



CONVENTION OF
ATLANTIC BAPTIST CHURCHES
Healthy churches. Missional churches.

A Theology of Hospitality

Responding to Refugees

Receiving Hospitality

- God is our *refuge* - we are ALL refugees. We are passing on what we have received. (Psalm 46; Mt.10:8)
- We provide for foreigners because we too were foreigners (Deut. 24:17-22, Lev. 19:33-34)
- We've been sponsored (chosen, adopted, redeemed) into God's family at great cost (Eph. 1:3-10)

Giving Hospitality

- "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:39; Luke 10:27 - The Good Samaritan)
- "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Help them. Give to them!" (Luke 6:27; Romans 12:17-21)
- God is especially concerned for the vulnerable and homeless (Isaiah 58:6-7)
- We are to give hospitality without knowing who the recipients really are (Hebrews 13:2)
- Jesus - the ultimate refugee (Mt. 25:35 "I was a stranger and you took me into your home")

How to Help

- God showed them visible evidence that He was there.
- Support those who call to the White House with all kinds of prayer requests (Prayer and spiritual support) (Ps. 135:2)
- Ask God to send the "clouds of judgment" and to provide help to those who are in need and who are oppressed.



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How to Help

- Get informed (from credible sources)
- Pray for peace
- Support those offering help in the Middle East such as Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) and Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB)
- Welcome and meet the practical needs of refugees who are already here or are on their way (volunteer with local settlement agencies)
- Sponsor refugees

Who to Help

- By definition all refugees NEED help, whether they're from Syria or elsewhere and regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, age, etc.
- In the Middle East, Christians have been especially targeted (Gal. 6:10 - do good to all, especially the family of believers)
- We must not ignore vulnerable people already among us, be they refugees or struggling citizens

Overcoming Fear

- “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...” (1 John 4:18)
- Fear is natural and is overcome by faith in God's love for us (1 John 5:4-5)
- Christ's command to help everyone - even enemies - is not common sense and has no guarantees.
- Our ultimate allegiance is to Christ, not our national security and comfort
- Christ promises trouble, but commands courageous joy for we're in capable hands (John 16:33)

Refugees Taking Resources?

- We are a nation of immigrants
- Refugees will certainly have needs so there will be short term strain on services, BUT studies show that newcomers:
 - are less likely to commit crimes or rely on social services than citizens
 - are net contributors to the economic health of a region
 - are highly motivated to settle well in their new country
- Canada is a vast country with an aging population - people are a country's greatest resource

Refugees a Security Threat?

- There is screening - our government's FIRST responsibility is to ensure the security of its citizens and they have expertise in this area
- How we treat refugees once they're here is a more important issue
- Broken relationships with people here or abroad is the main security threat

Muslim Refugees? A problem?

- We fear what we don't know - we recommend friendships with Muslims
- Refugees and Muslims have much in common with us (hopes, dreams, ambitions, concerns...)
- Like us, they are on a faith journey - we can help each other
- Many Muslim refugees are fleeing extremism
- Refugees to Canada are drawn from low risk populations and go thorough security screening

Expectations

- Refugees are people, not projects - many outcomes are beyond our control
- Being aware of and managing expectations is key
 - sponsors assist refugees in settlement, no strings attached
 - refugees must be given the freedom to make their own decisions
 - sponsorship should help refugees regain control of their lives
- Sponsors must use their influence carefully (esp. in regard to religious beliefs)

Motivation

- In response to what God has done for us, we obey and express our gratitude by helping others!



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How to Help

- God showed them visible evidence that He was with them.
- Support those who call to the White House with all kinds of prayer requests (Prayer and Spiritual Warfare) (Ps. 137:6)
- Ask God to send His "clouds of support" and to provide help to those who are struggling with the current situation.

