hope, the recognition that injustice has been done and there is a model of forgiveness. The Gospel addresses every aspect of this.

If you have questions or would like clarifications then please contact Ian Davies on 861293 or email [IanDavies@pobox.com](mailto:IanDavies@pobox.com)

PS. The global scale of forcible displacement can be hard to grasp. The UN statistics for the end of 2016 gave a worldwide assessment of 22 million refugees and 43 million IDPs, a total of 65 million displaced people.<sup>1</sup> This is equivalent to one in every 113 human beings. The UN estimated that 28,000 people were displaced every day, approaching 20 every minute, throughout 2016. Keep in mind that each number represents human beings, made in God's image and for whom Jesus longs to be known as Emmanuel. Lord have mercy.

#### Prayer meeting:

My suggestion for the Church Prayer Meeting on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January would be to focus on the topic of displacement. Perhaps ask Scott Sissons to contribute. If so, do also include Chris and his work in South Africa.

#### Intercessions on Sundays:

Please use a selection of the following.

##### Migrants & Displaced Persons:

- For steps to be taken to address the exploitation of some migrant workers that is prevalent in some parts of our world
- For effective action to address the causes of displacement, including conflicts, oppression, poor governance, ineffective support for those affected by natural disasters or simply changing patterns of agriculture
- For effective international support to those countries hosting large numbers of displaced people; the UN's top six are Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia & Jordan. Iraq would be included if they included IDPs. Bangladesh might make the top six if it was recalibrated now.
- Pray for Christians worldwide to be actively engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to all in need

##### Specific Mission Partner: Bible Society – Bible-based trauma healing programme

- "Volunteers in local churches are trained as group facilitators and participants use a workbook in their language. Content is based on the Bible. Refugees hear about God's care for them, and they start to find identity, meaning and hope in the story of God's love found in His word." (Bible Society, UK, website)
- Pray that the Bible-based trauma healing resources will be widely used.
- Pray that those who participate will know the healing touch of Jesus

##### Specific Mission Partner: Corrie Sissons, with Oxfam's Global Humanitarian Team

- At the time of writing, she was in Bangladesh working on the situation of the Rohingya people displaced into Bangladesh from Burma/Myanmar

##### Mission Partners: general

- All our overseas mission partners are migrant workers: pray that they know the presence and peace of Jesus where they are, that they wisely communicate with family and friends, and that their having moved will in itself be a testimony to neighbours

##### Knowing Jesus Christ and sharing His hope:

- Pray that many find peace with God because of how each of us lives our daily lives

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR; <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html> (accessed 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017)

- Likewise, pray that all involved with each of our mission partners will make Jesus accessible to many by how they live their lives and do what they do

Useful links:

Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Bible Society: UK: [www.biblesociety.org.uk/](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/)

Egypt: [www.darelketab.org/bs3/en/default.aspx](http://www.darelketab.org/bs3/en/default.aspx)

Open the Book: [www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/)

Youth for Christ: UK: <https://yfc.uk/>

Local: [www.yfcgloucestershire.co.uk/](http://www.yfcgloucestershire.co.uk/)

The Rock: [www.therock.uk.com/](http://www.therock.uk.com/)

Street Pastors: <http://streetpastors.org/locations/cheltenham/>

GARAS: <http://www.garas.org.uk/>

Mandritsara - Mat & Katy Linley: [mandritsara.org.uk/](http://mandritsara.org.uk/)

Kagando: Friends of Kagando: [www.friendsofkagando.org.uk/](http://www.friendsofkagando.org.uk/)

TEAR Fund: [www.tearfund.org/](http://www.tearfund.org/)

Corrie Sissons: [www.oxfam.org.uk/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/)

Scott & Chris Sissons in South Africa: <https://sissonsinsouthafrica.wordpress.com/>