

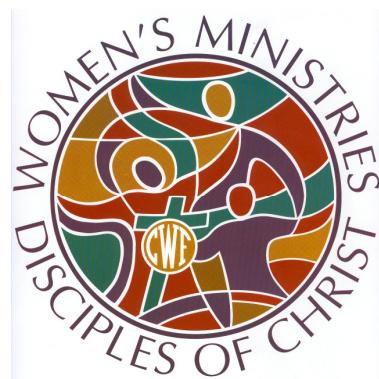
Study, Service and Worship Material for Disciples Women's Groups

Refugees in and from Greece and Turkey



Refugee and Immigration Ministries

A Resource for Disciples
Women from DHM's
Refugee and Immigration
Ministries Program



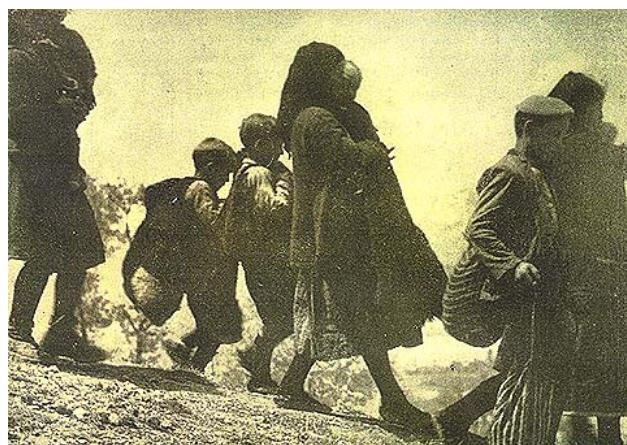
Study

Refugees from Greece:

Macedonian Refugees:

From 1946 to 1949, during the Greek Civil War between the right-wing monarchist government and the Democratic Army of Greece (a branch of the Communist party), ethnic Macedonian refugees were forced out of Greece. There are no hard historical records about the number who fled Greece. Some historians claim that there were as many as 100,000.

"The Plight of the Macedonian Refugee Children" by Risto Stefov tells the story of the refugee children who were forced to leave their families behind as they fled the country. A passage from that book reads: "It was a dreary spring day on March 25th, 1948, when it all began. It was a day filled with high emotions, tears and heartbreak for the mothers and children of



western Aegean Macedonia. It was the day the Detsa Begaltsi (Refugee Children) left, and for most it was the last time that they would ever see their beloved family and home.

"Mothers prepared luggage, a change of clothing, food and eating utensils before escorting their little ones to the designated meeting places. With eyes tearing, mothers said goodbye to their loved ones before sending them into the hands of destiny. Their cries could be heard for a long time as they disappeared into the distance. It didn't take too long before the emptiness was felt, and many mothers could not stop crying and contemplating the fate of their little ones."

To this day, the government of Greece does not recognize those who left and refuses to issue citizenship to them or to their descendants. The Greek government did allow the refugees to enter Greece during the period from August 10, 2003 to October 30, 2003. They were able to stay up to 20 days in order to visit their birthplaces.

Old newsreel footage of the Macedonian children being forced out of Greece in the late 1940's can be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOFcR2yTKN8> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVCZTmXR1h0>.

Photos of the refugees who were allowed to return to Greece in 2003 can be seen at: <http://www.annakari.com/portfolio/greek.html>. One of those photos follows:



In 2003, Tasko Ivanov and his friend, Stojan Trpchevski went back to Greece. They had been forced out of Greece as children, and this was their first visit back. They went to visit Stojan's old neighbour Dilba Gadole who was 97 years old. Through talking to her and her family, Tasko and Dilba realized that they were related. Tasko was moved to tears as she told him about his grandfather and father. (Photo: Anna Kari)

Refugees in Greece and Turkey:

The Greek/Turkey Border:

The entry way into Europe for many refugees is by crossing from Turkey into Greece by way of either the border or the Aegean Sea. Many attempts are made by Greek authorities to keep the refugees from entering Europe. In 2001, Greece and Turkey signed a treaty allowing for deportation between the two countries. Sometimes this results in a revolving door of deportation back and forth between Greece and Turkey.

There are many Greek islands in the Aegean Sea that the refugees use as stepping stones into Europe, and there is no coherent policy in Greece to deal with the increasing migration flows towards the Greek islands, directed by smugglers and corrupt Turkish officials. Both countries share a vast naval frontier, and activists accuse each of unofficially



pushing migrants to the other side. Greek officials often turn a blind eye to issues raised by local communities, indirectly transferring responsibility to local people on the islands.

In 2008, the people of Patmos (an island of 2,984 people near Turkey) decided to not let any more refugees come ashore. When 133 migrants (mostly women and children from Iraq and Afghanistan) arrived off shore, the mayor and others gathered to prevent their landing on shore. In line with common practice, the smugglers destroyed the boats that brought them, in order to prevent the Greek naval police from sending the boats back. This created a humanitarian crisis. The community felt that their blockade was the last measure available to them to protect the viability of their community which depends solely on tourism for its economy. Twice the population of Patmos had arrived during the year; and as a result, the refugees survived in disgraceful conditions around the port until they managed to leave to Athens. This had a major impact on the tourism of the island.

In another situation that year, a reception center on Patmos held 140 refugees from the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan, and Somalia. These 140 refugees were crammed into a second floor discotheque measuring just 60 square yards. The only advantage the building offered was shelter from the outside temperatures approaching 104 degrees. Because the government had not paid the rent for the discotheque, the refugees (including women and babies) were evicted and forced to live on the streets of Patmos.

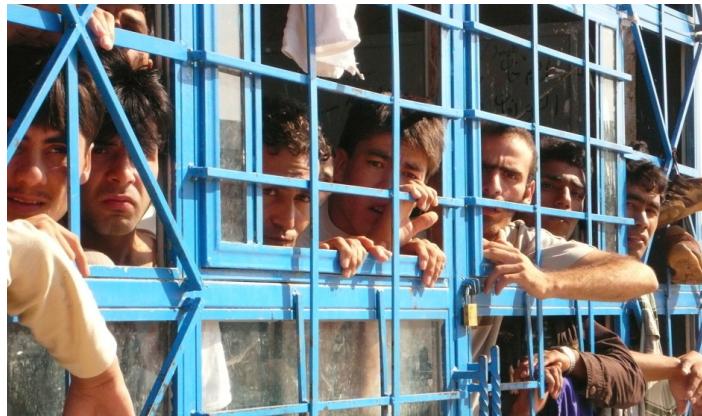
General Information on Refugees in Greece:

Since 2001, according to numbers provided by the Greek government to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of refugees seeking asylum in Greece has risen from just under 1,200 people to about 30,000. In addition to these numbers are over 100,000 who try to pass through Greece without applying for asylum. Greece is increasingly a gateway for people fleeing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of these refugees pay smugglers to take them by land across Turkey and then by boat to Greece.

Some choose to stay in Greece, either illegally or by applying for asylum there. But most plan to continue on to wealthier European countries, known for their more generous asylum policies. While most European Union countries have an asylum acceptance rate from 19 to 25 percent, the Greek acceptance rate is less than one percent. Greece is one of the smallest and poorest nations in the European Union, yet they are on the front line of receiving refugees who are headed to Europe.

In 2007, just eight refugees were granted asylum by Greece on their first application. On appeal, an additional 132 were. A part-time asylum appeals board hears about 60 cases a week. In July of 2009, the Greek government came up with a solution to the growing backlog of asylum appeals – abolish the asylum appeal board. Additionally, the government introduced a Presidential Decree which spread the job of interviewing asylum seekers to police offices throughout the country. Those officers have a lot of other duties and no training in asylum law or in conducting interviews with fearful asylum seekers. Competent interpreters and asylum lawyers are mostly unavailable to the asylum seekers.

Poor asylum procedures are just part of the picture. There are also illegal push-backs of migrants at the Turkish border, the puncturing of boats



Greek Detention Center (Photo: Paraketa)

in the Aegean Sea, deplorable conditions of detention, police brutality, and various legal and administrative efforts to keep asylum seekers from lodging a claim to asylum. Greece routinely arrests all migrants found on its territory and detains them for three months. In 2007, Greece detained 112,364 undocumented migrants.

In July of 2009, Greek police demolished a refugee camp in the port of Patras, home to about 150 people who were applying for asylum in Greece. The police cordoned off the camp and began asking for identification. Police arrested all the refugees they could find, who were

then sent to different police stations and internment camps across Greece. Those arrested included 40 unaccompanied minors.



A fire began at one of the camps, destroying most of the buildings. Police did nothing to stop the fire; and after the fire, they used bulldozers to demolish the remaining structures, leaving only a makeshift mosque and a tent owned by Doctors Without Borders. The camp had been running for 13 years. At its height it housed 2,000 people, but only about 150 Afghans were living there at the time of the fire. The camp was built by refugees themselves out of makeshift materials.

Patras camp fire (*Photo: Xanthoula Karanika*)

The Dublin Accord:

The European Union passed a law (the Dublin Accord) which allows any Union member state to send asylum seekers who enter the European Union back to the country through which they first entered. This puts a disproportionate burden on countries that lie on the European Union's external border – like Greece, Italy and Spain. Not only do they have to deal with clandestine migrants crossing their border, but they also have to accept back asylum seekers who have crossed from their territory into neighboring EU countries. Since so many people enter through Greece, Greece is overburdened with other countries sending asylum seekers back to them.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees advised European Union countries to stop sending asylum seekers to Greece until further notice, a step that amounts to a condemnation of Greece's treatment of refugees. Early in 2008, Norway announced that it would no longer return asylum seekers to Greece.

There are many stories of asylum seekers returned to Greece because of the Dublin Accord. One asylum seeker returned from Germany was originally from Iraq. In 2007 he and his brother fled Iraq through Greece for Munich because, as Christians, they had been threatened by Islamist groups. His brother was granted refugee status in Germany, but he was deported back to Greece in 2008 by the German authorities, because of the Dublin Accord. In Greece he became homeless, sleeping on a traffic island in Athens. His Greek documentation has expired and he could be detained if the police pick him up. If he attempts to obtain an extension on his documentation he also risks instant arrest. He can only survive thanks to private donations of food, clothing, and money.

Afghan Refugees in Greece:

In Patras, Greece, on the outskirts of this port city in a squalid squatter camp, hundreds of young men and boys from Afghanistan – many of whom say they fled violence – huddle in board shacks and over open cooking fires, waiting to be smuggled deeper into Europe. The Red Cross attempts to provide services, but it is not trusted in the camp because smugglers who control the camp have spread rumors accusing them of working with the Greek police.

One 15-year-old Afghan who had already made it beyond Greece to France told the story of how he ended up in Europe, alone. The boy's family left Afghanistan after his mother lost her leg in an explosion in 2004. They spent three years in Iran, where he went to school for the first time, learning English and discovering the Internet. After his father suffered a back injury that made working difficult, the boy headed west. He spent two months working 11-hour days in a clothing sweatshop in Istanbul, Turkey. He was then smuggled into Greece, where he was forced to work on a potato and onion farm near Agros for nine months, finally escaping in the back of a truck. He reached Paris by train after nearly a year on the road. "I want to go to school," he said in English. "I would like it if I could be – it sounds like a lot to ask – an engineer of computing."

Iraqi Refugees in Greece:

Iraqis, many of which are Assyrians, make up one of the largest groups of asylum seekers in Greece. There are an estimated 2,000 Assyrians in Greece. In Greece the Assyrians deal with lack of protection, lack of employment, lack of proper documentation (90 percent of Assyrians in Greece are without papers and legal protection), and high costs (electricity sometimes exceeds rent). Those that can afford to study do so without receiving any study certificates upon completion of a course. Lacking identity cards makes them ineligible to receive certificates or degrees for study.



Assyrian widow in Greece (Photo: L.Kiorkis)

Somali Refugees in Greece:

Greece also is the location of refugees from Somalia. In southern Greece, Somali seasonal workers live in abandoned houses. The darker they are, the less they get paid. In Athens, in flop houses there are 50 to 60 people in a room. It is hot, uncomfortable and costs about three Euros a day.

One of the most common refugee routes leads people north from Mogadishu to Bossaso, Somalia. Here people fleeing the violence of their hometown must pay as much as \$2,000 to take a raft across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. From Yemen, they can take a bus through Saudi Arabia, but then they must walk through Syria and Turkey. This journey often takes place at night and usually requires two weeks of hard, quick walking.

Amal, a 19-year-old Somali refugee woman was pregnant when she left Somalia. She and her husband could not afford to pay the smugglers for two passages, so they thought it best if Amal were to have her baby in what they thought would be the safe harbor of Europe. For this part of the walking tour, the pregnant Amal had to pay the smugglers \$550. All through the journey they pushed and shoved the young woman



Somalis being detained in Greece (Photo: Athens Indymedia)

threatening to leave her behind if she could not keep up. When she reached Izmir, Turkey, Amal's child was born. From there, Amal had to pay the smugglers another \$1,000 to cross the Aegean Sea. There were 18 people on the inflatable raft that carried Amal and her baby away from Turkey. The smugglers forced her to get out of the raft before it reached shore, because they did not want to get caught by the Greek Coast Guard, so the terrified Amal had to carry her child over her head while she struggled through the waves toward dry land. Then she had to carry her baby over a mountain with the trees tearing at her clothes. On the other side of the mountain, Amal was captured by the Greek police.

The authorities held Amal in detention on an island for 18 days. In detention, she was given only adult food for both herself and her baby. When she was released, Amal was put on a ship that took her to the mainland and Athens. Amal was expected to pay her own fare. She had no money, so other refugees had to pay her way.

Because they are denied official status, Amal and other Somali refugees are told to leave the country, but if they try to leave, Greek authorities will arrest them for traveling without papers, and if they actually manage to get on the plane, the authorities in other countries will send them back to Greece because of the Dublin Accord. (*Story From: "The Plight of Somali Refugees in Greece" by Abdi-Noor Haji Mohamed*)

Videos of Refugees in Greece:

Iraqis – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGmAND6BtLk>

Afghans – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb1IFERbVss>

Afghans – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRNaL4JCsOM>

Detention Center – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP2yT6EjBXo>

The Response of the Church in Greece:

The Ecumenical Refugee Program (ERP) is a service program of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Greece that provides assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. The program started in 1994 following the close of the World Council of Churches refugee program in Greece. The ERP runs different projects funded by various sources, but one of the primary projects provides legal assistance to asylum seekers in Athens and the Mytilini Detention Center, the areas that receive the largest numbers of persons in need of protection. ERP strives to assist asylum seekers and persons returned to Greece under the Dublin Accord as they seek asylum and try to find housing and a way to survive.

An Encounter with Refugees in Turkey:

The following is a report of an encounter between an Australian, Dean Kalimniou, and refugees he met in Turkey: “I remember that squalid room, with paint flecks falling disaffectedly from the walls onto the twenty or so slumbering figures covered with blankets, huddled together for warmth on the freezing concrete floor below. One of their number had come upstairs only moments before, begging me to help him fix the heater, an antiquated nineteen sixties contraption with exposed wiring. His friends, refugees who had smuggled themselves across the Iranian and Iraqi border into Turkey, after a long and arduous march through rivers and mountain passes, were freezing in that Constantinopolitan winter. They needed something to eat and warmth, for at dawn the next day, the Pakistani people smugglers would arrive to escort the bedraggled and exhausted young men from Kesan, across the forested and watery Thracian hinterland, across the border into Greece. After that, they were on their own.

“One of their number, Bassim, an engineering student, had completed the crossing twice before. ‘I don’t mind the Greek police,’ he explained. ‘When you get caught they thump you around for a bit and then they put you in a cell and give you something to eat before they expel you. If you get caught on this side, the Turkish police beat you up, give you nothing to eat and take all your money.’ I couldn’t fix the heater.

"Wandering around Cemberlitas, the column of Constantine a few days later, I chanced upon two of the young men I had seen in the room that night. One was sporting a black eye, the other a broken nose. They waved at me not to approach them. The crossing had been tried and they had been found wanting. Now penniless, exhausted and aching, they had returned to base, fearful of being apprehended and deported but equally resolved to find another way to get to Greece and safety, if only they could find a way to pay the people smugglers."

Non-European Refugees in Turkey:

Turkey is a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees but maintains a reservation on the 1967 Protocol in order to limit to Europeans its obligations. This means that refugees from European countries are treated much better than refugees from other countries. For those Europeans it recognizes as refugees, Turkey seeks resettlement to third countries.

Upon entry to Turkey, non-European refugees are divided into two groups. Those without documents are forced to register themselves and live in towns bordering countries from which or through which they have fled. Fear of being kidnapped by Islamic states and groups, deported back to persecution, and brutalized by the Turkish police are their main concerns. Those arriving with documentation are transferred to central towns surrounding Ankara. All refugees are denied freedom of movement or the right to choose their city of residence.

Asylum seekers must register with the Turkish authorities within ten days of arrival, otherwise they will be deemed "illegal" by the government. Since non-European asylum seekers cannot reside permanently in Turkey, they are only issued temporary stay permits. They are placed in guesthouses which are made to comfortably hold only 30 people, but some are forced to hold 300.

According to the World Refugee Survey, there are over 18,000 registered refugees in Turkey – mostly from Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan – but the reality is that there are hundreds of thousands of refugees in Turkey who are hiding until they can find a way on to Europe. During 2008, Turkey received only 10,800 asylum applications and granted temporary asylum to only 1,100 of them, mostly Iraqis.

Non-European refugees do not receive any financial support from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and are denied access to free health care while their claims for asylum are being determined. Even those eventually recognized by the UNHCR do not automatically get financial assistance. They are also denied the right to work in Turkey.

If you're a migrant or refugee who's stranded in Istanbul, you spend a lot of time waiting – waiting for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to give you legal documents, waiting for someone to give you an odd job, but most of all, waiting for a chance to move on to another country in Europe. It can take years of waiting. And there are tens of thousands of you in Istanbul.

Incidences of abusive treatment of asylum seekers abound. In April of 2008, Turkey forced 18 people, including 5 Iranian refugees, to swim a dangerous river back into Iraq. Four of them drowned. In October of 2008, Turkey expelled a group of Uzbekistani refugees into Iranian territory for the second time in one month. Members of the group were alleged to have been beaten up and women and girls threatened with rape unless they left Turkey.

Generally, very few opportunities exist for refugees to interact with locals or create cross-cultural understanding. There has been a tendency to portray most refugees in Turkey as



Asylum Seeker Waiting in Turkey

(Photo: Jesuit Refugee Service/Europe)

criminals. Most female refugees from Eastern European countries were associated with prostitution, while most African refugees were associated with drugs and criminality. With the involvement of the UNHCR, sensitivity training toward refugees has been provided to government officials, police officers, and lawyers. However, the question of refugee integration generally remains of little public concern.

European Refugees in Turkey:



Camp for Kosovar Refugees (*Photo: JRiggs*)
several miles outside Istanbul to a refugee camp that had held 10,000 refugees during the Kosovo crisis. At the time of the CWS visit only 179 refugees remained there. The rest had been resettled in other countries.

The conditions at the camp were wonderful, in comparison with conditions of the non-European asylum seekers in Turkey. The camp covered 390 acres, had washing machines in the dorms and had supply rooms filled with clothing and food (more than was needed for the 179 people living there). The refugees were allowed to leave the camp during the day to attend school, visit town, or find employment. The 179 remaining refugees had the option to get citizenship and stay in Turkey if they wanted to do so. The juxtaposition of how the Kosovar refugees were treated in comparison with how the non-European refugees were treated was overwhelming to the delegation.



UNHCR Barracks, used when camp held 10,000

In the past, Turkey established a refugee camp for European refugees, many of whom stayed in the camp for many years before being resettled, returning to their homes, or integrating into Turkish society. In 2000, Jennifer Riggs, Director of the Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries, joined a Church World Service (CWS) delegation that visited Turkey to learn about the treatment of refugees there. The delegation traveled

several miles outside Istanbul to a refugee camp that had held 10,000 refugees during the Kosovo crisis. At the time of the CWS visit only 179 refugees remained there. The rest had been resettled in other countries.

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Well-stocked clothing room (*Photos: JRiggs*)

Istanbul Interparish Migrant Program (IIMP):

The CWS delegation also visited the IIMP which was providing a ministry to the non-European refugees in Turkey. (*Read more about Disciples involvement in IIMP below.*) IIMP introduced the delegation to refugees living in the basement of one of the churches in Istanbul and refugees who participated in some of their self-development activities. At the time of the visit, IIMP (which was the only successful ecumenical project in Istanbul) had a caseload of 500 families who were provided counseling, a soup kitchen, school, a postal address, and a clinic. The clinic was dealing mostly with TB problems because the refugees were living in such

unhealthy conditions. IIMP had a caseload of 20 percent refugees recognized by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 30 percent asylum seekers going through the process, and 50 percent rejected cases. They helped 50 to 100 refugees, usually the rejected cases, return to their home countries each year.



IIMP income-generating self-development programs – catering business and craft project (Photos: JRiggs)

The Disciples Response:

Resettlement of Refugees out of Greece and Turkey:



Over the years, the Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM) has resettled countless refugees out of both Greece and Turkey. These refugees have been from many different nationalities; however the majority has been from European countries like Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, the USSR, Poland, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Smaller groups have come from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and several African countries. Many of the African refugees RIM resettled were in Turkey for many years, because the Turkish government did not want to spend the money it would have cost to deport them all the way back to Africa.

Assistance to Refugees in Turkey:

Predecessors of the current Global Ministries missionaries in Istanbul helped to organize local Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic parishes to serve the influx of refugees to that city during the First Gulf War in 1991, through the organization they created called Istanbul Interparish Migrant Program. Over the years, the parishes have further developed this ecumenical program. Because their budget is very small, they focus on the most marginalized group of migrants – women and children. Current Global Ministries missionaries continue on the IIMP Board.

Most of the churches that participate in IIMP are small with about 60 members, but on Sunday mornings the number in their worship service grow to over 200 because of all the refugees who come to participate.

Today the IIMP helps refugees with food staples, guides them to medical and legal aid, gives them clothes, provides a small program for their children, provides language classes in English and Turkish, provides computer and tailoring classes, and helps the refugees get to Ankara for their interviews with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (the UNHCR does not have an office in Istanbul where the largest number of refugees are living).



Service

To learn about the official Disciples Women's service project for this study, see the Disciples Women's Web site at www.discipleswomen.org.

In addition, RIM offers the following ways for Disciples Women's groups to provide for the needs of asylum seekers in Greece and Turkey.

The service of prayer:

Because they are offered no protection by the governments of Greece and Turkey, asylum seekers in both countries need our prayers. Pray that they might find a solution to their unstable lives that will provide them the opportunity to start their lives over in safe and secure situations. Pray that they will not be pushed back and forth across borders. Pray that they will not be forced to live in deplorable conditions. Pray that the small communities of Greece that feel overrun with refugees may find ways to be hospitable, despite the overwhelming needs of asylum seekers coming to their communities. Pray that the Ecumenical Refugee Program (ERP) and the Istanbul Interparish Migrant Program will be more fully supported in their efforts to help the refugees coming to Greece and Turkey.



The service of giving:

Support the Istanbul Interparish Migrant Program by making contributions to Global Ministries, designating your contribution to that migrant program. Send checks to Global Ministries, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Worship

Worship center:

Ideas of things to place on your worship center include: a Bible opened to Deuteronomy 15:1-11, a globe of the world (with Greece and Turkey facing those gathered), a candle, and your offering basket/plate.

Call to Worship



Leader: Hear the word of the prophet Amos: "Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

People: Our God is a God of justice!

Leader: Hear the word of the prophet Micah: "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

People: God's people are a people of mercy!

Leader: Hear the word of God from the Torah: "God defends the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the foreigner, giving to each food and clothes. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were

foreigners in Egypt."

People: Our God is a God who loves the stranger!

Leader: Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Come you who are blessed by God; take your inheritance.... For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these sisters and brothers of mine, you did for me."

People: Our God is a God who is encountered in the poor, the needy and the foreigner!

Let us worship the God who calls us into fellowship with each other and with the weak, vulnerable and marginalized of the world. Amen.

Scripture Reading – Deuteronomy 15:1-11

Reflection on Scripture

Some or all of the following thoughts could be shared as a reflection on the scripture reading.

As Christians we believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ has freed us from the burden of the law, but the law can still be an important means of learning about the will of God. The law had a deep concern for the welfare of all people – need was the determining factor, not importance or status. Every 7th year was to be proclaimed the year of the Lord's release in honor of God. The land was to be left fallow, and no planting or harvesting was to be done. This was also good for the soil, to prevent depletion and erosion. The financial side of the economy (the trader, the merchant, and the artist) didn't have to stop its labor, but the payment of loans by the poor had to be canceled and the poor lent whatever was needed to live through the year. Deuteronomy even goes as far as to say that if Israel would truly obey the law, then there would be no need of it because there would be no poor. But as things were, the poor would never cease out of the land. This is the scripture that Jesus quotes in John 12: "The poor you always have with you." The poor are with us because we have not yet fully obeyed the will of God. Human need is not a matter just for social service systems or governmental regulations and laws. It is a matter for personal mercy and loving-kindness. Meeting the needs of refugees and immigrants is one of the ways that we fulfill the will of God.



Confession



Leader: For our failure to feel the sufferings of others, and our tendency to live comfortably with injustice,

People: God forgive us.

Leader: For the self-righteousness which denies guilt, and the self-interest which strangles compassion,

People: God forgive us.

Leader: For those who live their lives in careless unconcern, who cry "Peace, peace" when there is no peace,

People: We ask your mercy.

Leader: For our failings in community, our lack of understanding,

People: We ask your mercy.

Leader: For times when we are too eager to be better than others, when we are too rushed to care, when we are too tired to bother, when we

don't really listen, when we are too quick to act from motives other than love,
People: God forgive us.

Source: Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, South Africa

Offering:

As the offering is received, invite the women to visualize a refugee or asylum seeker in Greece or Turkey trying to care for herself and/or her family without a job, a safe place to live, enough food, or proper medical care. Then invite the women to visualize themselves reaching out to that suffering woman offering her hope and comfort.

Offertory Prayer

God, in the midst of our efforts to accumulate more and more of the things we feel we cannot live without; we pause to bring our offering to you for your blessing. Make us more fully aware of those persons around the world who have fled their homes with nothing but the clothes they are wearing. May they be for us an example of what it is that we truly cannot live without – your love and grace, given freely to the entire world. Amen

How to Contact RIM

Please feel free to contact us for any further information you may need, or look us up on the Internet at <http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/RIM/>. You will find a lot of material about various refugee and immigration issues on our Web site.

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