

Christian Community Churches of Australia

Perspective on Refugees

Public Statements

What is a refugee?

According to the United Nations, “A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.”¹

What is the Church’s response to refugees?

To accept them as equals, invite them, welcome them, care for them, share generously with them what God has gifted to us, and do all this with an embrace of dignity and love, like family, especially to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Public Summary

All people are created equal by God. All people are loved equally by God. Therefore, refugees, from God’s perspective have the same value, standing, and dignity as all of his created people.

God is a God who creates family. God always invites all to come into his family. God throughout history has called his people to follow his loving lead by accepting, inviting and helping orphans and widows, strangers and foreigners. Like God we are then called to provide a family place for those who have none, this includes the refugee.

We must share what God has given us. We can all have many points of identity: language, tribe, nation, and spiritual. However, as Christians we are citizens of heaven and aliens and strangers on this earth. We must automatically place any desire to hold onto our land, our national identity, our culture, and our way of living, under the allegiance call of Christ. We must recognize that everything has either been created by God or gifted to us by God. Therefore, we must share God’s gifts with all his created people.

We must provide special care for our Christian brothers and sisters. The Bible places a special emphasis on caring for those who are within the family of God, to the point of suffering with those brothers and sisters who are suffering.

Therefore, as the family of God, we must:

1. Accept and invite refugees.
2. Be generous to those who ask for help.

¹ ‘What is a Refugee - USA for UNHCR’, accessed 21 August 2016, <http://www.unrefugees.org/what-is-a-refugee/>.

3. Provide special care to fellow Christians.
4. Welcome, accept, and care for them as we would want to be welcomed, accepted, and cared for - with an embrace of dignity and love, as equals, like family.

It is easy to start our consideration of refugees by making public comment, or requesting the government deal with the people and the issues, without any personal relational engagement. This approach is problematic. In making such demands we are asking the world to respond to that which is the call of God on Christian hearts and lives. Our lives must first display that which we wish to request of others. We must first embrace the people; it is only then that we will have grounds for our voice to be heard in the public square.

God has invited and included us in his family, through grace. We must invite and include others by offering this same grace.