

Ideas for Starting a Refugee Ministry

Designed for Any Member of the Local Church

- ◆ Prayerfully study
 - The Great Commission: *Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 24:14*
 - The Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
 - The inspired counsels on the “heaven-sent opportunity” to reach out to “The Stranger in our Midst” (See *Education* p. 262-271, *Evangelism* p. 568-573 and *Christian Service* p. 77-112.
- ◆ Get acquainted with refugees and immigrants near your church “*It is acquaintance that awakens sympathy and sympathy is the spring of effective ministry.*” *Education* p. 262
 - Contact the local government office of public assistance (and/or court system) to see what language groups they serve. See if they have any demographics maps or other information about these language groups. Ask about any refugee assistance organizations in the area.
 - Check the “Restaurant” and “Grocery” sections of your local phone book to see what ethnic foods are available in your area.
 - Pray that God will guide you to the people He has sent here for you to introduce to Him.
 - Talk to people you meet in local grocery and department stores and apartment complexes who may be from another country. If they are fluent in English, ask if they are bilingual, then ask what languages they speak. If they are not fluent in English, ask if they know another language. Be a friend. Ask what it is like being in this country. Ask what is hard about life in this country. Learn a greeting in their language. Learn how to say “Thank you” in their language. Exchange contact information if they seem comfortable. Stay in touch. Invite them to your home for a meal. Ask about their culture. Ask about family—here and abroad. Imagine what life must be like for them. Show that you care. Ask if there is anything they need. Meet that need to the best of your ability. Invite them to church. Offer to take them. (They may not have transportation.) Use the phrases you learn in their language to greet others who speak the same language.
- ◆ As God leads, share with the church what you are learning and doing. Ask them to pray with you for the unreached refugees and immigrants in your area.
- ◆ As your refugee/immigrant friends begin coming to church with you, introduce them to your friends at church. These connections are crucial.
- ◆ Remember the following counsel, and let God lead.
 - *Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."*--MH 143.

For more information contact Terri Saelee, North American Division Refugee Ministries Coordinator at (608) 443-6575 or TerriSaelee@nad.adventist.org or visit the website: www.refugeeministries.org.