

Why We Need More of These Spiritual Gatekeepers if We Want to See Revival

Every refugee struggles when it comes to starting a new life. The food is different, the laws are unfamiliar, jobs are tough to find and English is hard to learn.

But the worst part of being a refugee in a new land is being so far from family, friends and a sense of community.

One struggle that many don't realize new refugees face comes from refugees who have already resettled in their new land. Newcomers are often looked down upon by those who have acclimated to the culture—they're seen as weak.

After I came to America in 1982, I truly needed structure—a community of people who would come around me and help me take those difficult first steps forward. That's what I found at the Arabic Church of Dallas, which brings up an important truth. Refugees have an "in-between" national identity, and reaching them for Christ is most effectively done in the context of fellow "in-between-ers."

That's why connecting refugees to Christian communities that speak their language and know their culture is so important.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Making disciples of all nations no longer means you have to travel across the globe. People from nations where you could never go and preach the Gospel are right here in our back

yard.

If Christians will not befriend refugees and help them connect with believers from their culture, then what you're seeing happening in Europe—pockets of extremism, hatred of the West and resistance to assimilation—is going to happen here.

This is the time the Lord has appointed to reach the world right here in your country.

So will you join Him?

Will you follow The Lord's commands to His people in Exodus 23:9, "Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt"?

From a worldly perspective, refugees may look like a liability to our nation. But they're an incredible asset to God's kingdom.

They are the "gatekeepers" of cultures all over the world—men and women through whom God can reach the least-reached people of the world with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not many people helped my family during our 22-year exodus from Iraq to America. But I remember the ones who did—because they changed our lives.

Oskar Schindler saved the lives of 1,200 Jews during the holocaust by employing them in his factories, even paying bribes with his own money to keep them from being sent to concentration camps.

Schindler was a flawed man who, as far as I know, had no deep Christian faith. But what he did for those 1,200 Jews has echoed through the decades as an example of selfless love for others.

Maybe the Lord isn't calling you to help 1,200 refugees—perhaps it's just one or two. But I can tell you from

experience that the ones you impact will never, ever forget the difference you made in their lives.

*This article is adapted from The Refugee: A Story of God's Grace and Hope on One Man's Road to Refuge by **Jalil Dawood**, pastor of the Arabic Church of Dallas and founder of World Refugee Care.*