

I was a stranger and you welcomed me

(Matthew 25:35)



**AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE COMPELLED TO ASK
"WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?" IN SEEKING TO BUILD
THE COMMON GOOD, WE CANNOT IGNORE
THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO MIGRATE
SEEKING EMPLOYMENT, SAFETY AND HOPE.**

Who Are Migrants

- There are more than 200 million migrants in the world. With the onset of globalization the number of migrants has more than doubled in 25 years.
- Migrants differ from immigrants because they do not permanently settle in their host countries.
- Migrants move for many reasons including the search for employment, education, or fleeing from conflict or environmental disasters.
- Almost half of migrants are women.

The Gifts Migrants Bring

- Migrants fill labour shortages and provide needed labour skills in their host countries.
- Migrants contribute to the local economy.
- Migrants send remittances (money) back to their home countries. In 2005, \$167 billion USD was sent to counties in the Global South, three times the value of Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada has partnerships and programs in a number of migrant sending countries including El Salvador, where 3 of every 4 households receive remittances.

What you and your congregation can do:

- Learn if there are migrants in your community and seek ways to follow the Biblical mandate of welcoming the stranger who is among us. (Matthew 25:31-40, Hebrews 13:2)
- Provide a safe place for migrants to become acquainted with Canadian culture and local facilities and opportunities.
- Support efforts for migrants to make connections with others of their own language and nationality.
- Offer advocacy and support as they become established, particularly in the areas of housing, employment, education, medical care, legal rights and other social supports.
- Extend hospitality and the offer of a spiritual community of belonging.

On 18th December

1990 the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This date was later recognized as International Migrant's Day. This date can be observed by learning about migrants and their rights.

A prayer for migrants

LORD, GIVE OUR FEET STRENGTH TO
ACCOMPANY OUR BROTHERS AND
SISTERS WHO HAVE BEEN UPROOTED
FROM THEIR HOMELANDS.
GIVE OUR LEGS STRENGTH TO STAND
IN SOLIDARITY, TO STAND ALONGSIDE
THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE WAITING
TO FIND A SAFE PLACE TO REST.
GIVE OUR ARMS STRENGTH TO REACH
OUT TO THE NEWCOMER, MAKING
EACH ONE WELCOME. OPEN OUR
MOUTHS TO SPEAK WORDS OF
KINDNESS TO THE NEWCOMER,
TO DEMAND JUSTICE FOR ALL PEOPLE,
TO DEFEND THOSE MOST IN NEED.
HELP US TO RECOGNIZE
THE CHRIST IN EACH ONE OF US.
AMEN.

Source: "Inner Circle" verses from "Liturgy on Theme of Uprooted People" by Beverly O'Grady in *On Frequent Journeys: Worship Resources on Uprooted Peoples*, edited by Rebekah Chevalier, United Church Publishing House, 1997, pp. 59-61. Reprinted with permission.

About Migrants

- The most vulnerable groups of migrants are those migrating from the global South to global North or within the global South.
- Vulnerable migrants include those who are trafficked and smuggled, irregular migrants, and live-in caregivers.
- 18,000 migrants are employed under the Federal Government's Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. They contribute to Canada's Employment Insurance (EI), but are ineligible to access EI funds.

Danger and Vulnerability

- People-trafficking generates an estimated seven billion dollars a year.
- By 2020 people-trafficking will be worth more than narcotics-trafficking (currently the most profitable form of trafficking).
- 1.2 million children are trafficked annually.

Would You Like to Learn More?

- "God's People: A people on the move," KAIROS Canada.
- Hay, J. Charles, "The Bible and the Outsider A contribution for the 1997 Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People," KAIROS Canada, September 1996, www.kairoscanada.org.
- "Crossing Arizona," DVD. Available from Justice Ministries.

This resource is based on the report of the International Affairs Committee to the 133rd General Assembly, June 2007. For more information contact Katharine Masterton at Justice Ministries at kmasterton@presbyterian.ca or call 1-800-619-7301 ext 250.