



The Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Fellowship region is home to a large number of refugees, immigrants and victims of human trafficking. MACBF desires to equip our churches to be better prepared to minister to and with these who have come to our doorsteps.

This handbook is designed to be a resource for action. You will be guided to walk your streets, to investigate what God is already doing through your community to assist you as you offer the welcoming presence of Christ to those knocking on your door. You will not find answers on these pages; instead you will find questions for your team to explore. We hope you will also join us as we engage with our Cooperative Baptist Fellowship partners in Kampala, Uganda ministering to and with refugees through Refuge and Hope International.

MACBF is here to equip you and to assist you on this journey. Thanks to Dr. Daniel Carro of our partner, the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, for creating the Bible studies in this resource. We encourage you to reach out to neighboring congregations and share the experiences and resources that you gather. Together, we are better than we are apart.

This resource is a living document and as such will be updated and enhanced as needed. If you would like to receive these updates, or if you have additional information to add, please contact our Coordinator at [Trisha.MACBF@gmail.com](mailto:Trisha.MACBF@gmail.com). Once our new website is established, you will also be able to access this resource online.

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## **WHY are we engaging in such a ministry?**

In 2014, one of our MACBF pastors was visited by a stranger. He was in the USA as an asylum seeker and was afraid for his family who remained in his country of origin. The pastor prayed with this gentleman and offered some social assistance, but the pastor felt ill-equipped for ministering effectively.

Recently, a church learned one of their young people had been wooed by a man. Though he was not much older than she, his attention made her feel pretty, special and noticed. His flattery, gifts and promises drew her into the world of human sex trafficking. The church felt ill equipped to minister to her and her family.

These are just two examples of ministry opportunities presented to our churches on a regular basis. We hope to begin sharing these stories with one another as we equip ourselves to better provide support and hope as the presence of Christ in the Mid-Atlantic.

***We encourage you to create a focus group (or task an already formed mission group) who is interested in this ministry. They will work through and explore these questions and resources together.***

## WHY is this important?

### NO ONE CHOOSES TO BE A REFUGEE

*"Every minute eight people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror. If conflict threatened your family, what would you do? Stay and risk your lives? Or try to flee, and risk kidnap, rape or torture?"*

*For many refugees the choice is between the horrific or something worse."*

*Source: UNHCR*

*"We each have a responsibility to make this horrific and all-too-common crime a lot less common. And our work with victims is the key that will open the door to real change—not just on behalf of the more than 44,000 survivors who have been identified in the past year, but also for the more than 20 million victims of trafficking who have not." -- John F. Kerry, Secretary of State*

*Source: US Department of State*

From EthicsDaily: <http://www.ethicsdaily.com/a-lesson-from-ruth-on-welcoming-refugees-cms-22099>

From the United Methodist Church: <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/welcoming-the-migrant-to-the-us>

# Welcoming Strangers in the Name of Jesus

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One of the most difficult commands the church has received from the Judeo-Christian tradition is the one of welcoming the stranger. Immigrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking, and other kind of “strangers” come to mind when our congregations are compelled to respond to our communities about serving people who come to our doors. The following three Bible studies are designed to help perplexed churches to cope with the demands of the day regarding welcoming the stranger.

## Bible Study # 1

### The Mission of Jesus and the Mission of the Church

#### Luke 4:16-21

“The church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning,” wrote Swiss theologian Emil Brunner (*The Word and the World*, London, SCM Press, 1931, p. 108). No other declaration about the mission of the church has been as influential and as widely quoted as a concise description of the relation of mission to the life of the church. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann added that “mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood” (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, p.10).

“The heart of ‘mission’ is the drive to share the good news with all, to cross every border with the gospel,” writes more recently Peruvian missiologist Samuel Escobar (*The New Global Mission*, Downers Grove, Intervarsity, 2003, p. 13). And he adds: “As a community of believers in Jesus Christ, the church performs various functions. It bears *testimony* just by being the church, the company of believers have *fellowship* and feel a sense of belonging, they express joyful gratitude to God in *worship*, they receive *teaching* on the Christian life, they provide *service* in meeting the needs of people both within and outside the church, and they are prophetic in the denunciation of evil when God’s kingdom is proclaimed. All of these activities are part of the answer to questions such as ‘What is the church’s mission in the world?’ or ‘What does the church exists for?’ Sharing the good news, going to ‘the other’ with the message of Jesus Christ, inviting others to Jesus’ great banquet, gives a focus and direction to all the other functions. Thus, one can say that the church exists for mission and that a church that is only inward looking is not truly the church.”

Most missiologists today agree that what makes the church is its mission. It is not the building, it is not a convivial fellowship, it is not the programs. What makes the church to be the church is its sense of mission, this sense of having been sent into the world with a

mandate from God. Mission, then, is not a byproduct of a church. It is quite the opposite: the church is the product and result of God's mission.

“Whom would you choose as an ideal model for the doing of mission in the next decade or next century?” asks missiologist Alan Neely (*A New Call to Mission*, Macon, Smyth & Helwys, 2000, p. 22-23). Would you pick Lottie Moon, William Carey, perhaps the apostle Paul? Neely answers his question: “If we are going to have a model or pattern by which we engage in mission, should we not go back to the original? Who should be considered the original? I suggest we consider first Jesus as our model. To think of Jesus as a missionary may be a new concept for many. [However] we begin with Jesus for two important reasons. First, because Jesus discloses to us what God is like. When we think of God we must think of God in terms of this person, Jesus, or God is not God. Moreover, we can only understand the motive and dimensions of the Christian mission by looking carefully at the mission of Jesus.”

The text under consideration today –Luke 4:16-21– spells out Jesus' mission clearly. In Matthew (9:35) we read that “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.” There are three general activities that Matthew describes about the mission of Jesus: teaching, preaching, and healing.

Luke's text, however, is more detailed. The mission of Jesus is rooted in the prophecy of Isaiah (61:1-3). Jesus takes upon himself the vision that Isaiah has had for the anointed of the Lord: – To bring good news to the oppressed,

- To bind up the brokenhearted,
- To proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
- To proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;
- To comfort all who mourn;
- To provide for those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

Jesus' mission, then, according to Luke's record, was declared as:

- To bring good news to the poor,
- To proclaim release to the captives,
- To proclaim recovery of sight to the blind,
- To let the oppressed go free,
- To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The mission of the church is the mission of Jesus. Jesus' mission literalized and historicized the good news of the Gospel by teaching, preaching and healing men, women and children. He healed the lame, the blind, the physically challenged, the chronically ill, the “possessed.” Jesus fed the hungry, included in his community people who were socially and religiously ostracized, ate with “tax collectors and sinners”, healed people in the Sabbath, even insisted that children had access to him. His ministry was whole and holistic. All areas of human life were touched by Jesus' mission.

In the next two Bible studies, we will concentrate on how Jesus' mission –and the church's today– revolves around welcoming the stranger.

Activities:

1. Compare the three definitions of mission that begin this study: Brunner, Moltmann and Escobar.
2. Compare the mission of Jesus in Matthew (9:35) and in Luke (4:18-19), marking similitudes and differences.
3. Compare the mission statement of your church with the mission statement of Jesus. If your church has not written a mission statement, write one for your church following Jesus' example. In the same way that Jesus adopted the declaration of Isaiah about the anointed of the Lord for himself, shouldn't our churches adopt Jesus' declaration of mission for ourselves?
4. Comment on the two reasons that Alan Neely suggests for why Jesus should be our model or pattern for how do we engage in mission.
5. Expand on what does it mean for a church today
  - To bring good news to the poor,
  - To proclaim release to the captives,
  - To proclaim recovery of sight to the blind,
  - To let the oppressed go free,
  - To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
6. How can a church today imitate Jesus in having a whole and holistic ministry?

## **Bible Study # 2**

### **The Power of God and the Stranger**

#### **Luke 4:22-30**

When we read the declaration of mission of Jesus in Luke 4 we seldom realize that the story does not end with Jesus saying: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21). The story continues, and is a puzzling one.

Luke (4:22) informs us that, as soon as Jesus finished with his homily, “All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.” Later in the story, and after everything had transpired that Sabbath, Luke (4:28-29) also tells us that “When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.” What has changed? What was the offending matter, so offending that they wanted to throw Jesus off a precipice?

The Luke story is fragmentary, but it gives us enough material to realize that the Jews in the Nazareth synagogue were offended by the fact that Jesus equalized non-Jews with the Jews as recipients of God’s grace.

The discussions in the synagogue that Sabbath revolved around the person of Jesus and the identification he had made of himself as the “anointed of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1), that is, the Messiah. If he was –as he claimed– the anointed of the Lord, how is it that we know that he is “the son of Joseph?” (4:22). The parallel passages (Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-5), which only record the first part of the conversation, give us the impression that the Jews took offense at the fact that Jesus has identified himself as the Messiah. In their own view, Jesus could not be the Messiah because they knew him and his family, they were their local neighbors. In the record of the parallel gospels, the story ends with the proverb, “a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household,” and the fact that Jesus could not make many miracles there in Nazareth.

Luke’s record, however, provides us with a fuller background, which help us better understand the rage of the Jews that Sabbath day. Luke –being himself a doctor– recalls people trying to give back Jesus his own medicine by quoting the proverb, “Doctor, cure yourself!” (4:23). Not only that, they demanded from Jesus “Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.” The people of Nazareth were expecting Jesus to make good his claim to the Messiahship by doing there what they had heard of his doing in Capernaum and elsewhere. It is curious that this same appeal was addressed to Jesus while suffering on the cross (Mt 27:40, 42).

Jesus was not ready to let anybody think that the power of God was either a matter of proof, or a property of the Jews. The power of God is distributed according to the will of God, who gives it freely and abundantly to everyone who comes to God in faith. To prove his point, Jesus recalls two great examples of the Old Testament in which the power of God was disbursed to people who were not Jews. The first one (4:25-26) is the widow of Zarephthah of Sidon (1 Kings 17:8-24), who fed her household and Elijah the prophet with the

unending jar of meal and jug of oil, and whose son was revived by the prophet after being almost dead. The second example (4:27) was the one of Naaman of Syria (2 Kings 5:1-27) who was cleaned by Elisha from leprosy.

Perhaps the most offending thing for the Jews that day was that Jesus stressed the fact that “many widows were in Israel” (4:25) and “many lepers were in Israel” (4:27), but they did not received God’s favor, except for these strangers. The Jews of the Nazareth synagogue were nor ready to see God welcoming strangers. For this very reason they wanted to get rid of Jesus. According to their exclusivist views, the God of Israel should only take care of the people of Israel, not of strangers. Jesus showed them the opposite view. According to Jesus, the power and the grace of God is to be received and enjoyed by all humanity, all ethnias, all kinds of people, all nations, all kinds of “strangers.”

Welcoming the stranger should not have been foreign for a good Jew. The Old Testament is full of commandments about welcoming the stranger. The Bible teaches us:

– That God loves strangers (Deuteronomy 10:17-19, 27:19): “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

– That God watches over the stranger (Psalm 146:9): “The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.”

– That God requires God’s people to love the stranger too (Leviticus 19:33-34): “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (See also Leviticus 19:10 and Exodus 22:21).

– That God requires God’s people to treat the stranger with the same care we treat our own kin (Exodus 12:49): “There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.” (See also Numbers 15:15).

Welcoming the stranger was in the heart of Jesus’ mission. In the parable of the judgment of the nations, in Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus states clearly the implications of his mission, which is also the mission of the church. “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” **“I was a stranger,” says Jesus, “and you welcomed me.”**

Who is a stranger? A stranger is a person whom one does not know or with whom one is not familiar, as in “don’t talk to strangers.” A stranger is a person who does not know, or is not known in, a particular place or community, as in “I’m a stranger in these parts.” A

stranger is a person entirely unaccustomed or unfamiliar to something, be that a feeling, an experience, or a particular situation, as in “he is no stranger to controversy.”

In the wrong place, at the wrong time, all of us are strangers. Given the circumstances, each of us is a stranger to someone else. We also define strangers with other words. We say that strangers are aliens, unknown persons, refugees, homeless, cyphers, non-entities, entrants, freshmen, foreigners, neophytes, newcomers, outsiders, barbarians, outlanders, intruders, trespassers, immigrants. A stranger is anyone who does not belong in the environment in which they are found.

Jesus was an example in welcoming strangers. He healed the lame, the blind, the physically challenged, the chronically ill, the “possessed.” Jesus fed the hungry, included in his community people who were socially and religiously ostracized, ate with “tax collectors and sinners”, healed people in the Sabbath, and even insisted that children had access to him. His ministry was whole and holistic. All areas of human life were touched by Jesus’ mission.

Activities:

1. Discuss in class about what was so heretical for the Jews about Jesus declaring himself to be the “anointed of the Lord.”
2. Study the cases of the widow of Zarephthah of Sidon, and Naaman the Syrian.
3. Explain why the Jews were so offended by the examples of the widow and Naaman.
4. Relate the love of God for strangers (Deuteronomy 10:17-19, 27:19) with the demand that God make on us to love strangers.
5. What does Jesus mean when he declares: “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me?”
6. In which ways can your church show hospitality toward strangers?

### **Bible Study # 3**

## **God's Radical Hospitality**

### **Matthew 5:43-48**

We end these three Bible studies on welcoming the stranger with the study of one of most impressive passages of the Sermon on the Mount.

According to Jesus, the Jews of his time had heard “that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy” (5:43). The Old Testament did say we shall love our neighbor (Leviticus 19:18), but it did not say that we shall hate our enemies. That was the interpretation of the rabbis of the time. The Bible deplores hate (See Leviticus 19:17 and Deuteronomy 23:7). The Bible was right, the interpretation of the rabbis was wrong.

So Jesus corrects the interpretation. “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (5:44). The justification of Jesus is direct: “so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (5:45). God is a radical host, Jesus teaches. God does not make difference on the evil and the good when God commands God’s sun to rise over the horizon, or God’s rain to fall over the face of the earth. All are treated equally with sun and rain. The good and the bad happen to all, God does not make difference. God is God of every human person under the sun. Paul to the Romans said it clearly: “Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also” (Romans 3:29).

The argument of Jesus goes even further: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:46-48). The question of Jesus is: What more are you doing? “More” translates the Greek word *perisson*, which means what is left over, what is more than enough, something that is more than plenty, more than required, something that is unnecessary because it abounds, overflows, excels, exceeds.

It is implied in the question that there is something we need to do to others that it is not needed, something that is not required, that is more than sufficient, that abounds, that exceeds, something that is out of the ordinary. There is no way to avoid the fact that we Christians cannot be satisfied with only doing what is required, what is expected from us. As Jesus said: “So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!” (Luke 17:10).

It was more than required. I did not have to do it. But I did it. I was not supposed to forgive my brother, but I forgave him. I was not expected to help the one that provoked her own pain, but I took her out of the mud. I was not supposed to visit my enemy, but I gave him food, I gave him drink, I stored burning coals on his head (Romans 12:18-21). I did it because of love, and love is always something extraordinary, more than required.

Jesus' implication is that there is no glory in the work done only by obligation. There is no prize in what you do because you had to. Only the one that has the capacity of doing what is not expected, of turning the cheek that is not required, of giving away the cloak that is not demanded, of traveling the mile that is not commanded, only that person gain for him/herself the privilege of being used by God in the ministration of human needs.

We provide in the ministration of strangers because God has done it. God in Christ was the first missionary who came to a world with twisted values and proclaimed the presence of the kingdom of God, a kingdom in which strangers are made members of the family of God.

The Bible includes many stories of God's people being strangers themselves: Abraham left Ur to migrate to Canaan, Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, Jacob's family migrated to Egypt to escape famine, the Israelites left Egypt to escape oppression, Naomi and her husband left Israel to escape famine, later Ruth left Moab and stayed with Naomi when she returned to Israel, the people of Judah were exiled in Babylon, Jesus Himself Was a Refugee (Matthew 2:13–15), Paul and other early Christians had to flee from one country to another to escape persecution, among many others that could be told.

When God's people failed to treat strangers as God's law required, they were admonished by the prophets.

- Treat strangers with care, said Isaiah (1:17).
- Do not do violence to the stranger, said Jeremiah (7:6, 22:3).
- Do not extort the stranger, pleaded Ezekiel (22:7, 29).
- Do not oppress or thrust aside the stranger, called Malachi (3:5).

The message is clear: Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow, and welcome the stranger.

The New Testament also pleaded for the strangers.

- Do not separate yourself from the stranger, wrote Paul to the Galatians (2:11-12).
- Show hospitality to strangers, pleads the author of Hebrews (13:2), “for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

God's concern for strangers is rooted in the fact that they do not possess the typical rights and privileges afforded to full members of the community. Strangers are especially vulnerable.

Welcoming the stranger enters into the heart of God in a special way. The plan of God for our world was summarized by Paul in several ways:

- In his letter to the Romans (5:10) Paul wrote, “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.” We were enemies, strangers to God, but now we have been reconciled with God by the very actions of God.

– To the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:19) Paul wrote that: “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.” God is the main reconciler. We are reconcilers in the name of God.

– To the Ephesians (2:13-16, 19) Paul wrote, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.” We were far and now are near. We are now a part of the new humanity of God, one that includes all sorts of peoples and “strangers.” We were strangers and aliens, but now we are co-citizens with the saints and members of the family of God.

The radical hospitality of God has reached to all of us. If we say we follow Jesus’ teachings, we need to show to the world around us the same hospitality that each of us received from God in Christ. Do it gladly, do it with enthusiasm. You have been made a part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

#### Activities:

1. What does it mean that God is God of the Jews and the Gentiles, and that God “makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous?”
2. Discuss what does it mean today Jesus’ expression: “What more are you doing?”
3. Recall some of the stories of God’s people as strangers told in the Bible.
4. Compare the warnings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi regarding the treatment of strangers.
5. Compare the three sayings of Paul regarding reconciliation in Romans, 2 Corinthians and Ephesians.
6. In which ways can your church imitate God in showing radical hospitality?

## 2014 Human Rights Day Litany from the Baptist World Alliance

<http://www.bwanet.org/programs/freedom-and-justice/human-rights-day2>

*As Baptists, we commit ourselves to the cause of human rights in our communities, countries and around the world through prayer, advocacy and representation; repenting of our complicity in human rights abuses through our negligence or participation; committing to giving voice to the voiceless, hope to the hopeless and brokering peace where peace is lacking.*

### CALL TO PRAYER

**Leader:** Someone is shouting in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make a straight path for God to travel! Every valley must be filled up, every hill and mountain leveled off. The winding roads must be made straight, and the rough paths made smooth." (Luke 3:1-6)

**All:** God of justice, your messenger has called us to prepare your way, to make your paths straight.

**Leader:** But the world is not ready to receive you. The roadway is choked with material possessions of people who have become rich from the labor of those who are denied access to resources because of their race, ethnicity, gender, class or nationality.

**All:** God of peace, your messenger is calling us to prepare your way.

**Leader:** But fearful threats exist. The highway is barricaded with armaments. The valleys are filled with landmines that kill innocent children, women and men.

**All:** God of compassion, your messenger is calling us to prepare your way.

**Leader:** But not everybody will be free to greet you. Some of the courageous languish in prison, tortured for their beliefs or for speaking truth to power. Many women are imprisoned in their homes, abused by their husbands and without means of escape because they are denied legal and economic recourse. Many children are chained in sweatshops or sold into prostitution.

**All:** How then shall we prepare the way?

**Leader:** In the name of God and for the sake of God's people, we proclaim in word and deed that all human beings are born with fundamental human rights.

**All:** How shall we prepare the way?

**Leader:** We will strive to guarantee the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of women and men.

**All:** How shall we prepare the way?

**Leader:** We will work for a world in which human beings enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want.

**All:** Then we will go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before us shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. And every valley shall be filled and the crooked shall be made straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**Leader:** May God's face shine upon us, that God's way may be known upon the earth, the peace of God among all nations.

**All:** Let the peoples pursue your justice and your peace, O God. Let all the people pursue your peace.

**Leader:** Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth.

**All:** Let the people pursue your justice and your peace, O God. Let all the people pursue your peace.

## **PRAYER**

God of life, Creator of all people  
As equal in dignity and humanity;  
You have called us to be one:  
To live in unity and harmony;  
To build faith and realize community.  
Yet we are divided  
Race from race; class from class;  
Rich from poor; gender from gender;  
Old from young; neighbor from neighbor.  
O God, by whose love all enmity is brought to an end:  
Break down the walls that separate us,  
Forgive the sins that divide us,  
Free us from pride and prejudice.  
O God, give us the courage to repent honestly;  
Give us the power to change our lives.  
Amen.

## **LITANY OF COMMITMENT**

Excerpts from the Beatitudes (Luke 6:17-22 and Matthew 5:1-11), the Covenant of Intra-Baptist Relations and the Charter of the United Nations

**Leader:** God of all creation, we are your children.

**All:** Help us seek the security of the whole human family made in your image and for whom Jesus lived, died and lived again.

**Leader:** Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God."

**All:** God of Peace, we your children are "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

**Leader:** Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**All:** God of Love, we your children "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and nations large and small."

**Leader:** Jesus said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God."

**All:** God of Life, we your children will "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

**Leader:** Jesus said, "love your neighbor as yourself and love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return."

**All:** God of Community, we your children will "practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors." We are called to be peacemakers to the Christ who came that we might know a peace that passes understanding. Lead us to rise up and be called children of God, citizens of a new world community. Guide us to speak boldly, with moral conviction, to the nations and to the world. Let us build, with your grace, a global community by acting now for world peace, for a flowering of justice, for an opportunity of love, for the realization of Your peace. AMEN.

**Friday: "...the kind of fasting I have chosen:...to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Isaiah 58:6**

Victims of human trafficking are treated as commodities and only worth what the seller can get for them. Pray for

- Sense of worth as a child as a child of God and worthy of the same love as any of God's children
- Courage to take any opportunity to leave their traffickers
- Contact with the trafficking number hotline or someone who can get them help
- Opportunity to change situations that put them in a position of vulnerability
- Sense of power, love and sound mind that comes from the Holy Spirit



**Saturday: "...in order that we...might be for the praise of his glory." Ephesians 1:11**

CBF Field Personnel, their partners, and countless churches and individuals welcome the strangers with the love and friendship of Christ every day. Pray for

- Resources to meet the needs of those entrusted to them
- Wisdom in crossing cultural barriers
- Creativity and insight as they develop and maintain programs

- Compassion and empathy for the hundreds and thousands who look to them for help, guidance, and love.
- Spiritual nourishment to equip them for the task of sharing the love of Christ in culturally relevant ways.



**Welcoming the Stranger**  
30 Days of Prayer for Internationals



The prayer booklet *Welcoming the Stranger: 30 days of prayer for Internationals* contains a story for each day with prayer points, resources, and ways to engage. To order contact [nell@cbfinternationals.org](mailto:nell@cbfinternationals.org)

# Praying for Internationals

*Welcoming the stranger as you pray.*

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP  
MISSION COMMUNITY  
[cbfinternationals.org](http://cbfinternationals.org)  
[missioncommunities.org/internationals](http://missioncommunities.org/internationals)  
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## CBF INTERNATIONALS CLUSTER

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
Global Missions  
2930 Powers Road South Suite 133  
Atlanta, GA 30341

For more info regarding this and other resources contact Nell Green  
E-mail: [nell@cbfinternationals.org](mailto:nell@cbfinternationals.org)



**Cooperative Baptist FELLOWSHIP**

## Welcoming the stranger as we pray....

### Sunday: "Let us not give up meeting together..." Hebrews 10:25

Displaced peoples often find it difficult to find and become involved in communities of faith. Pray for

- Ability to find others to join in communal worship
- Those in different cultural communities who will lead out in joint worship
- Opportunities for spiritual nourishment through Bible study and discipleship
- Sense of God's presence no matter where they may be
- Openness to the word of God, hearing testimony of God's working, and receiving the good news of Jesus entering into personal relationship with him.



### Monday: "No longer foreigners and aliens, but... members of God's household..." Ephesians 2:19

International Students are far from family and their main support system even as they adjust to new schools and cultures. Pray for

- Provision of host families who will take exchange students for a year
- Those who will be surrogate families to international students attending colleges and universities

- Adjustment to new school and culture
- English skills necessary to succeed academically

- Those who will share the love of Christ in culturally relevant ways and with integrity

### Tuesday: "He got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left..." Matthew 2:14

Refugees do not want to leave. They are forced from their homes by political, economic, or religious oppression and/or instability. Pray for

- Safety for those vulnerable to further exploitation as they travel the refugee highway, especially women and children.
- Provision of facilities for refugees fleeing in crisis situations
- Facility of 'red tape' as they transition to a new home country
- Communities who would lovingly receive refugees and help them adjust
- Individuals who would be the hands, feet, and voice of Christ to these who are weary from the journey

### Wednesday: "Love those who are aliens..." Deuteronomy 10:19

Immigrants have created a new place for themselves as their host country becomes their home country. Pray for

- Ability to integrate into their new society even as they are able to guard their cultural uniqueness

- Ability to learn English and succeed in securing work that will adequately provide for their families.

- Wisdom as they raise children in a culture that is foreign to them but will not be to their children.



- Help and guidance as they work on visas and work permits
- Those from their new country who will come alongside and share life with them in sincere love and friendship

### Thursday: "Let the little children come to me..." Mark 10:14

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are children raised in a culture that is not the culture of their parents. Pray for

- Friends who will appreciate their uniqueness
- Opportunities to use their gifts in navigating multiple cultures and languages
- A sense of belonging
- Wisdom and guidance in remaining loyal to their culture of origin, even as they enjoy the culture they are raised in.
- Ability to separate culture from faith and learn what following Jesus looks like in any culture

**Pray with our Global CBF partners! [www.refugeandhope.org](http://www.refugeandhope.org)**

Refuge and Hope International serves the urban refugee community in Kampala through the Center of Hope. The Center provides English classes, computer classes, classes in math, history, science and geography, as well as providing counseling, Bible studies, and cultural events. During the school holidays, the Center provides leadership training to youth and students. Currently there are over 300 students attending classes at the Center of Hope. There is a full time program in the mornings and a part time program in the afternoons to assist those who need a more flexible schedule. Refuge and Hope desires to serve the urban refugee community in Kampala regardless of race, tribe, gender, or religion in a holistic manner that will provide improved life skills; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual guidance; and help create a loving supportive community that impacts the lives of the refugees, the host community and their home country and throughout the world.



**Foundational Bible Verses**

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.” Psalm 46:1

“You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.” Psalm 119:114

“Heal them and preach the Kingdom of God.” Luke 10:9

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Isaiah 61:1-2

# FAST

## WEEK PRAYER CALENDAR

### AWARENESS TO FREEDOM

## ENDING SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed." Isaiah 61:1 (NLT)

DAY 1 DAY 2 DAY 3 DAY 4 DAY 5 DAY 6 DAY 7

PRAY FOR THOSE WHOSE VOICES ARE NOT HEARD: the defenseless, the imprisoned, and the broken. Pray for the rescue and restoration of those domestically and internationally enslaved.	PRAY FOR THOSE WHO DAILY BATTLE HUMAN TRAFFICKING for those who give of their time, money, and heart to serve victims - first responders, activists, advocates, counselors, social workers and church leaders. Pray for wisdom, compassion, discernment and empathy. Pray a bright light be shown into this dark place.	PRAY AGAINST PROPAGANDA OF LIES IMPRESSED UPON SOCIETY - the normalization of sexual harm. Pray that the evil found in pornography, strip clubs, and the solicitation of sex would be exposed. Pray the God would convict the hearts of all involved so that they might turn from wickedness and seek redemption. Pray for the heart of those who exerts undo power over another human being; that God may heal the heart of exploitation and end the demand.	PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE: children, single-parent households, the abused, immigrants and foster homes. Pray for the guidance of children and the wisdom of caretakers: school bus drivers, teachers, church leaders, parents, and other authority figures. Pray protection over those at-risk; that they might be protected from harm.	PRAY FOR GOD'S PROVISION: that laws and would be put in place which abolish exploitation of human beings in any capacity; and in so doing, laws would be put into effect outlawing the sale or purchase of slave-made products. Pray for global leaders to respond to the call and stand to end labor trafficking. Pray that consumers will make conscientious decisions in the products they purchase and support those companies that have cleaned up their supply line of all slave labor	PRAY FOR CORPORATE COLLABORATION among God's children in the fight to end slavery and human trafficking. Pray for the empowerment of the local church to stand against evil. Pray for the church's practitioners to gain wisdom and knowledge in becoming the top defender and protector against exploitation of persons. Pray that the church would rise up, take heart, and pursue justice. Pray for the church to provide tangible comfort, support and protection as we are called to be His hands that heal.
ISAIAH 42:22 LEVITICUS 19:29 EXODUS 20:14	ISAIAH 61:7 REVELATIONS 21:1-5 JEREMIAH 29:11 ISAIAH 58:6	ROMANS 8:20-21 GALATIANS 5:13-14	2 THESSALONIANS 3:2-3 ISAIAH 41:10 PSALM 121:7-8	ISAIAH 10:1-2 PSALM 2:10-12	ISAIAH 61:1-3 1 PETER 2:9-10 1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5 EPHESIANS 4:19-20

**Recognizing the Signs of Trafficking.....** from <http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/what-human-trafficking/recognizing-signs>

**Are you or someone you know being trafficked?**

**Is human trafficking happening in your community?**

**Knowing the red flags and indicators of human trafficking is a key step in identifying more victims and helping them find the assistance they need.**

**To request help or report suspected human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Or text INFO or HELP to us at: BeFree (233733).**

**Common Work and Living Conditions: The Individual(s) in Question**

- Is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes
- Is under 18 and is providing commercial sex acts
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp / manager
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)

**Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior**

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement
- Avoids eye contact

**Poor Physical Health**

- Lacks health care
- Appears malnourished

- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture

#### **Lack of Control**

- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (ID or passport)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating)

#### **Other**

- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where he/she is staying/address
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in
- Loss of sense of time
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story

This list is not exhaustive and represents only a selection of possible indicators. Also, the red flags in this list may not be present in all trafficking cases and are not cumulative. Learn more at [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org).

## **An Exercise** (used by permission)

*A Mission Experience: Hearing, Seeing and Praying for God's World*, Marion Aldridge, Retired CBFSC  
Visit 14 "Stations of the World"

*Schedule an afternoon, a weekend or a full week as a pilgrimage with a purpose – a time dedicated to seeing and hearing God's world.*

1. Get on a city bus, or other public transportation, and go to places in your town or state about which you know little or nothing. You don't have to travel far to see worlds you know nothing about. (If funds permit and there is a desire, then travel to a more distant location. Get off the "beaten path.")
2. Go to and from work by different routes every day of the week.
3. Invite the parents of your children's international friends over for dessert.
4. Invite a colleague from another culture out to lunch.
5. Go to a magazine store or the library and purchase or look through ten magazines you have never heard of on subjects about which you know nothing. Tune into radio and television stations you do not ordinarily listen to or watch, sections of the newspaper you do not habitually read.
6. Go into ten businesses you have never entered before. What stores do you see on the side of the road or highway or city street about which you know nothing?
7. Visit five different religious centers (churches, temples, mosques, cathedrals) different from your own. Engage in conversation regarding worship, architecture, theology, ethics, and doctrine. The goal is to listen, not to debate.
8. Frequent a restaurant that serves an ethnic food you have never tried.
9. Volunteer at any secular social service provider.
10. Frequent any public recreation areas in neighborhoods where internationals live.
11. Go online and visit "You Tube" (or other personal space sites), visit a chat room that discusses an unfamiliar subject, or visit other Internet sites that will lead you to subjects about which you know little or nothing.
12. Watch the newspaper for local cultural events and attend, especially when celebrating cultural or religious holidays.
13. Volunteer some time at schools, centers, or churches to help children or adults learn English as a second language, or help at a refugee center or another service provider to internationals.
14. Take lessons to learn a foreign language.

## EXPLORE

### **Your specific congregation and community:**

1. What does your congregation need to feel better equipped to offer a warm welcome?
2. What does “warm welcome” look like to you?
3. What specific things do you do to help newcomers and strangers feel welcome?
4. What are immigrants/refugees/victims asking for when they come to your church doors?  
(You might need to talk with your church staff for specifics)
5. What are your regional idioms? You might need to ask someone who moved to your community from a different region to figure these out!
6. What are foods specific to your region?  
For example, do you call soft drinks soda, pop, soda pop, coke (even if it’s Pepsi)?

**Basic Needs: We encourage you to create a master map, locate all of these places and mark your map so you can share it!**

7. Where are the ethnic grocery stores? Once you locate them, visit them! It would be a great exercise for you to ask another shopper for a tip of something they can only find in this specific store.
8. Where is the closest food pantry? What is required? What days are they open?
9. Where is the closest clothing closet? What is required? What days are they open?
10. Where do people shop for basic needs like clothing and cleaning supplies? Are there certain days prices are discounted?
11. How do I get utilities? What are utilities? What's really needed? What documents are needed to open an account?

**Spiritual Life:**

12. Where are the ethnic churches? List as many as you have within a 20 mile radius. Once you have determined a “large” number of people from a specific background, go worship with a church that matches.
13. Where is the local mosque? When is the instruction time for children?
14. Where is the local synagogue?
15. Where is the local \_\_\_\_ temple?

**Education:**

16. How do you enroll in school? What documents are needed?
17. What inoculations (shots) are needed?
18. What's an IEP? (Individual Education Plan) What are the pros and cons to a child having an IEP? Will a child be seen as "behind," or worse, feel "stupid" if he/she has an IEP?
19. What is ESOL? Why should a child be part of ESOL?
20. What is a PTA? (Parent Teacher Association) Must a family join?
21. Where should you get school supplies? Are there free resources?
22. What is the school dress code?
23. Where are Adult ESOL classes? Is there child care?

**Social:**

24. What is socially acceptable dress in the community?
25. Where's the library? What can be done there?
26. What are the rules of the community?
27. Can banks be trusted? Who works with newcomers to the US?
28. What about loans? PayDay loans?
29. What is a social worker?
30. What is CPS? (Child Protective Services)
31. What do I do if I or my children are victims of domestic violence? (Define domestic violence – in some cultures, it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife)
32. Where can I get parenting help?

**Health:**

- 33. Where is a doctor I can afford?
- 34. Are there doctors who speak languages other than English?
- 35. Where is the county clinic? What are the hours? What is needed for service?
- 36. Where is the drugstore?
- 37. How to do basic first aid in the US? What are meds called?  
tylenol/acetaminophen/panadol..... Are generics ok?
- 38. What vaccines are needed to go to school? (see 17)
- 39. Where can I get rape after care?
- 40. Where are the local shelters? Who do they take?
- 41. Is there a safe house nearby?

**Legal and Employment:**

*NOTE: If you encounter someone who is in need of legal assistance, please refer the individual to a professional. See resources at the end of this workbook.*

- 42. Where do you get a work permit?
- 43. How do you get a green card?
- 44. Where is a citizenship class? Is there child care?
- 45. Where is vocational training available?
- 46. Where can I get legal assistance?
- 47. What do I do if I am not documented?
- 48. What are taxes? How are they paid?
- 49. How do I develop a resume?
- 50. Are there organizations that assist with job finding?

### What else can my congregation do?

- **Pray:** Pray for all immigrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking and their families all over the world as they struggle to find stability and safety in a new community. Pray that we would embrace and care for the “stranger” who enters our neighborhoods and congregations.
- **Learn:** Learn the underlying issues and reason persons are immigrating to the U.S. Learn how to support immigrants and connect them to local resources.
- **Learn:** Learn the underlying issues and reason persons are trafficked. Connect with organizations who are working to combat this epidemic.
- **Learn:** Learn how to prevent children and others from being trafficked (this is a real issue at all socio-economic issues).
- **Support:** Support immigrants who are in our communities by creating a church wide plan of action and creating partnerships with local immigrant resources.
- **Support:** Support victims by connecting with organizations who specialize in this work.
- **Partner:** Partner with MACBF as we collaborate with CBF missionaries ministering in Uganda with immigrants and victims. [www.refugeandhope.org](http://www.refugeandhope.org)

**Further Resources:**

CBF Internationals: <http://www.cbfinternationals.org/>

CBF mission community Internationals: <http://missioncommunities.org/internationals-resources/>

CBF Ministers Call for Immigration Reform: <http://www.cbf.net/news/archive/8869/>

Baptist World Alliance: Freedom and Justice: <http://bwanet.org/programs/freedom-and-justice>

Baptist World Aid: <http://bwanet.org/programs/baptist-world-aid>

American Baptists Human Trafficking:  
[http://www.internationalministries.org/topics/human\\_trafficking](http://www.internationalministries.org/topics/human_trafficking)

US Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): <http://www.unhcr.org/>

International Justice Mission: <https://www.ijm.org/>

**Immigration Organizations and resources in the Mid-Atlantic Region:**

- CAIR Coalition: <http://www.caircoalition.org>
- Ayuda: <http://ayuda.com>
- Catholic Charities: <http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/ILS>
- CARECEN: <http://www.carecencdc.org/direct-services/immigration-legal-services/>
- County Government Offices have helpful local resources

**CVT - Center for Victims of Torture**

[www.cvt.org/](http://www.cvt.org/)

1776 K Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006

Tel: +1 612 43 64 800

Client Services: +1 612 43 64 840

Toll-free: +1 877 26 58 775

E-mail: [cvt@cvt.org](mailto:cvt@cvt.org)

The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is a private, non-profit, non-partisan, humanitarian organisation that helps to rebuild the lives of refugees and communities affected by war. It provides mental health services to refugees and survivors in post conflict situations who suffer from the effects of torture and trauma; trains local staff to be paraprofessional Psychosocial Counsellors (PSCs) to act as peer counsellors and builds the capacity of community leaders, teachers, health care workers to recognize the effects of trauma.

**Human Rights First**

[www.humanrightsfirst.org/](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/) 805 15th Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005-2207

Tel: +1 (202) 547 5692

Fax: +1 (202) 543 5999

Human Rights First is a non-profit, nonpartisan international human rights organization with offices in New York and Washington D.C. Volunteer lawyers at the Refugee Representation Program at Human Rights First help asylum seekers in the U.S. with asylum cases. Human Rights First collaborates with pro-bono lawyers who provide legal support for asylum seekers in the United States of America. To learn more about their services see: <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/our-work/refugee-protection/probonoprogram/>

#### **International Commission on Eritrean Refugees**

[www.iceritrefugees.org](http://www.iceritrefugees.org)/2141 P Street, N.W., Suite 103 Washington, DC 20008

Tel: +1 (202) 56 86 508

Fax: +1 (202) 56 86 508

Email: [ICER@ICERitrefugees.org](mailto:ICER@ICERitrefugees.org)

Contact Person: Yebio Woldemariam, Chair of the International Commission for Eritrean Refugees

Email: [yebiow@gmail.com](mailto:yebiow@gmail.com)

International Commission for Eritrean Refugees- ICER 's objective is to coordinate the various efforts exerted by multiple organisations and individuals around the globe currently working independently to reduce the suffering of the Eritrean refugees. ICER is a non-profit and non-political association that works on behalf of Eritrean refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons, victims of trafficking, and victims of torture to advocate for their rights and protection. Adopting a rights-based approach to refugee advocacy and protection, ICER's core activities include monitoring Eritrean refugee situations around the globe, research and information dissemination, legal and policy related advocacy, legal aid and advice, and awareness-raising activities. ICER's membership currently includes more than 120 members in North America, Europe, Israel, Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa who will operate as regional sections. ICER's web page is translated in English, Arabic and Tigrigna.

#### **PHR - Physicians for Human Rights**

[www.physiciansforhumanrights.org](http://www.physiciansforhumanrights.org)/1156 15th Street, NW, Suite 1001, Washington, DC 20005

Tel: +1 (202) 72 85 335 or +1 (202) 72 85 335

Fax: +1 (202) 72 83 053

Email: [Click here](#)

Physicians for Human rights is a non-profit, non-sectarian organisation which mobilises health professionals in order to investigate the health consequences of human rights violations and work to stop them.

Their 'Asylum Program' aims to assist torture survivors and other noncitizens seeking safe haven in the United States. Physicians for Human rights specialise in conducting forensic psychological and physical evaluations to document evidence of torture and abuse. The medical-legal affidavits that they submit to courts on behalf of survivors are frequently the determining factor when judges grant asylum or other relief from deportation.

#### **Refugee Council USA**

[www.rcusa.org](http://www.rcusa.org) 1628 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

Tel: +1 202 31 92 102

Fax: +1 202 31 92 104

Email: [info@rcusa.org](mailto:info@rcusa.org)

RCUSA provides information on refugee rights and the resettlement process. They also engage in advocacy on issues affecting the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons, victims of trafficking, and victims of torture in the United States and across the world.

- See more at: <http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/united-states-america-probono-directory#sthash.ZWw9GI1l.dpuf>

#### **Human Trafficking Organizations in the Mid-Atlantic Region:**

- FAAST [www.faastinternational.org](http://www.faastinternational.org)
- Polaris [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)
- SafeHaven [www.globalpeace.org](http://www.globalpeace.org)

#### **The World Council of Churches resources:**

Sermon- And Who is My Neighbor : <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/sermons/and-who-is-my-neighbour>

Statement on Practicing Hospitality:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/international-affairs/human-rights-and-impunity/practising-hospitality-in-an-era-of-new-forms-of-migration>

Statement of Migration and Migrant Workers:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/migration/migration-and-migrant-workers-discerning-responses-as-churches>