GOSPEL, SOCIETY & Culture

REFUGEES

Christian thinking about asylum seekers and refugees.

RESOURCE PAPER 4, 2014

Image: UNHCR / S. Malkawi

Imagine this:

Someone knocks on the door of your house late at night. You open the door, and you see a young man, in his late teens or early twenties. His clothes are dishevelled, there's stubble on his chin, and a bruise on his cheek.

"Can you help me?" he says. "It's not safe for me to live at home anymore. I've been on the streets for a couple of days but I just got mugged."

What would you do? Would you slam the door in his face? Give him food and drink, but leave him outside the house? Or let him come in, to eat and wash and get first aid, but send him away afterwards? Would you treat him as a guest, and let him move in for a while? Or even, perhaps, officially adopt him into your family?

It wouldn't be an easy decision, and there would be many things to consider. You'd need to think about the well-being of your existing family: your husband or wife, your children who are tucked up in bed. You would rightly have concerns about giving a stranger free access to your home - you'd have to think them through, and deal with them.

If you did let him in, you'd need to be realistic about how much help you could offer. Would you be able to feed and clothe him along with the rest of your family? What about his medical bills? If you let him stay for a while, what would be his role in the household? Would you expect him to help out in domestic chores and get a job so that he could contribute to the family? Or would you be happy to provide for all his needs?

In many ways, these are the kinds of questions our nation faces when dealing with asylum seekers and refugees. Asylum seekers claim to have run away from, or been forced out of, their home nation. They're not 'family', because they're not Australian citizens; they're not 'guests', because they haven't applied for an appropriate visa before arriving: they just turn up on our doorstep, as strangers asking for our help. And we need to decide, as individual citizens and as a nation, how to respond.

Our national conversation about refugees and asylum seekers has been described as strident, bitter, and full of hate.[1] The most profound contribution Christians can make is to become informed and to engage with that conversation.

Our aim in this resource paper is to provide you with sufficient information that you'll be able to engage in the public discussion about refugees, discerning truth and challenging injustice, and helping people in your community think about how a Christian attitude of compassion might be expressed in welcome and generosity and wisdom.

Image: Alemaugi (Wikimedia Commons).

REFUGEES: A GLOBAL CONCERN

The Refugee Convention of the United Nations was established in 1951 in response to the needs of people displaced as a result of conflict during the Second World War. The 1967 Protocol broadened the Convention's scope by removing geographical and temporal restrictions. Under the Convention,

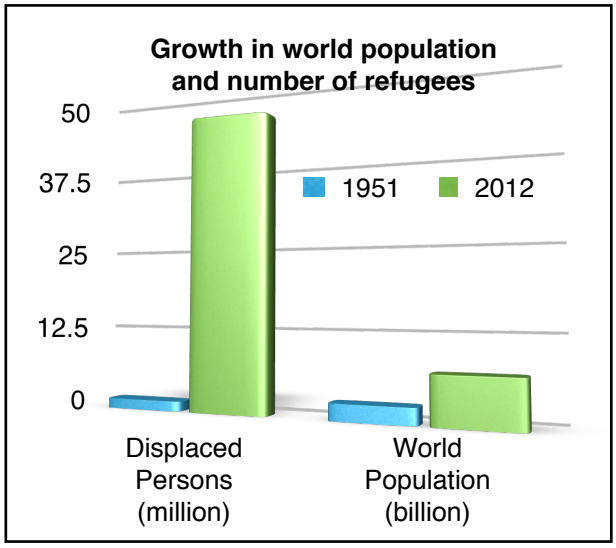
> *a 'refugee' is any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."*

Put another way, a refugee is a person who has left his or her country because of fear of being persecuted if they remain, and who is unwilling, because of that fear, to return.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees also has a concern for people who don't fit the strict definition of a refugee, but nevertheless need protection.[2] This includes 'asylum seekers', who are individuals seeking international protection. Every refugee is initially an asylum seeker, but not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee. In countries such as Australia, which has its own refugee status determination procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose request for refugee status hasn't been finally granted. The distinction between asylum seekers and refugees is important because it is a legal status that determines how the various immigration laws are applied to the individuals concerned.

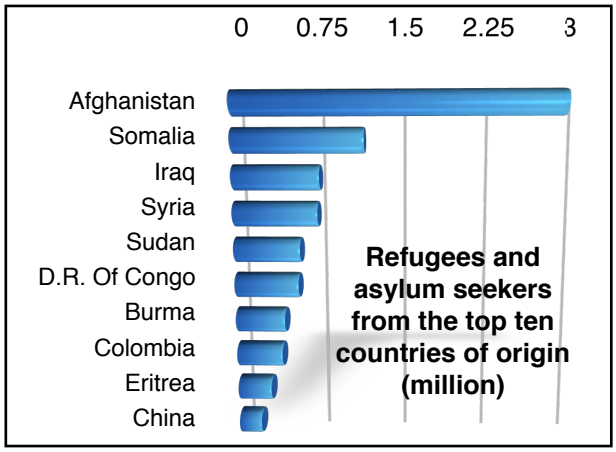
The Convention and the Protocol together contain the rights of refugees within, and their obligations toward, their 'host' country. Some basic rights apply to all refugees. This includes the right to be protected from *refoulement* (return to their home country where they face threat), unless they pose a danger to the country in which they have sought refuge. Other rights - such as the right to education and housing, to have access to the courts, to be able to work - come into play the longer a refugee remains in the host country. Refugees have the right not to be punished for illegal entry into the country where they seek asylum. Refugees for their part are required to abide by the laws and regulations of their country of asylum, and to respect measures taken by that country for the maintenance of public order.[3] These rights and obligations are compatible with a genuine Christian response to refugees and asylum seekers.

Since 1951 the number of refugees around the world has increased, and at a far greater rate than world population growth.[4]



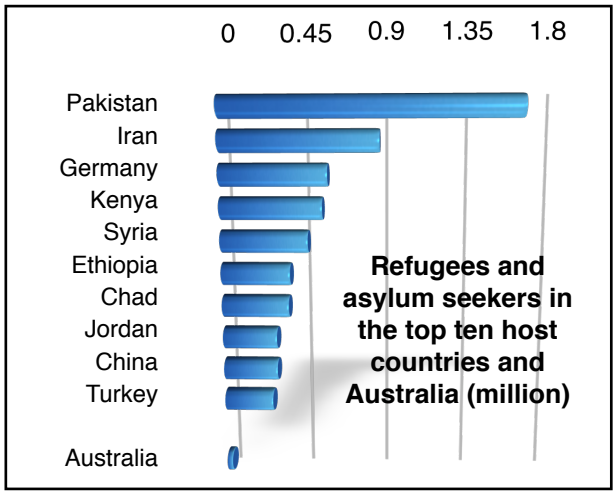
Recent world events, in particular the many civil conflicts in the Middle East since 2011, have resulted in a sharp increase in the numbers of refugees in some regions. By October 2013, the UNHCR had registered just over 2 million refugees leaving Syria, one-fifth of whom were under 4 years of age, and a third of whom were aged 5-17 years.[5] The proportion of children amongst Syrian refugees is representative of global statistics: the UN estimates that 41% of all refugees around the world are children.[6] There is little doubt that our world is experiencing a refugee crisis.[7]

Most refugees are hosted by developing countries. The UNHCR resettlement program seeks to move refugees from developing countries, which are already relatively impoverished and have over-stretched infrastructure, to developed countries, which have much better resources to accommodate them. The basic aim is to share the global refugee load a little more equitably. Australia is one of the 26 states who participated in the original Convention Conference, and we continue to participate voluntarily in the UNHCR resettlement program. Australia receives about 6,000 referrals from the UNHCR each year.[8] The United States, Canada and the Nordic countries also have significant refugee resettlement programs. Even so, each year the UNHCR only manages to resettle about 1% of refugees registered with the organisation.[9]

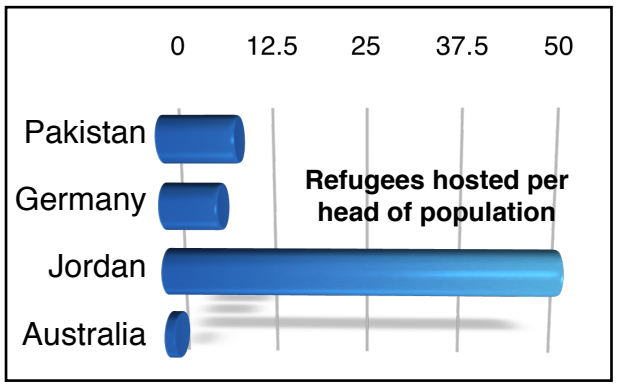


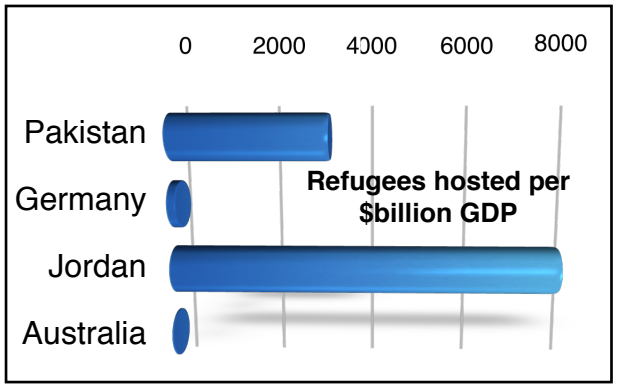
As you would expect, the countries of origin for most refugees are those where civil unrest, religious persecution and other conflicts exist. By far the most refugees and asylum seekers come from Afghanistan, but other countries in the Middle East, Africa, South America and South East Asia also contribute significantly to the world refugee burden.

The nation hosting the largest number of refugees is Pakistan. More than 1.5 million refugees reside in Pakistan, all but a few hundred of whom are from neighbouring Afghanistan.[10] Australia hosts about thirty thousand refugees. Compared with Pakistan, and many other countries, this is a relatively small number.



The difference between the involvement of developed and developing countries is even more stark when the number of hosted refugees is calculated per head of population, or weighed against an internationally recognised measure of affluence such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Developing nations carry the greatest burden of hosting refugees, and Australia ranks poorly (62nd in terms of population, and 87th in terms of GDP).[11]





REFUGEES: AN AUSTRALIAN CONCERN

Australia has its own procedures for determining whether or not an asylum seeker should be granted refugee status - the Migration Act 1958 with the Migration Regulations 1994. The Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection explicitly excludes from the definition of 'refugee' those people who leave their country because of general civil disturbance, war, famine, natural disasters, or in order to seek a better life.[12] Nevertheless, as a participant in the UNHCR refugee resettlement program, Australia has a responsibility to comply with the provisions of the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In 2012 nearly 6000 refugees were resettled in Australia through the UN humanitarian program. On a per capita basis Australia ranked 2nd compared to other participating countries and thus appeared relatively generous. However these figures do not include asylum applications made directly to Australian immigration authorities. Taking all asylum applications together, Australia accounted for only one percent of all refugee resettlements that year, and was ranked *22nd* on a per capita basis.[13]

Some asylum seekers arrive in Australian territory by sea and without a valid entry visa. They are frequently described in the press - and by politicians - as 'boat people', but are formally designated 'IMAs'. Prior to October 2013 the acronym meant 'Irregular Maritime Arrival', but it has recently been changed to mean '*Illegal* Maritime Arrival'.[14] Over the last few years IMAs have usually entered Australian territory at Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, a location that is less than 500 km from Indonesia and therefore within the sailing range of many sea craft.

Some asylum seekers arrive in Australian territory by other means. They are known by the acronym 'non-IMA', which now means 'Non Illegal Maritime Arrivals'. They enter Australia on a valid visa (such as a tourist or student visa) and then seek a protection visa in order to stay longer. In 2011-2012 nearly half of all protection visa applications made by non-IMAs were from people holding student visas.[15]

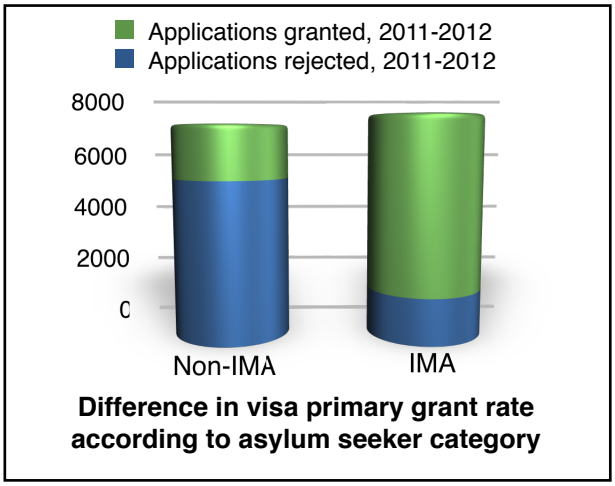
In recent times political and media interest has been largely focussed on IMAs. In July 2013, in response to the twin problems of people-smuggling and deaths at sea, the Labor government introduced a Regional Resettlement Arrangement whereby IMAs would be relocated to Papua New Guinea (Manus Island) or Nauru to await processing of their visa applications. A significant element of this policy was the removal of any possibility of final resettlement in Australia. Instead, resettlement would be in Papua New Guinea, or in another participating regional state, if found to be a genuine refugee. The intent of the policy, which applies only to IMAs, was to discourage asylum seekers from making the risky sea voyage to Australia.[16]

Image: The Daily Telegraph.

After the September 2013 election, the Coalition government introduced further changes to Australian immigration policy. Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB) was established with the intent of preventing loss of life at sea and combatting the activities of people smugglers. OSB is a military-led border security operation.[17] Since the introduction of OSB, some IMAs have been sent home, and others to Manus Island or Nauru for off-shore processing of their visa applications.[18] Australian navy vessels have intercepted and turned back boats carrying asylum seekers.[19] Further, the Manus Island detention facilities have been the subject of media and public criticism following riots and the death of a detainee.[20]

In 2011-2012 roughly equal numbers of protection visa applications were received from each group, but a larger proportion of IMAs were found to be genuine refugees than was the case for non-IMAs.[21] Over the four years 2009-2012, protection visas were ultimately granted to just over ninety percent of IMA applicants, but to only forty-six percent of non-IMA applicants.[22]

Mandatory detention has been a key element of Australia's immigration policy since 1992.[23] The Migration Act 1958 requires the detention of people who are not citizens, and who do not hold a valid entry visa, while appropriate security, health and character checks are carried out.[24] These requirements apply to asylum seekers, refugees who have had their visa cancelled or who have had adverse security assessments,

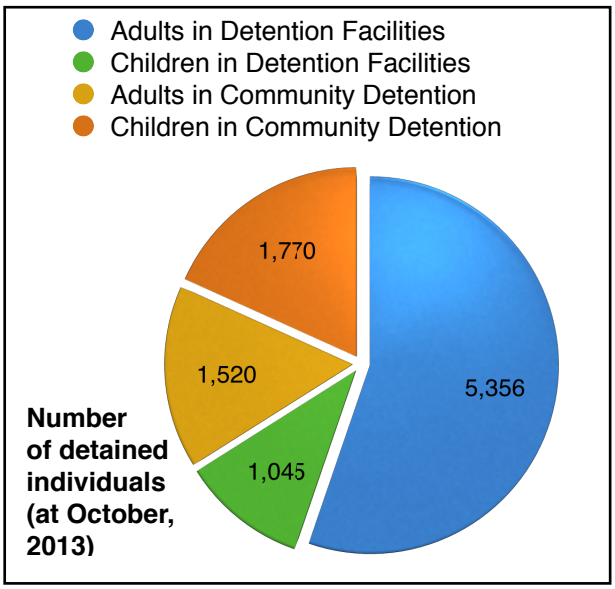


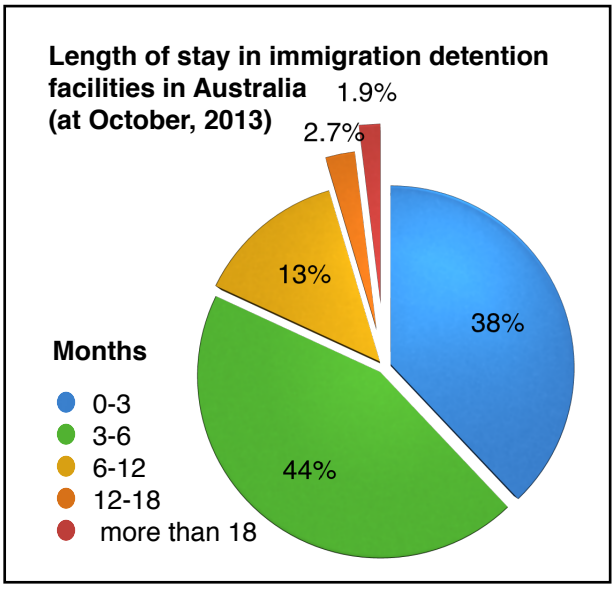
Difference in visa primary grant rate according to asylum seeker category

students who have breached the conditions of their student visa, and to people who have overstayed other visas (for example tourist visas).[25] Release from immigration detention is only permitted when a visa is granted, or if the person is removed from Australia.

Many aspects of Australia's mandatory detention policy have been criticised, including the quality of the facilities, the duration of the stay, and the detrimental effects on detainees' health.[26] Most detainees spend less than 6 months in immigration detention facilities in Australia, but a significant number remain longer than this. At the end of October 2013, nearly three hundred currently detained people had been detained longer than 12 months, well beyond the pre-1992 limit. The average length of stay in an Australian detention facility is 115 days - this is up to five times longer than average detention periods in other developed countries.[27]

The provisions of OSB apply only to IMAs - asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat. Asylum seekers who arrive by other means are generally not detained while their application is being processed, unless they overstay their first visa. Some human rights advocates have argued that, in effect, Australia has - unjustly - created two 'classes' of asylum seeker: those who arrive by sea without a valid visa, and those who arrive by some other means.[28]





THE BIBLE ON REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Australia is a sovereign nation-state, and is free (within the bounds of the Refugee Convention) to decide how to treat asylum seekers while their protection visa applications are being assessed, and also whether or not to grant them refugee status. But the way we treat them will show the world something about Australia as a nation – it will demonstrate our character, the kind of people we are.

As Christians, we believe that the ultimate standard of a good, healthy, righteous character is found not in this world, but through divine revelation: in the God who reveals himself in the Christ of the Bible. What does the Bible say about God, nations, and refugees?

This world is a refugee factory.

We shouldn't be surprised that people become displaced, and have to flee hardship or persecution. The Bible records natural disasters that create refugees: Jacob and his family, and Naomi and her family, both fled famine, finding refuge in Egypt (Gen 16:1-7) and Moab (Ruth 1:1) respectively. The Bible also has examples of powerful communities who oppress others, creating the kind of conditions from which people flee:

- Egypt enslaved the Israelites because they were numerous (Ex 1);
- the prophets condemned Israel and Judah for oppressing the weak and vulnerable (Is 1:15-17; Jer 1:1-11; Amos 1-2);
- Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus had to run away from Bethlehem and find refuge in Egypt because Herod was trying kill Jesus (Matt 2:13-18).

So, we should not be surprised that refugees exist. In a sinful world, natural disasters happen, and people oppress each other. Refugees flee from conditions like this. The only question is: how will we respond when they knock on our door?

Christians can be hospitable: sharing our resources with those in need

God's people have always been a community of refugees. Old Testament Israel fled persecution in Egypt. As God's nation, Israel was to be characterised by being kind to, and protecting, the weakest members of society – especially aliens and foreigners (Exod. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19; 23:7). In Leviticus 19:33-34, God commanded the Israelites:

> *"When an alien lives with you in your land, do not ill-treat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."*

Note how this kindness was to be motivated by empathy. Israelites knew what it felt like to be oppressed foreigners, because they were once oppressed foreigners in Egypt.

Jesus knows what it's like to be a foreigner, and to be treated wrongfully. He was rejected by those who should have welcomed him. John 1:10-11 says:

> *"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."*

Jesus is creator God. The whole world belongs to him. He came as God's promised Messiah, to God's own people, the Jews. He deserved to be welcomed, honoured, obeyed and worshiped. Instead, he was despised, rejected, and dishonoured (Isaiah 53:3). It was the kind of cruel, irrational, wicked rejection that he alluded to in his own parable of the vineyard tenants who murder the owner's son and heir (Matt 21:37-46; Mark 12:6-12; Luke 20:13-19). Jesus is

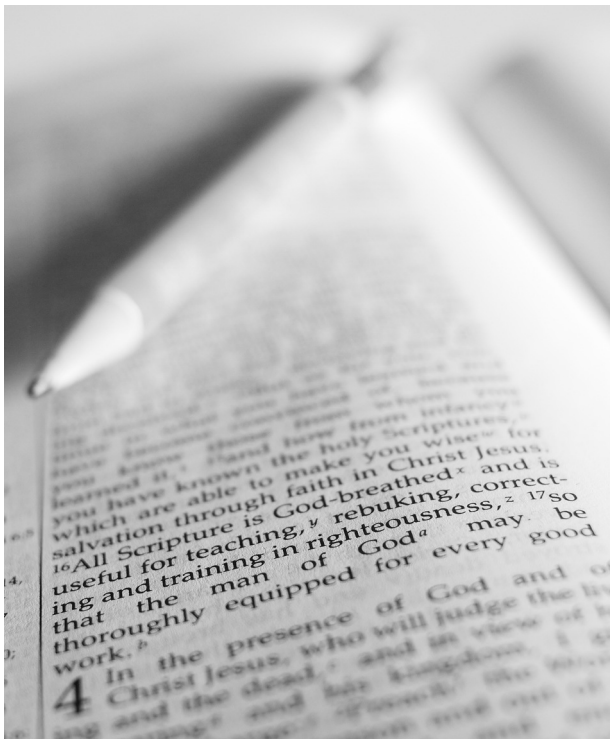


Image: Sheryl Sarkozy

the refugee king, chased away and hounded to death by his own people.

Christians, as God's people, should reflect God's character. We can't forgive people's sins – only Jesus can do that. However, we can be hospitable: we can share our resources with those in need. The early church shared their resources, both within the local church (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37), and internationally, as a further inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the one church (Acts 11:27-30; 24:17; Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9; Gal 2:10). As we do this, we, in a small way, show the world what our God is like – we're a "light to the world" (Matt 5:14), drawing them to praise our Father in heaven (Matt 5:16).

Christians can call all people to love their neighbour.

Not only can we do good, in Jesus' name, to asylum seekers; we can call all people to have a more compassionate, and less self-protective, attitude to them.

God created humanity to represent him on earth (Gen 1:26-28; 9:6). This image, though damaged by sin, still remains upon us (James 3:9). Because sinners still bear the image of God, non-Christians can still feel compassion and

sympathy towards someone who's suffering. So, we can challenge all people – politicians, community leaders, and ordinary Australians – to change their attitude to asylum seekers: to not be suspicious and selfish, but compassionate instead. When talking with non-Christians about asylum seekers, ask them:

1. How would they like to be treated if they were fleeing famine, war or persecution? "Walk a mile in my shoes"; or, as Jesus said, "do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt 7:12);

2. What reputation do they want our country to have internationally? Rich, greedy and self-protective? Or rich and generous? Or at least rich and responsible – pulling our weight, sharing the international refugee load? Jesus was rich, but became poor for our sakes (2 Cor 8:9).

Integrity

So far, we have been encouraging a compassionate response to asylum seekers. But compassion is not naivety. We need a proper process to determine whether asylum seekers are being truthful and whether they really are refugees as defined by the UN Refugee Convention.

Some people might try to abuse the refugee system so as to circumvent the process of applying for an Australian visa. They may in fact be motivated not by fear of oppression, but by greed: they may want access to first-world wealth and lifestyle, but be unable to demonstrate, through the regular migration system, that they have the personal qualities we desire in an immigrant.

Christians reject greed and materialism (Prov. 30:7-9; Matt 6:19-34; Luke 12:15-34; 1 Tim 6:3-10, 17-19; James 2:1-7; 5:1-6) and worship truth incarnate (John 14:6). Compassion is not naivety; our refugee system should not encourage greed and deceit. Let us be hospitable to those who need protection from unrighteous oppression, not to those who are trying to exploit our compassion for their own ends.

Counting the cost

We need to count the cost of such compassion. Jesus constantly warned his disciples to consider the cost of following him (Mark 10:21-22; Luke 14:25-33; John 6:60-66; 15:18-23), and the Apostles warned the early church of the cost of following the crucified Messiah (Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:12-19; 2 Tim 3:12; Rev 13:10). Properly integrating refugees into Australia society involves housing them, teaching them English, educating them, assisting them to find employment, and providing them with basic health care. The Asylum Seekers Expert Panel estimated that increasing Australia's participation in the official UN refugee resettlement program from 13,750 to 20,000 places would cost $1.4 billion over five years, and that increasing family migration visas by 4,000 places would cost $800 million.[29]

To this economic cost must be added the informal social cost of incorporating a new people group into a local suburb and its social institutions: schools, shops – and churches.

Christians should be ready to welcome refugees, not only into the church community, but into the local community. This welcome will involve patiently trying to communicate with people who don't speak English well; showing them how to get about in Australia – how buses and trains work; how and where to shop; how to set up and operate a bank account; and so on. It will involve encouraging our children to make friends with refugee children, and stand by them when they're the butt of racist taunts. This will be inconvenient and costly, in both time and money. Such welcome will probably lead to evangelistic opportunities, for we extend this welcome in the name of Christ, who welcomes sinners into his kingdom. But we don't do it for the evangelistic opportunities; we do it because we are filled with compassion for needy people.

GETTING PRACTICAL

Here are some suggestions for how, as individual Christians and as churches, we can show hospitality to asylum seekers and have a positive impact on the immigration debate:

1. Visit detention centres. Talk to people. Teach them English. Read the Bible. Pray with them.
2. Invite them to your home, and to church. Make it a regular thing, not just a once-off to make yourself feel good.
3. Get involved in refugee support project such as *"Welcome to my place"* or *"Simple Love"*.

   http://welcometomyplace.org.au/

   http://www.simplelove.com.au
4. Read widely. The endnotes to this article include links to reports by government and non-government agencies, to news articles and editorial comments. To learn what other Christians think about asylum seekers, read these articles:

   http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2003/01/aliens-and-strangers-the-scope-of-the-kingdom-and-the-logic-of-the-gospel-2/

   http://www.ethos.org.au/Online-Articles/Blog/We-re-All-Boat-People--A-Biblical-View-of-Refugees

   http://publicchristianity.org/library/loving-the-stranger-in-our-midst#.UzzWgF4xFSU

   http://publicchristianity.org/library/that-they-may-have-life#.UzzWQV4xFSU

   https://publicchristianity.org/library/that-they-may-have-life-part-ii#.UzzWql4xFSU
5. Run a seminar at your church. Watch together the SBS Documentary series *Go Back to Where You Came From*. Talk about what you've learned. Keep the conversation going.
6. Visit http://www.refugeeweek.org.au/resources/kit.php to access a wide range of resources that will help you stay informed, and perhaps even run a Refugee Week event at your church.
7. Pray for our governments as they make decisions on our behalf.

Image: Paul harris, via The Sydney Morning Herald

THINKING ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES

There are many individual issues worthy of attention within the broader debate about the global problem of refugees. In Australia the debate's current focus is on the specific problem of asylum seekers attempting to enter Australia by boat, and the tragedy of deaths at sea. In addition to the practical personal actions we have already suggested in this paper, we think Christians can make an immediate and positive impact to that particular debate by thinking through - and speaking up about - the following issues. The first is the question of the language we use when we speak about asylum seekers, and the second is the policy of mandatory detention. From time to time we will provide additional comments on other aspects of the debate, on the website www.gsandc.org.au.

#1 Is it right to speak of asylum seekers as 'illegal immigrants'?

The issue here is whether our conversation properly reflects the facts, or whether we speak in a way that misleads or manipulates the perception others have about refugees and asylum seekers.

Australian legislation (the Migration Act 1958 and Migration Regulations 1994) requires that non-citizens who enter or reside in Australia must have a valid visa. So, from the perspective of Australian immigration law, an asylum seeker who sets foot on Australian territory, but does not hold a valid visa, *is* entering the country illegally. From the perspective of Australian law, their immigration status is exactly the same as that of a student or tourist or any other non-citizen who overstays their visa.

But what of international law, and Australia's obligations as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and other UN Protocols? The 2000 UN Protocol regarding people smuggling defines 'illegal entry' as: 'crossing borders without complying with the necessary requirements for legal entry into the receiving State'.[30] The Refugee Convention doesn't attempt to define 'illegal entry', but recognises the concept and acknowledges that refugees may have to enter a country illegally in order to apply for protection. Entering another country illegally is precisely what a person *must* do in order to apply for refugee status - the application cannot be made while they are in their home country.

In short, seeking refugee status is not in and of itself illegal, but an asylum seeker may have to breach the immigration laws of a country in order to seek the protection of that country.

Our current Federal Government is, then, technically correct when it uses the word 'illegal' to describe asylum seekers who have no valid visa. However we need to ask whether such language is helpful and fair, or misleading and manipulative. The UNHCR discourages the use of 'illegals' language in connection with refugees and asylum seekers, preferring the term 'irregular'. Experts in immigration law have expressed concern about the effect of 'illegals' language - they argue that it creates the impression that asylum seekers have committed a criminal act in seeking asylum, when in fact they have not.[31] In the United Kingdom, where there is a similar trend toward the use of 'illegals'

language, a recent study suggested that it was being used by the media and politicians to tap into, and manipulate, public fears about threats to society, demonising asylum seekers as the possible source of those threats.[32]

How, then, should Christians respond to the Australian Government's recent unapologetic insistence that it will not condone 'illegal entry' into Australia, and that 'stopping the boats' is a 'battle' against which a 'full arsenal of measures' must be used?[33]

The Bible is clear: our language must reflect the truth of a matter; it must not be misleading, or deliberately manipulative or deceptive. In our conversations about refugees and asylum seekers we must guard against our own use of unhelpful or misleading words, and at the same time be willing to challenge our politicians and journalists about their intent when they use such language.

#2 Immigration detention

As we noted above, the Refugee Convention recognises that an asylum seeker may have to enter a country illegally in order to apply for protection. Because of this, the Convention permits 'necessary' restrictions on the movement of refugees within a host country while their immigration status is being determined (Article 31). In other words, the Convention allows for the temporary detention of asylum seekers while their protection visa applications are being processed.

However the Convention makes it clear that a refugee is not to be penalised for illegally entering a country in order to seek protection, provided they show, without delay, good cause for their illegal entry or stay. Host countries are entitled to carry out appropriate checks, but people are not to be detained purely on the basis of their action in seeking asylum, and they are not to be unnecessarily detained.

Australia's policy of mandatory detention, then, is not technically a breach of our obligations as a signatory to the Convention. There are, however, many aspects of the policy about which we should be challenging our politicians. The key question, apart from whether or not we are meeting our obligations under human rights laws, is whether our treatment of residents of detention facilities is compassionate, fair and just.

Are we exposing people to the risk of physical and mental health problems? Are we detaining people for longer than is reasonable while we process their claims? Is it just and fair to transfer people to offshore processing facilities in nations less developed than ours? These all are questions that Christians can reasonably put to the politicians for whom they vote.

Consider, as an example, the particular problem of children in detention. The Government's official position is that children are not held in immigration detention centres, but instead are accommodated in low security 'alternative places of detention' within the detention network.[34] At December 2013, more than 1,100 children under 18 years of age were residing in such accommodation.[35] Some of these facilities are in the same geographic locations as the higher security detention centres, such as Christmas Island. These facilities may well be low security, but they are detention nonetheless. The Australian Human Rights Commission has alerted the community to the physical and mental health risks faced by these children, and has recently commenced a new inquiry into their welfare.[36] Christians should be following closely the progress of the inquiry, and be ready to bring a godly viewpoint to the debate.

Endnotes

[1] Allan Asher, former Commonwealth Ombudsman, speaking at the MACH (Ministry Across Cultural Horizons) Network Dinner held at the Arabic Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Toongabbie on November 21, 2013.

[2] http://unhcr.org.au/unhcr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=54 , 21/10/2013.

[3] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 60th Anniversary Publication.* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2010), 14-16.

[4] http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/stat-int.php , 21/10/2013.

[5] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php , 21/10/2013.

[6] http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/index.shtml , 4/2/2014.

[7] http://unhcr.org.au/unhcr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=324:governor-general-calls-on-australians-to-support-refugee-crisis-in-syria&catid=35:news-a-media&Itemid=63 , 23/10/2013.

[8] http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/refugees/overviewofforceddisplacement.html , 3/2/2014.

[9] http://unhcr.org.au/unhcr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=139&Itemid=60 , 21/10/2013.

[10] http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e487016.html , 21/10/2013.

[11] http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/stat-int.php , 21/10/2013

[12] Commonwealth of Australia: Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Asylum Trends – Australia*, (Annual Publication, 2011-12), 2.

[13] http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-24/liberal-mp-kelly-odwyer-incorrect-on-australias-refugee-intake/5270252 , 24/02/2014

[14] http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/65onshore-processing-illegal-maritime-arrivals.htm , 2/2/2014.

[15] Commonwealth of Australia: Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Asylum Trends – Australia*, (Annual Publication, 2011-12), 5.

[16] *Regional Resettlement Arrangement Between Australia and Papua New Guinea*, 31/7/2013, www.dfat.gov.au/issues/rra-png.pdf , 1/11/2013.

[17] http://www.customs.gov.au/site/operation-sovereign-borders.asp , 21/10/2013

[18] http://www.customs.gov.au/site/131018transcript_operation-sovereign-borders.asp , 21/10/2013.

[19] http://www.news.com.au/national/tony-abbott-admits-to-asylum-boats-turnback/story-fncynjr2-1226814434711 . 2/2/2014.

http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/policy/coalition-begins-boat-policy-offensive/story-fn9hm1gu-1226814437544# , 2/2/2014

http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-01-31/scott-morrison-fronts-senate-committee-over-asylum-seeker-policy/5230098 , 2/2/2014

[20] http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/one-person-dead-others-seriously-injured-during-violent-manus-island-clashes-20140218-32x3k.html , 18/2/2014.

[21] Commonwealth of Australia: Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Asylum Trends – Australia*, (Annual Publication, 2011-12). 7,13,25,28.

[22] www.refugeecouncil.org.au/n/mr/131214_Asylum_Grant.pdf , 4/2/2014.

[23] http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/Detention#_Toc351535439 , 27/3/2014

[24] https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/82detention.htm , 7/2/2014.

[25] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/immigration-detention-and-human-rights , 4/2/2014.

[26] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/national-inquiry-children-immigration-detention , 21/10/2013.

[27] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/immigration-detention-statistics , 4/2/2014.

[28] http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/Detention#_Toc351535449, 4/2/2014.

[29] Australian Government. *Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers* (2012), 143.

[30] http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=496323791b&query=people%20smuggling%20protocol , 7/2/2014.

[31] http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-06/morrison-correct-illegal-entry-people/4935372 , 7/2/2014.

[32] http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-06/morrison-correct-illegal-entry-people/4935372 , 7/2/2014.

[33] http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/sm/2013/sm209131.htm , 29/10/2013.

[34] https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/82detention.htm , 5/2/2014.

[35] http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/detention/_pdf/immigration-detention-statistics-dec2013.pdf , 8/2/2014.

[36] http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-03/human-rights-inquiry-into-asylum-children-in-detention/5233496 , 4/2/2014.

The Gospel, Society and Culture committee aims to provide resources which are faithful to Scripture, relevant to the life and mission of the church, engaged with contemporary Australian culture and informed by careful research. Resource Papers aim to be consistent with the confessional position of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and to reflect positions on social issues expressed by the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in NSW. They have not been approved by the Assembly and so do not represent the official view of the Presbyterian Church of NSW.

For more information about The Gospel, Society and Culture committee see www.gsandc.org.au .

The initial research and writing for this Resource Paper was conducted by Kamal Weerakoon and Sheryl Sarkoezy.

All images used by permission or from the public domain.

© Gospel, Society and Culture committee, PCNSW, 2014.