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One Day I Will Return...Perhaps

*International migration is one of the great issues of this century.
We have entered a new era of mobility.*

— Kofi Atta Annan , Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

“Don’t ask me where I’m from—my homeland is far away.” These words carry a melody of their own, and they capture something essential about human history. Without people constantly on the move, humanity would never have spread across the earth. If we were to trace our lineage back, as the biblical genealogies do, we would find that Adam and Eve were not only the first ancestors of the human race—they were also the first migrants.

When we hear the word “immigrant,” we tend to picture a family packing up their belongings and crossing a border. But if we begin to see the world through the lens of “displaced or migrating peoples,” we realize that far more people than we might expect have left their country of birth and set foot in a foreign land. Whether by force or by choice, they are all undergoing a kind of departure—leaving behind familiar languages, habits, and surroundings, and stepping into a future marked by challenge and, perhaps, by hope.

In their foundational work *Diaspora Missiology*, Professors Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan identify four categories of people living outside their place of origin: refugees, economically active migrants, international students, and nomads. In the post-pandemic era, remote work has become a defining feature of modern life, giving rise to the digital nomad—a new kind of person for a new kind of world. With this in mind, we propose adding a fifth category to the original four, one that belongs distinctly to our present moment.

Taken together, these categories help us see more clearly the full spectrum of those who have left their homes—and the unique challenges each group faces.





Types of Migrating Peoples

Refugees

The United Nations Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside their country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return.

Refugees are people who have been forcibly displaced—driven from their homes by war, violence, or instability, often with no safe path of return. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of April 2025, more than 122 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced. Of these, approximately 42.7 million are classified as refugees, while tens of millions more remain internally displaced within their own countries.

In the short term, refugees need the essentials for survival: safe shelter, food, and medical care. In the long term, they need either the opportunity to return home or the chance to rebuild their lives in a country willing to receive them. On average, refugees spend between six and fifteen years in temporary camps before securing a more permanent solution. In the face of a crisis of this scale, governments, international organizations, and NGOs—including many churches and Christian institutions—are actively engaged in providing relief and facilitating resettlement. For many refugees, these efforts are an indispensable lifeline.



Photo by Jonathan Ramalho on Unsplash

Economically Active Migrants

Economic migrants are people who move to another country primarily for employment and economic opportunity, and they make up by far the largest share of those living outside their place of origin worldwide. Some hold formal labor contracts, while others are professionals working across borders or entrepreneurs who have established businesses abroad.

According to the International Labour Organization, there were approximately 167 million migrant workers worldwide in 2022. These workers contribute to the economies of their host countries while typically sending a portion of their earnings back home. The World Bank reports that low- and middle-income countries received more than \$800 billion in remittances from overseas migrants in 2022 alone—a flow that has become a vital economic lifeline for many developing nations.

Undocumented or unauthorized migrants also fall within this category, though their numbers are difficult to estimate with precision. The United States alone is estimated to have more than ten million undocumented migrants. Many entered on time-limited visas and remained beyond their permitted stay, while others crossed borders illegally in search of work.

Regardless of legal status, the economic and cross-cultural contributions of economic migrants cannot be overlooked. They help fill labor shortages in developed economies, while also bringing new skills and capital back to their home countries. Many migrant workers are themselves Christians, quietly carrying the gospel into every corner of the world through their workplaces and business relationships—building bridges across cultures in ways that formal mission structures often cannot.

International Students

International students are among the most influential segments of the global mobile population. According to UNESCO, approximately 6.9 million students were enrolled in higher education outside their home countries in 2022, with more than half studying at institutions in Europe and North America.

Many international students choose to remain in their host countries after completing their studies—taking jobs, building careers, and in some cases obtaining permanent residency. This can contribute to a significant “brain drain” in their countries of origin. In some countries in Africa and Central America, more than half of university graduates emigrate to developed economies after finishing their education—a large-scale outflow of skilled talent that places further strain on already fragile public services back home.

The cross-border flow of talent also has its positive side. Students who return home after completing their studies abroad bring back up-to-date knowledge and global perspectives, with the potential to strengthen the technical capacity and innovative potential of their home societies. Even those who remain overseas often give back through remittances, investment, and academic collaboration.

Many young people who would otherwise have little or no exposure to Christianity in their home countries first encounter the gospel while studying abroad. Student fellowships and local churches that actively welcome international students—offering language support, homestays, and opportunities for genuine cultural exchange—often become their first experience of the love of Christ in an unfamiliar place. International graduates who come to faith during their student years carry significant potential to become key contributors to cross-cultural ministry, wherever in the world they may go.

Traditional Nomads

Traditional nomadic peoples represent a distinct and substantial segment of the world's mobile populations. Globally, their numbers are estimated at between thirty and forty million, living primarily across the steppes of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Sahel—the semi-arid belt south of the Sahara in Africa. Well-known nomadic groups include the Fulani of West Africa, the Maasai of East Africa, the Bedouin of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the Inuit and Sámi peoples of the Arctic.

For generations, nomadic peoples have sustained self-sufficient ways of life, enabling them to make use of environments that others cannot cultivate. Yet the advance of modernity is steadily constraining the space in which such ways of life can continue. The drawing of national borders, land privatization, and the erection of fences have blocked traditional migration routes. Mechanized agriculture and settled farming have steadily eaten into grazing lands. Drought, conflict, and other pressures have only compounded the strain. As a result, many nomadic communities have been forced to settle or fundamentally transform their way of life.

In their host countries, nomadic peoples often find themselves on the margins of society, facing the loss of traditional grazing rights and lacking adequate access to education, healthcare, clean water, economic opportunities, and legal protection. A number of international development and aid organizations—including World Vision and International Justice Mission—work specifically with nomadic communities, drilling wells, establishing mobile schools, and advocating for their legal rights, helping them improve their living conditions while preserving their traditional ways of life.

Digital Nomads

Digital nomads are knowledge workers who, enabled by modern technology, can treat the entire world as their office. They typically work in fields such as software development, digital marketing, design, writing, online education, or consulting—roles that can be performed remotely with nothing more than a laptop and a reliable internet connection.

Digital nomads are drawn to a lifestyle of travel and freedom, working as they move and choosing where to live from month to month. They might spend a few months writing code in a café in Bali, then head to a co-working space in Lisbon later in the year to collaborate with others. By 2024, more than 40 million people worldwide identified as digital nomads, and a growing number of countries have introduced dedicated “digital nomad visas” to attract this mobile, high-spending workforce and stimulate their local economies.

For digital nomads, mobility is largely a matter of choice rather than necessity. This new form of movement blurs the boundaries between travel and residence, and between work and leisure, while also posing challenges to existing visa, tax, and labor frameworks. For the church, digital nomads present a distinctive reality: scattered across the globe, they can serve as bridges for cross-cultural engagement and mission, yet they also need meaningful connection, support, and spiritual accountability. How to pastor and equip these “citizens of the earth” through both digital and in-person means has become an emerging question—one that contemporary mission cannot afford to ignore.

When “there is no way forward here” and “there is hope elsewhere” intersect, movement becomes inevitable. The global flow of information and the ease of modern transportation have made such movement more frequent and more accessible than ever before.

What may appear to be the random movement of people, however, carries within it the purposes of God: drawing people from places where the gospel is scarcely heard to places where the truth can be known, and sending those who have been born again to places still in need of hope. Whatever the direction of that movement, its deeper purpose remains the same—that we might seek God, who is not far from any one of us.

This great tide of cross-border movement brings both challenges and opportunities to the nations it touches—and stands as a test set before the global church.



Migration in the Era of Postwar Reconstruction

The Rise of the Gastarbeiter System in Germany



In the aftermath of World War II, Europe lay in ruins and was in urgent need of labor to rebuild. Beginning in the 1960s, the West German government signed a series of bilateral Gastarbeiter (guest worker) recruitment agreements with Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, and other countries. Among these groups, Turkish workers made up the largest share.

The West German government initially intended to limit Turkish Gastarbeiter to short-term stays by issuing visas valid for only two years. Such short contracts, however, could only attract workers with limited education—those willing to take on the manual, low-status jobs that German citizens were unwilling to do.

When those two-year visas expired, employers were reluctant to train new replacements, while experienced workers were equally unwilling to return home. Under pressure from both sides, the government extended their visas. After five years of continuous employment, these workers became legally eligible for long-term residency. As a result, most Turkish Gastarbeiter remained in Germany and later brought their families to join them.

Between 1955 and 1973, more than ten million Gastarbeiter migrated to Germany, yet the government lacked a clear plan for how to address the growing presence of these workers. It was not until 2005 that Germany began to pursue meaningful integration policies—decades too late for the first generation of Turkish migrants, who had by then formed a parallel society in Germany, largely separate from mainstream culture.

Heavenly Father, Europe's Gastarbeiter left their homelands to fill the labor shortages of the postwar years, yet in the process grew ever more distant from the places they once called home. We ask that You would personally heal the wounds they have carried through their journeys—the loneliness, the discrimination, and the pain of rejection. Comfort those who find themselves suspended between two worlds, neither fully belonging to the place they came from nor fully accepted in the place they now live. Raise up Your church, that it may become a cross-cultural refuge. Call Your people to listen to their stories and to walk with them into a deeper sense of belonging. May Your love break down long-standing barriers, and may the cities of Germany, through the meeting of different peoples, become places that bear witness to Your work of reconciliation. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

New Migrations After the Cold War

The Opening of Eastern Europe and the Movement of People

In 1989, the Fall of the Berlin Wall marked a turning point, and Eastern Europe was transformed. Poland's Solidarity movement won an overwhelming victory in the June elections, defeating the ruling Polish United Workers' Party. Hungary began dismantling its border fortifications, and large numbers of East Germans moved west. A wave of democracy swept across the continent, toppling every Soviet-style communist government in its path.



The Berlin Wall

With the Iron Curtain lifted, the people of Eastern Europe suddenly found themselves free to move west in search of a better life. Poles, Romanians, Bulgarians, and others began streaming into Western Europe. Anna was a Romanian nurse who came to Italy after the fall of the communist regime. She cared for elderly Italians and used her meager wages to support her three children back home. She sang lullabies to them over the phone. She spoke with them from afar. But she could not hold them. This is the quiet grief shared by so many who leave: a mother earns a living far away, while her children grow up without her.

In 2004, when eight Central European countries — including Poland and the Czech Republic — joined the European Union, hundreds of thousands of Eastern Europeans traveled to work in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, and other Western nations, setting off another surge of migration. These two great waves of movement permanently reshaped the ethnic and cultural landscape of Europe.

Heavenly Father, before the forces of history, we are often carried along, unable to choose our own path. Have mercy on those who have been forced to leave their homes—whether mothers working far away to provide for their children, or laborers who journey alone to unfamiliar lands. You see the cost they bear in order to survive. Sustain every struggling family, that they may not lose hope through long seasons of separation. Raise up believers among the migrant communities in Europe's cities—those who bring comfort, companionship, and encouragement—so that Your church may become a place of rest for those on the move. May every person who crosses a border, in their journey from one land to another, encounter Your love that transcends every boundary. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Immigration Policy After Brexit

The Uncertain Future of Somalis in Britain



On June 23, 2016, 51.9% of British voters chose to leave the European Union. On January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom formally completed its withdrawal, bringing an era to a close. Yet the impact extended beyond EU citizens, falling also on communities such as Somalis who had long since made Britain their home.

Between 1998 and 2002, those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom came primarily from conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. During this period, Britain also became home to the largest

Somalis diaspora in Europe. These refugees, who fled civil war and arrived in the 1990s, have since put down roots across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, building communities and raising families. According to the 2021 census, more than 100,000 Somali migrants were living in these regions.

Beginning in 2021, the United Kingdom introduced a points-based immigration system, requiring applicants to demonstrate a high level of English proficiency, specific professional skills, and a confirmed job offer. For many Somali families, these thresholds have proved impossible to meet, leaving relatives stranded in third countries with no clear path forward. Even some individuals who had already been granted refugee status found themselves caught in delay and uncertainty when attempting to renew their visas under the new system—leaving many in the paradoxical position of being legally present yet unable to feel secure.

Heavenly Father, the policy upheaval brought about by Brexit has left many immigrant and refugee families once again living in fear and uncertainty. Have mercy on those who now worry about their status and whether they will be allowed to remain. Sustain the families who have been forced apart by these systems, and under such heavy burdens, grant them hearts that can still hold onto joy. May Your church become their refuge and support, so that when the structures of society are shaken, they may find in You a foundation that cannot be moved. Lord, be their protector. Even when their legal status is uncertain, may they find in You a secure and lasting belonging. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



The Weight of a Rubber Boat

The Tragedy of North African Refugees Crossing the Mediterranean

In the dead of night, dozens of gaunt men and women are packed together on a rubber boat. They carry with them a longing for a new life, setting out from Libya at great risk to find it. As the boat nears the Italian island of Lampedusa, the fuel runs out. They are left to drift on the Mediterranean.

The central Mediterranean route is the deadliest maritime migration corridor in the world. Over the past decade, more than ten thousand people have gone missing in these waters. According to data from the European Union's emergency hotline for migrants in distress at sea, more than 1,300 migrant vessels encountered danger in the Mediterranean last year alone. The International Organization for Migration reports that at least 3,800 people died or went missing in the process—nearly half of them along the very route that boat had taken.

The instability and poverty of North Africa are driving this wave of migration. Libya has remained fragmented since the collapse of its government in 2011, becoming a hub for human smuggling networks. Tunisia continues to face persistently high unemployment, while many from sub-Saharan Africa, seeking a way to make a living, travel through Morocco and Algeria to attempt to cross the Mediterranean.

Behind every statistic lies a face—a life that longed for peace.



Photo by IFRC on Flickr

A rubber dinghy carrying approximately 50 men and women, departing from Bodrum, Turkey, toward the Greek island of Kos.

Heavenly Father, hear every cry for help from the sea. Those men, women, and children crowded onto rubber boats are not statistics, but precious lives in Your sight. Protect those now setting out on dangerous journeys, that they may not fall into death or into the hands of traffickers. Bring deep comfort to the families who have already lost loved ones. Help those engaged in maritime rescue—sharpen their eyes, that in the vastness of the sea they may see those who long for a life of safety and peace. Stir the churches along Europe's coastlines, that they would see beyond headlines about "illegal migrants" and recognize these North African refugees as their neighbors. Lord, may this deadliest of sea routes, through Your mercy, become a place that bears witness to the hope of resurrection. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



The Challenge of Starting Over

Syrian Refugees



Photo by Salah Darwish on Unsplash

Syrians who left their homeland carried with them a deep longing for the loved ones they left behind, as well as hope for the future, as they set out in search of a new life. By the end of 2023, approximately 970,000 Syrians were living in Germany, of whom about 710,000 were asylum seekers. Sweden had received around 200,000 more.

Sahar, a fifteen-year-old Syrian girl, described her experience simply: “At first, it was hard. I had no friends, I couldn’t speak Swedish, and I missed my family and friends terribly. Now I really like it

here—I can talk with others, I enjoy going to school, and I’ve made good friends.” For Sahar, this has been a positive experience. But for countries like Germany and Sweden, the picture is more complex: many schools have struggled to accommodate the sudden influx of students, placing real strain educational resources.

Refugees often find that their academic and professional qualifications are not easily recognized in Europe. Language barriers further complicate the search for employment, and the job market frequently brings with it the added challenge of racial discrimination. In their new countries, many Syrian refugees attend language classes and vocational training, hoping to build a foundation for a new life as quickly as possible. They do so not only for themselves, but in the hope of bringing family members still living under bombardment to join them—so they can live without fear of violence reaching their home.

Heavenly Father, we pray for every Syrian family carrying the memory of war as they begin again in a foreign land. Heal the wounds in their bodies and in their hearts, and grant them the strength to keep going amid unfamiliar languages and cultures. Watch over the children who are striving to adapt in school. May they not be shamed because of cultural differences, but instead encounter teachers and friends who receive them with kindness. Help every parent as they prepare to seek work. Teach them to turn to You and depend on You in their time of need. Lord, we also ask that You would use the local church—not only to provide resources, but to walk alongside them—so that in their displacement, Syrian refugees may encounter a true home. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



Identity and Faith in the Diaspora

The Kurdish People — A Nation Without a Country

The Kurds are the fourth-largest ethnic group in the Middle East, numbering around thirty million people—yet they have no country of their own. They are scattered across Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, and in each of these places they have faced suppression. In Syria, the Bashar al-Assad regime banned the Kurdish language and cultural celebrations. In Turkey, repeated and often violent crackdowns on Kurdish uprisings forced many Kurds for decades to live under the designation “Mountain Turks,” a label intended to erase their identity. Under the weight of political and ethnic persecution, hundreds of thousands of Kurds have fled their homelands in search of asylum abroad since the 1960s.



Photo by CharlesFred on Flickr

Today, approximately two million Kurds live in diaspora around the world. In Europe, they are concentrated primarily in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the Nordic countries. Germany alone is home to an estimated 750,000 Kurds, while Sweden and France each have around 130,000—making Kurds a significant minority presence across the continent.

In terms of faith, the majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims. After migrating to Europe, many find themselves navigating a secular society, continuing to attend mosque while simultaneously engaging with the openness of Swedish or German public life. This dual belonging has produced a rich and nuanced inner life — one that remains loyal to tradition while also drawing toward the tolerance and pluralism embedded in their new cultures.

Heavenly Father, we ask that You would heal the wounds the Kurdish people have long endured under oppression. In their search for belonging, keep them from losing hope. Watch over Kurdish families seeking asylum in Europe; may they find safe homes, stable livelihoods, and lives free from discrimination. Raise up Your church, and teach it how to welcome the Kurdish people—with empathy, respect, and humility—entering into their culture, walking alongside them, and becoming their friends. May Your peace and the grace of reconciliation come upon the Kurdish people, so that in their long exile they may encounter Your eternal promises. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

A Gospel Seed in a Shoebox

The Faith Journey of Romanian Migrants



Poverty is a driving force behind Romania's migration wave. After the communist regime fell in 1989, Romania became a democracy—but what followed was industrial collapse and social upheaval. As recently as 2024, nearly thirty percent of Romania's population was classified as being at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This is not simply a matter of low income. It can mean being unable to pay electricity bills, being unable to afford medical care, children missing out on schooling, and a lack of stable work.

Economic hardship drove tens of thousands to seek work in Spain. Today, more than one million Romanians live there, forming the country's largest non-Spanish-speaking immigrant community. Across towns and cities, the church has become a place of refuge for Romanian communities.

Livia, who lives in Toledo, has seen how the love of God can cross borders. When she was five, her father left for Spain to find work, leaving her and her sister behind in Romania. One Christmas, she received a shoebox gift from a Christian organization. Inside were two small dolls. That simple gift became a lasting source of warmth in her memory.

The following year, she and her family made their way to Toledo, and that gift became a source of comfort she carried with her from home. Years later, she encountered the same ministry again at her church and immediately signed up to take part. Now, each year, she prepares shoeboxes for children in need—because she knows that even a small sign of being loved can change a person's life.

Heavenly Father, You see every family torn apart by poverty, and You grieve over every family forced into separation. Draw especially near to the parents who have left home to provide, and to the children growing up alone in their homeland—be their comfort in the midst of loneliness. Thank You that even a small shoebox can become a seed of love. May this ministry continue to take root, grow, and bear fruit, so that more children, through being loved, may come to know You. Bless Romanian believers in Spain and across Europe. In the hardships of migration, may they continue to bear witness to Your faithfulness. Make Your church a refuge for migrants, so that all who are far from home may find comfort and hope in Your house. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

A Harvest Field in a Diverse City

The Chinese Community in Paris

Paris, the “City of Light,” draws people from every corner of the world—to work, to study, and to build a life. Within this vibrant city, a growing Chinese community has quietly taken root. Research indicates that France is home to around fifty Chinese evangelical churches, more than forty of which are located in Paris.

13th arrondissement of Paris and the Belleville are home to much of Paris’s Chinese immigrant population. The community includes merchants and students from the coastal Wenzhou region of Zhejiang Province, ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, and a second generation raised entirely in a French-speaking environment. Though often described simply as “Chinese,” this is in fact a community shaped by a rich mix of languages and cultures.



Photo by Maria Lysenko on Unsplash

And yet the vibrancy of Paris has not hindered the Gospel from taking root. According to the International Mission Board, during the 2024 Paris Olympics, members of Chinese churches took to the streets, distributing Gospel booklets and commemorative pins and engaging in more than a thousand conversations about faith—112 of which led to decisions to follow Christ.

For the Chinese people making their way in Paris, the challenges are real: language, cultural adjustment, rebuilding a social world from nothing. But so is the longing — for belonging, for identity, for a meaningful life.

Heavenly Father, Chinese people who have left their homes and are striving in a foreign culture face many challenges—in language, culture, family, and identity. Be their refuge, we pray. Bring comfort to lonely hearts and renew the strength of weary spirits. We lift up the Chinese churches in Paris. Lord, grant them unity and love from above, so that amid the diversity of Mandarin, Cantonese, Wenzhou dialect, and French, each church may become a vessel of mercy and grace. Raise up new workers, small groups, and ministries, and shepherds who can reach the second generation of young people, to care for every weary soul. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The Factory Floor is also the Mission Field

Chinese Workers in Prato, Italy



In Prato, the lights of textile factories often come on before the street lamps—and go out long after. This unassuming city in Tuscany is home to the largest concentration of Chinese workers in Europe. By 2020, nearly sixty percent of Prato's legally registered foreign residents were Chinese. Most work long hours in the garment industry, living in dormitories beside the factory floor or in converted warehouses, their lives closely bound to the work before them.

Language barriers and a relatively insular social world have kept them on the margins of city life. Most workers are unable to converse in Italian and rely largely on Chinese networks, with little interaction with the wider society around them. During the pandemic, this community moved quickly to protect itself—closing shops, pooling resources, and supporting one another—prompting media discussion of a Chinese “self-reliance network.” At the same time, these reports highlighted a continuing reality: a community that remains largely separate from the Italian mainstream.

Within this vast and insular community, the work of the Gospel faces three obstacles. Long working hours leave little room for people to step away and enter a church or small group. There is a lack of accessible resources for discipleship and spiritual formation. And the combined pressures of unstable legal status and demanding labor leave little space to pause and consider the deeper questions of life and faith. Jesus came that people might have life—but in Prato, many spend their days stitching garments for others, while no one comes to mend what is broken within them.

Heavenly Father, watch over the workers who begin their labor before dawn and are still at their machines late into the night. In the midst of busyness and silence, speak to them, and let them know that they are not forgotten, but precious in Your sight, created in Your image. We pray for the Chinese churches and Gospel work in Prato. Lord, make a way—enable Your church to cross the barriers of language, legal status, and culture, and to enter the textile factories and dormitories, bringing Your word and Your comfort to those in need of truth and companionship. We ask for Your mercy to come near. Raise up more servants who are willing to go into the dark corners of the factories and bring hope to weary hearts. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Surviving on the Margins Across Europe

A Thousand Years of Roma Wanderings I

The Roma trace their origins to a minority community in India, from which they began migrating roughly a thousand years ago. They have been called “Gypsies” and “Bohemians,” yet what has remained constant is their long history of movement—centuries of migration across the Eurasian continent. Throughout history, European nations have subjected the Roma to forced assimilation, relocation, registration and surveillance, and even genocide. During the World War II, scholarly estimates suggest that approximately 500,000 Roma perished in the Holocaust.



Photo by Touam (Hervé Agnoux) on Wikimedia Commons

Today, more than ten million Roma live across Europe, the majority on the margins of society. For many Roma communities, unemployment, exclusion from education, and poor housing conditions are as commonplace as discrimination and rejection. Without documentation, education, or language skills, they have little chance of securing a foothold in the labor market.

Even when a Roma worker manages to find temporary work, there is no guarantee they will be paid for their labor. For some employers, a single call to immigration authorities is enough to avoid paying wages—an easy way to cut costs. These layered vulnerabilities have made the Roma a primary target for human trafficking. The reason is simple: no one notices if a few Roma people disappear.

Heavenly Father, we cry out to You for the Roma people, scattered across Europe and pushed to the margins. You know their long history of displacement, and You see the burdens they still carry today—lack of education, unemployment, discrimination, and exploitation. Watch over the families forced to live in harsh conditions, for You are their Lord. Protect the men, women, and children who are vulnerable to human trafficking, and frustrate the plans of those who would harm them. May Your church in cities and towns become a place that welcomes the Roma, so that in their long story of wandering they may encounter a Savior who never leaves them nor forsakes them. Lord, let the Gospel shine among the Roma people, bringing new life and an eternal hope. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Challenges in Education and Evangelism

A Thousand Years of Roma Wanderings II



The educational gap facing Roma children is severe. Sixty percent of Roma children under the age of three have no access to nearby early childhood education. Language barriers, cultural isolation, poverty, and discrimination place Roma children at a disadvantage from the moment they enter school. They are often placed in segregated classes, or fall behind due to a lack of materials and difficulty following instruction in a language not their own. For many families, the choice is stark: rather than sending children to sit in classrooms where they may be overlooked, it seems more practical to have them stay with adults and help earn an income.

Amid these many disadvantages, the Roma community is seeing a growing movement of the Gospel. Pentecostal churches in particular have expanded rapidly, bringing not only spiritual renewal but also improvements in literacy and education. Even so, the Roma's long history of rejection has fostered a deep wariness of outsiders. Trust must be built gradually—through education and practical service—before the Gospel can be meaningfully shared.

Some local governments and churches have begun implementing education and integration programs for the Roma—including hiring Roma teachers, offering instruction in their mother tongue, and equipping Roma communities with the practical knowledge and communication skills needed to navigate modern society and interact with public institutions.

Heavenly Father, watch over Roma children, that they may not be forgotten amid the gaps of the education system and the barriers of culture. Open the hearts of schools and governments, that unjust systems may be restored, and that these children will no longer be denied the opportunity to learn because of their background. Strengthen those working to advance education and integration efforts. Help them overcome many challenges, so that Roma people may learn to navigate society and stand on firm ground. Bless the Roma churches. For the Gospel is not only for the salvation of souls, but for the renewal of daily life. May literacy classes, Romani language instruction, and family ministry become means through which more Roma families are transformed by Your love. Lord, write hope upon the wounds of Roma history. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



Where Traditional Culture Meets Christian Faith

Roma Communities

For the Roma, faith is not built on abstract ideas but is embedded in music, story, and everyday relationships. Roma culture has long valued family ties, oral tradition, and a strong awareness of the spiritual world. As a result, when Roma people encounter faith, they often begin with experience rather than doctrine—from a song that moves the heart, a prayer that brings healing, or a community that welcomes them—and from there, they gradually find their way toward God.



Photo by Touam (Hervé Agnoux) on Wikimedia Commons

It is Pentecostal worship that most closely resonates with Roma culture—free, expressive, open to the miraculous, and centered on community and family. For this reason, Pentecostal churches have grown most rapidly among the Roma. Spain is home to an estimated thousand Roma churches, while in France, roughly forty percent of the Roma population has come to faith in evangelical churches.

Wherever the Gospel has taken root, the effects are visible: crime rates have declined, alcohol abuse has decreased, and many have found in Christ a new identity and a hope they had never known before.

Mission organizations have also found unique ways to share the Gospel among the Roma. Trans World Radio, for example, broadcasts in the Romani language, allowing many who cannot read to hear the story of Jesus. Church networks use music, short stories, and drama to communicate the Gospel.

When hearts are moved, lives begin to change. A people who have wandered for centuries are gradually becoming some of the most vibrant witnesses in Europe.

Heavenly Father, thank You for making Roma culture good soil for the Gospel. Through music, story, and relationships, You have made a way for the Roma to encounter You. Use passionate worship and genuine community life to draw more Roma people to know You. Guard every Roma church, so that growth is not only in numbers, but in lives being renewed. Bless those who share the Gospel through many kinds of ministry. May Your word reach, through them, into the hearts of those who cannot read and are often overlooked by society. Lord, lead the Roma people out of a life of wandering and marginalization, and make them a people who bear bold witness across Europe. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Pulled Between Europe and the Homeland

The Fractured Identity of Second-Generation Migrants



Photo by Batuhan Doğan on Unsplash

Many second-generation migrants are born in Europe, yet carry a deep and persistent sense of divided identity. Research on Turkish Germans shows that 89 percent feel a strong sense of belonging to Turkey, while 81 percent also consider themselves part of Germany. Their lives seem to stand on two pieces of ground at once: the country where they were born, and the cultural heritage of a homeland they may never have set foot in, yet which continues to shape them.

This tension—being born in Europe while still rooted in another homeland—places a double burden on the younger generation. In the wider society, they work hard to fit in, only to be reminded—through their accent, appearance, or religion—that they do not fully belong. At home, they are expected to preserve the values and language of their parents' generation. This constant process of adjustment, self-doubt, and searching for a place to stand leaves many young people living with ongoing tension.

A growing number of churches have begun offering bilingual worship services, cross-cultural fellowships, and care groups—providing a space where second-generation migrants can find room to breathe amid this tension. In these communities, they do not have to choose between their heritage and their European identity. In Christ, they are free to explore who they are, to be accepted, and to be heard. They begin to see that they are not people caught in between, but bridges God desires to use.

Heavenly Father, You know the tension second-generation migrants face as they grow up between two cultures. They long to be accepted, yet often do not know where they belong. Comfort the young people who are weary from this struggle, and help them find a firm foundation in You. May the church become their home—not another choice that adds to their confusion, but a place that walks with them as they learn to integrate their story in Christ, and to recognize Your work in their lives. Lord, use them as bridges across cultures. May they carry the testimony of having encountered You and become a help to other migrant communities. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

From Sending to Receiving

The Missional Transformation of the European Church

The direction of mission in the European church is changing. A 2020 report examining seventy-four churches across twenty-two countries that had welcomed migrants found that half had begun receiving migrants as full members. In twenty-five percent of those congregations, migrants had become a visible minority, and in a further twenty percent, they made up the majority.

Mission is no longer only about being sent out. It is increasingly about learning to receive those whom God has brought.



Photo by Erika Giraud on Unsplash

A report by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe notes that the European Union issued more than 3.7 million first residence permits in 2023, with employment as the primary driver. Migration in Europe is not limited to refugees; it also includes movement for work, education, and family reunification. Welcoming, equipping, and integrating migrant communities is therefore an essential dimension of mission today.

Many pastors refer to migrant Christians as “missionaries from below.” They come carrying both brokenness and hope, and through their presence, help European churches rediscover what it means to live out the Christian faith within society. Detlef Blöcher, a leader in the German Evangelical Alliance, has described the arrival of migrants as a transfusion of new blood into the European church.

Heavenly Father, as You bring the nations to the doorstep of churches across Europe, open their hearts and give them eyes to discern the times, that they may see this not as a crisis, but as a calling. Heal the fear and close-mindedness of the past, and make Your church willing to welcome believers from many backgrounds. Raise up cross-cultural wisdom among pastors and leaders, so that the church may equip, walk alongside, and receive those who are newly arriving—not leaving them to sit and watch, but building them up as participants in Your mission. Lord, use the new perspective that migrant Christians bring to help the European church see anew the richness of Your kingdom in the midst of diversity. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Seeing God at Work in our Differences

Gospel Witness in Europe's Pluralistic Society



Photo by Dewang Gupta on Unsplash

The convergence of peoples and the interweaving of cultures has become part of everyday life in Europe. In this context, bearing witness to the Gospel is no longer a one-way proclamation, but a lived practice rooted in understanding and a willingness to walk alongside others. When difference is what we encounter the moment we step outside our door, the ability to understand one another and to speak honestly across those differences is not a bonus feature for the church. It is the very condition for the Gospel to take root and bear fruit.

The spiritual lives of migrant Christians are shaped and strengthened through migration, rebuilding, and adaptation. The rise of Roma churches offers a clear example: in an increasingly secular Europe, many traditional churches have lost vitality as they navigate the relationship between culture and faith. Yet communities from the margins—those with cross-cultural backgrounds and little institutional support—have often become some of the most vibrant and committed expressions of Christian faith on the continent.

When we learn to understand one another in the midst of difference, when we find a shared home in what feels unfamiliar, and when we recognize the body of Christ in the other, the Gospel reveals a deeper beauty and richness through such diversity. In a diverse Europe, the power of the Gospel does not lie in cultural advantage, but in the love and humility through which Christians build one another up.

Heavenly Father, as different cultures, languages, and histories meet on the same land, grant us understanding and compassion from You, so that the church does not fear difference, but learns to love within it. Soften our hearts, that we may be willing to walk alongside migrants, refugees, and minority communities, and to recognize Your image in their lives. Lord, we also pray for migrant Christians. Strengthen them in the hardships of migration and adaptation, and may their faith become a blessing and a reminder to the church in Europe. Lead the churches of Europe, by the humility and love You give, so that the Gospel may take root, bear fruit, and shine in this diverse land. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

For or Against Immigration?

North American Migration: Then and Now



The United States Declaration of Independence declares that “all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Who is meant by “all men” has been debated from the beginning. Some argue the phrase did not include women, children, or Indigenous peoples; others see in it a claim to self-governance by early American colonists, rather than the universal human rights the words seem to suggest. In the twenty-first century, as awareness of equality has grown, many have reinterpreted the phrase to mean what it appears to say—everyone. On this basis, arguments have been made for the rights of immigrants, refugees, and LGBTQ communities, often framed around the idea that the United States has always been a nation of immigrants and that all people are equal.

The positive view of immigration in the United States is partly rooted in the nation's founding narrative. Puritans established New England in search of religious freedom. Irish and Italian immigrants supported the country's industrialization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Jewish immigrants contributed to the growth of academic and cultural life. Asian immigrants have played a key role in technology and the professions. Over time, the idea that “immigrants make America stronger” has become part of the nation's self-understanding.

However, this positive narrative does not fully reflect the history of the United States. American attitudes toward immigration have long been marked by a tension between welcome and exclusion—from the nativist movements of the nineteenth century,* to the immigration quota systems of the twentieth,** and the wave of multiculturalism after the Cold War. These two forces have continued to pull in opposite directions.

In the twenty-first century, security concerns following the September 11 attacks and the economic pressures caused by the offshoring of manufacturing have led to a sharp rise in anti-immigration sentiment, making this tension even more pronounced.

* Anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, and anti-Chinese sentiment.

**The Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson–Reed Act) was one of the most sweeping exclusionary policies in American immigration history. It established immigration quotas based on ethnicity, favoring Northern and Western Europeans while severely restricting immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, as well as from Asia.

Heavenly Father, the phrase “all men are created equal” is continually being reinterpreted and redefined. Guide the United States to hold on to this openness, that it may become a more just and inclusive nation, receiving the voices of different peoples and minority communities with humility. Grant wisdom to those in government as they shape immigration policy—policies that are both wise and just, able to meet the need for labor at the lower levels of the economy, while also addressing the challenges at the border and easing people's concerns about security. Lord, as America moves rapidly toward a high-tech economy, there are manufacturing workers who cannot keep up with this great shift. Comfort those who are overlooked in the tide of change—those who suffer under inequality and are burdened by the weight of daily life. You see their anger, their confusion, and their weariness. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Refugee Policy and the Door It Opens to Unreached Peoples

The History of Refugees in North America



In 1975, a U.S. cargo ship rescues Vietnamese refugees from small boats at sea.

Some draw a direct line from the Puritans—who fled religious persecution in Europe to build new lives in the Americas—to refugees seeking resettlement today. They argue that offering asylum has long been a core American value. The historical record offers some support for this view. In 1948, the U.S. Congress passed its first refugee legislation, providing refuge for Europeans displaced by the World War II. In the years that followed, the United States admitted people fleeing communist regimes, including those from China, Hungary, South Korea, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Cuba.

When Fall of Saigon in April 1975, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees were resettled across the United States. Congress later passed the Refugee Act of 1980, establishing a formal legal definition of “refugee.” Since 1975, the United States has resettled more than three million refugees from over seventy countries, the majority from Vietnam and the former Soviet Union.

Looking at this trend, earlier waves of refugees came largely from European cultures similar to that of the United States, while later arrivals increasingly came from different cultural backgrounds. On the first day of his second term, Donald Trump signed an executive order suspending the U.S. refugee admissions program, reshaping the humanitarian framework that had been in place since World War II.

Heavenly Father, have mercy on those who are displaced. As they live in foreign lands and wait to be received, prepare a way for them and guide them with Your hand. Bless the United States, that it may “learn to do right; seek justice, defend the oppressed, take up the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17), and continue to be a place of refuge for those in need. May every refugee in shelters have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and turn to You. We also place the issue of border security in Your hands. Grant wisdom, that policies may address unauthorized migration wisely and justly, so that people will no longer see immigrants and refugees as threats or sources of fear, but as those whom You love and who need protection. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Is the Church Seizing the Gospel Opportunity in the Refugee Crisis?

Arab Refugees in North America

Aisha is an Arab refugee. While waiting for her asylum claim to be processed in the first safe country she reached, she was visited and supported by a Christian social worker—and through that encounter, she opened her heart to Jesus. In 2022, she was resettled in northern Canada. Before her departure, the social worker prayed for her, blessed her as she began a new chapter, and encouraged her to find a church when she arrived. Aisha agreed, full of hope. A year and a half later, the social worker received an unexpected message from her. Aisha shared

that no church in Canada had reached out to her, and no Christians had come to support her. In need of help, she eventually turned to a mosque, where she found assistance and a job as a cleaner. She did not join a church, but instead returned to her own community and to the life she had known before.

The global refugee population continues to grow, bringing new opportunities for refugees to encounter the Gospel. Whether the church makes use of this opportunity, however, is another matter. Some refugees hear the Gospel—and even come to faith—while still in transit. But when they arrive in a country of resettlement, they receive no follow-up or care from the church. As a result, the earlier work of those who first shared the Gospel with them is left unfinished.

Many churches in North America remain unfamiliar with immigrants and are unsure how to respond to the sudden arrival of refugees in their communities. Yet, thanks be to God, some refugee communities have planted their own churches and are actively sharing the Gospel with their own people. They have become a beautiful expression of the church's diversity across North America.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the Gospel workers who have reached out to refugees and sown seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds continue to grow and flourish, even after refugees arrive in their countries of resettlement. May churches in North America make the most of this opportunity—with love, patience, wisdom, gentleness, humility, and respect—to care for and follow up with these open-hearted refugees, so that they may truly experience Your love, grace, and mercy. We also pray for the welcome of refugees in American society. Bless them as they settle into life in the United States. May they establish churches within their own communities, faithfully sharing the Gospel and bearing witness to You. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.





Former Allies Stranded and Facing Deportation

Afghan Refugees After the American Withdrawal



Photo by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr

In 2025, the United States suspended its refugee admissions program (USRAP) and barred Afghan nationals from entry, leaving tens of thousands of Afghans who had been waiting for resettlement in America stunned.

In 2001, the United States went to war in Afghanistan to target al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime that sheltered them. Over the next two decades, many Afghans worked alongside American forces and institutions, including soldiers, interpreters, lawyers, judges, journalists, and human rights advocates. In April 2021, Joe

Biden announced the end of the American mission and ordered a full military withdrawal. More than 76,000 Afghans were evacuated to the United States.

Many others, however, were unable to leave. They applied for entry through the refugee admissions program and remained in limbo after the program was suspended. Now stranded in Pakistan, Qatar, and other transit countries, their situation has grown more difficult, especially after Pakistan announced a policy of returning Afghan nationals across the border.

In July 2018, several Afghan families in the San Francisco Bay Area began gathering and formed the Afghan-American Church in Fremont. They share the Gospel with fellow Afghans in their mother tongue. Please pray for them, that they would continue to carry a heart to share Jesus.

Heavenly Father, in a world shaped by shifting political interests and short-term gain, much suffering and disorder are left in their wake. Have mercy on Afghan refugees. Caught between transit countries and places of resettlement, they see no way forward and face danger behind them. In their pain and despair, they cannot find a way out. May the United States remember the commitments it once made, and work with other nations to provide proper resettlement for Afghan refugees. Bless the Afghan-American Church, that they may go to their own people with gentleness and humility from You, and with wisdom. May those they reach come to see that You show no partiality, and that Afghan people, too, are Your children. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



The Weight of Two Worlds

Iraqi Refugees and the Legacy of the Gulf War

The Gulf War of 1990 brought an early wave of Iraqi refugees to the United States. Many of these Iraqi Muslims came from conservative backgrounds, where it was customary for fathers to openly seek husbands for their daughters by approaching unmarried Iraqi men. In one case, an Iraqi father who had resettled in Lincoln, Nebraska, arranged marriages for his thirteen- and fourteen-year-old daughters to Iraqi American men aged twenty-eight and thirty-four. His hope was to protect them from premarital relationships, but he was unaware that this would violate U.S. laws protecting minors.



Photo by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr

Iraqi immigrants often find it difficult to integrate into life in the United States, in part because of cultural practices such as arranged marriage. At the same time, the Iraq War and the violent actions of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) have shaped how many Americans view Iraqi immigrants.

For Iraqi Americans, the experience is often one of tension. They feel a deep attachment to Iraq, while also holding genuine gratitude toward the United States, leaving them caught between the two. Most Iraqi-Americans see Saddam Hussein as the root of their country's instability. Yet concern for the safety of family and friends still living there often makes them reluctant to support U.S. sanctions or military action against Iraq.

Heavenly Father, the people of Iraq have suffered deeply under war and the violence of groups like ISIS. Their bodies and hearts carry deep wounds. As they are forced to leave their homes and come to the United States in search of refuge, show them Your grace. Grant them peace, healing, and new hope. May they encounter organizations and people willing to support them, helping them gradually adjust to life in America and rebuild a sense of dignity and security. Lead them to the church, that they may hear the Gospel and find rest in Your love. May the American church recognize this opportunity to show the love of Christ to Iraqi immigrants. Give them wisdom, sensitivity, and creativity from You, so that they may develop ministries that are close to Iraqi culture and responsive to their needs, and through them, may Iraqi people truly experience the love of a neighbor. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



Photo by Levi Meir Clancy on Unsplash

"I fled with the key to my home."

A Syrian mother's memory of home



Photo by UN Women Arab States on Flickr

When Amira left Aleppo with her children, she took only three things: her passport, her children's documents, and the key to her home.

"I don't know if I will ever go back. I don't know if the house is still there. But I had to bring the key. It reminds me that I was not born in a refugee camp."

"I want my children to know where we come from."

The key to a home carries a refugee's deepest longing: to return home.

In the stories of refugees, we find one another.

Moses was thirteen when civil war forced him and his family to flee to a refugee camp in Uganda and begin a new life.

A few years later, he and other young people came together and partnered with a nonprofit organization. They drove wooden stakes into the ground, built walls with mud bricks, and stretched plastic sheets for a roof. The first structure they built was not a home, but a school.

"Education is the future for us refugee children," Moses said.

Even in the hardest conditions, people strive to adapt, reclaim dignity, and build a future for themselves and their community.

"We built a school in the mud."

A South Sudanese young man fulfilling a dream



Photo by Arsenie Coseac on Flickr

"I have a name."

A Rohingya girl's language and identity



Photo by UN woman on Flickr

Her name and identity had never been recognized. Even the Rohingya name Yasmin was not acknowledged in Myanmar.

After fleeing to Bangladesh, she heard a teacher in the refugee camp call her name—fully and gently—for the first time.

"In that moment, I became myself. I became Rohingya," Yasmin said.

She learned English and Rohingya, and later became a teaching assistant in the camp, helping Rohingya children learn to read and write.

A name and a language are the foundation of identity. To learn one's mother tongue, and to have one's name spoken rightly—for refugees, this is where the journey of becoming begins.

Luisa sells arepas in Colombia—a traditional corn cake from Venezuela. Her stall is small, but there is always a line.

Each morning at four, she kneads the corn dough and shapes it the way her grandmother taught her.

"I couldn't bring my home in Venezuela with me," she says, "but I brought what my grandmother taught me. This is my new home."

"I feed my children here in Colombia—and my grandmother lives on with me."

Food carries a refugee's culture, memory, dignity, and identity. In a world where everything has been uprooted, it becomes a way to find a place to stand.



"I remember my grandmother through the food I make."

A Venezuelan refugee's memory of taste



Braving the Sea

The Vietnamese Refugee's American Dream



Photo by Tran Phu on Unsplash

At the 95th Academy Awards in 2023, two actors of Vietnamese background received nominations: Ke Huy Quan and Hong Chau. In his acceptance speech, Ke Huy Quan described a journey that began on a boat, continued through a year in a refugee camp, and—somehow—led him to the stage of Hollywood. Their recognition reflects a widely held view of America: that opportunity is available regardless of race or background, and that with talent and hard work, people may still find a path toward the American Dream.

When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, the United States evacuated about 130,000 Vietnamese—many of them educated professionals and skilled workers—and resettled them across the country. By the late 1970s, large numbers of Vietnamese, fearing repression under the communist government, took to the sea and fled to Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. This wave of refugees left a lasting impact on U.S. immigration policy.

Today, most Vietnamese-Americans are concentrated in California and Texas. The community is widely known for its anti-communist sentiment and its alignment with the Republican Party. According to a 2023 Pew survey, thirty-six percent of Vietnamese-Americans identify as Christians, with Catholics making up the largest share.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for making a way for Vietnamese refugees in the past. When they came to the United States after the war to start over, You sustained them through hardship and helped them stand firm. We thank You that they have been able to grow and find their place in their new home. Every good opportunity comes from Your hand. Continue to lead Vietnamese Americans to become vessels You can use—serving as salt and light in society, and bearing witness to the grace and truth of Christ through their lives. We also pray for Vietnamese churches in America. May they grow in health, filled with wisdom, courage, and vision from You, and boldly share the Gospel of Jesus with those who do not yet know Him. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.



The Lost Boys Begin Again in America

Survivors of the Sudanese Civil War

During the civil war in Sudan in the 1980s, many boys were separated from their families. They walked for months to reach refugee camps, and survived. They came to be known as the “Lost Boys of Sudan.” In 1990, they were resettled in the United States.

Sudanese boys are used to moving in groups. Back home, they would go together to herd cattle, attend school, or look for work—walking across open land and watching out for one another. It was simply a way of survival. When they first arrived in the United States, they naturally went

out in small groups. But their neighbors felt uneasy. In time, they were told—gently—that it was better not to move around in groups, so as not to be misunderstood.

Most Sudanese Americans send money home regularly. Their relatives in Sudan often assume they have become wealthy in America and ask for more, placing them under great pressure. Some Sudanese Americans receive so many calls asking for money that they are forced to change their phone numbers.



Photo by shalomshalomjerusalem on Flickr

Heavenly Father, the boys from Sudan who were once separated from their families have now been resettled in the United States. They have grown, put down roots, and built lives, work, and families of their own. May Your blessing rest on their lives in America. May they see that Your love and mercy are always with them. And may they pass on this blessing by sharing the Gospel with their people—even with family and friends in their homeland. We pray for Sudanese churches in America. May they be led by the Holy Spirit, nourished by Your word, and given boldness to share the good news of Jesus with those who do not yet know Him. May all who hear the Gospel turn to You. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

A Journey of Faith Across the Border

Mexican Migrants



Photo by The Free Birds on Unsplash

Walk the streets of Los Angeles, Phoenix, or Houston, and the scent of corn tortillas, the painted skulls and marigolds of Día de los Muertos, make you feel as if Mexico is just around the corner. The Mexican community is the largest Latino group in the United States. But their story is more than cultural continuity—it is a journey of faith that stretches across borders and generations, shaping lives along the way.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo turned Mexicans living in California, Texas, and the Southwest into Americans overnight. Later, the upheaval of the Mexican Revolution, together with growing demand for

labor in U.S. agriculture and railroads, drew more people north. During World War II, the Bracero Program brought 4.5 million workers into the United States, helping establish the Mexican-American community as a lasting presence in the country.

Mexico has long been a predominantly Catholic country. As recently as 2020, nearly eighty percent of its population identified as Catholic. In the United States, that pattern has begun to change. Current data shows that fifty-two percent of Latino immigrants still identify as Catholic, while twenty-one percent now report no religious affiliation. Notably, among Latino evangelical Christians, nearly half say they came to faith—were “born again”—in the United States.

Heavenly Father, the people of Mexico have long lived and worked on their own land. In the past century, migration and shifting borders have brought many challenges. Lord, watch over every pair of hands working hard for their families, and comfort those who feel anxious because of language, identity, or loneliness. Have mercy on Mexican migrants who are far from You. May the younger generation, in their search for identity, rediscover the lasting identity found in You. Lord, gently care for Your people. Whether in Mass or in their daily work, may they come to know that You are a loving and faithful God. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

A Stranger in a Strange Land

Even the Elite Get Lonely

Noa Tishby was born into Israel's establishment. Her family were nation-builders, and her grandfather was a diplomat. She went on to make a name for herself in film and television, and later became a cross-cultural advocate and public figure. By most standards, she had everything—resources, connections, and a platform. She was a typical member of the transnational elite.

But who says privilege means you have nothing to fear?

One bright September morning, her father called, his voice full of cheer: "Happy New Year!" Noa Tishby froze. It was Rosh Hashanah—the Jewish New Year—and she had completely forgotten. She stood on the balcony of a beautiful house in Los Angeles, looking out over the pool, the Hollywood sign in the distance. Far from home, she was suddenly overcome by a wave of loneliness.

That evening, her Australian boyfriend asked, "What is Rosh Hashanah?" This woman, who had spoken with confidence on international stages, found herself unable to answer. She could not explain to the person closest to her the most important holiday in her own culture.

In that moment, she had never felt so alone. In a place where no one understood her, she suddenly realized that she was no different from others in the diaspora—longing for home, longing to be understood, longing to know where she belonged.



Heavenly Father, generations of people on the move stand before You. In new cities, new languages, and new relationships, they strive to adapt—often hiding their loneliness and confusion behind a smile. Lord, give the church spiritual discernment, that we may see the true needs of those among us. Do not let any brother or sister carry the weight of displacement and helplessness alone. Teach us to slow down and reach out, to become bridges of Your love. When they most need to be heard and comforted, may we be there to share Your love. Lord, make us a home for the displaced. May every wandering heart find renewed strength in You. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Faith and the Green Card

Chinese International Students



Photo by Mason Wilkes on Unsplash

Between 1872 and 1875, the Qing Dynasty government selected and sent four cohorts of young students—120 in total—to the United States as part of the Chinese Educational Mission. It was an early experiment in state-sponsored study abroad, but it did not last.

Conservative officials at court brought the program to an abrupt end. They argued that the students had become “Americanized”—that they had abandoned Chinese traditions, converted to Christianity, taken foreigners as their teachers, refused to perform ritual prostrations, forgotten

their roots, and shown no respect for their elders. In their eyes, to study under Westerners was tantamount to betraying one’s own civilization.

Today, Chinese students coming to the United States to study are no longer seen as betraying their country. For many, it is simply a path toward academic study, career development, a better quality of life, and the possibility of settling in America.

Many have come to faith while studying abroad, and Chinese churches in the United States have grown as a result. These churches often reflect familiar Asian cultural patterns: indirect communication, a lack of transparency, reluctance to express disagreement openly, a strong concern for saving face, avoidance of conflict, and a tendency to shy away from difficult topics.

In recent years, the emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the United States has brought questions of gender and sexuality into the lives of the younger generation in Chinese churches. At the same time, many Chinese Americans identify as atheist, agnostic, or as having no particular religious belief.

Heavenly Father, You once opened a way for Chinese students during the Qing Era to receive an education in the United States and come to know Jesus. Though that path was cut short by conservative opposition, the Gospel was not hindered. Today, many Chinese and overseas Chinese come to America. Among them are those who have come to belong to Jesus. May they have vibrant, healthy spiritual lives, and lead others to Him. Lord, as a spirit of diversity and openness shapes Chinese churches in America, grant Your children wisdom to respond. May the Holy Spirit speak to those who call themselves atheists, agnostics, or “nothing in particular,” and call them into the fold of Jesus. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Building Community in a New Country

South Asian Muslim Migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh

In 1965, when the United States relaxed its restrictions on South Asian immigration, many Pakistani professionals moved to America. In the late 1980s, more arrived through family sponsorship. The numbers rose further in the early 1990s, as agricultural worker visas became available and the Diversity Visa Program—commonly known as the Green Card Lottery—was introduced. During those years, it was common to see Pakistani men working as taxi drivers or shop attendants in Manhattan and other major cities.



Photo by Zabih Bakhtiari on Unsplash

The ethnic conflict that led to Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971 continues to shape the South Asian diaspora in the United States. For instance, in 2019, a social media post went viral accusing Bangladeshis who wore the salwar kameez of “stealing” Pakistani identity, culture, and national dress. The post was later deleted, but the humiliation it caused did not disappear.

Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants who come to the United States through the Green Card Lottery are often highly educated and professionally trained, yet they still have to start from the beginning. The first generation speaks their native languages and holds on to their traditions, customs, and religion. The next generation tends to use English, and some grow up in multigenerational households. Both are striving to move upward in American society.

Heavenly Father, may the church open its doors to immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh—walking with them, helping them build relationships, and enabling them to experience Your love and acceptance in a foreign land. Lord, many carry a deep longing for their homeland and for the family they left behind. May the church walk alongside them in their loneliness and sorrow, with wisdom and compassion from You. May the Holy Spirit work in their hearts, so that Your love becomes their comfort and fills what is lacking within them. We also pray for the sensitive tensions between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Guard these from being stirred up or misused by those who do harm. In Christ, may hostility be removed and wounds be healed, so that people from both nations may learn to honor and love one another. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The Challenge of the Intercultural Family

International Marriage Migrants



Photo by Chewy on Unsplash

Interracial and interfaith marriages and partnerships are increasingly common in the United States. For many people, shared religious faith is no longer a primary factor in choosing a spouse. Among these are many unions between Christians and those with no religious belief. Muslim parents in America often consider the possibility that if their children marry non-Muslims, they may drift from the faith—and that the next generation may follow a different religion, or none at all.

Heung-Lin moved to the West Coast of the United States in the 1990s after marrying a white American. Both she and her husband are devoted Christians, active in church ministry. Their children were born around the turn of the millennium. They were homeschooled and later attended a Christian high school.

In recent years, however, the family has found itself in deep conflict with their children over a range of social issues—immigration, racial inequality, politics, LGBTQ rights, abortion, feminism, sexual autonomy, and the Israel–Palestine conflict. Whenever these topics arise, the conversation quickly turns heated.

The parents see a younger generation shaped by misguided ideas—naïve and unwise. The children see parents who are rigid, outdated, and unfeeling. As the distance between them continues to grow, Heung-Lin and her husband feel unable to share any of this at church. They can only pray in silence.

Heavenly Father, in this complex and rapidly changing world, many social issues do not have a single clear answer. Watch over families in the United States formed through international marriage. When different cultures, faiths, and generations come into tension, may Your gentleness enter their hearts. Help parents to listen to their children, and children to regard their parents with respect and understanding. When opinions differ and conversations grow tense, grant them patience and wisdom, that they may make room for one another and receive different viewpoints. Lord of peace, establish true reconciliation in these families. In the face of generational differences, lead them to rediscover connection through love and sincerity, and let tension become an opportunity to understand one another more deeply. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

The Search for Cultural Identity and Faith

Immigrant Children and the Second Generation

There is a scene in the Netflix series *Beef* in which a Korean American protagonist is gently embraced in a church. The moment feels warm, yet it also reveals a common wound among second-generation Asian migrants: when generational distance and cultural pressure go unhealed, they become barriers to faith.

A study in Ontario found that as many as forty-four percent of young Asian believers no longer attend their parents' heritage-language churches, highlighting the generational divide within single-ethnicity congregations. In North York, Toronto—where more than sixty percent of residents are immigrants, refugees, or international students—many young people feel that a monocultural church community cannot meet their dual needs.

A church that centers on spiritual life and welcomes bicultural identity may help these young people hold together the old and the new. Pastor Lee of Encounter Covenant Church in Toronto emphasizes that ministry should begin by grounding young people in the life of Christ, and then guiding them to see how their ethnic identity can be used in God's kingdom.

Only when faith is rooted in Christ, beyond any single culture, will young believers choose to stay. When the church embraces both generations with an open heart, it can weave together family values and the power of the Gospel, so that those who live between two worlds may find a home in the kingdom of God.



Heavenly Father, You know the struggle of second-generation believers between family expectations and social pressure. You know their desire to be understood, accepted, and seen. Heal the hearts wounded by the distance between generations, and bring parents and children back together in Your love. Strengthen young believers, so that they do not lose themselves among different identities, but find in Christ a better home. Guide the church, and give pastors and members wisdom to build communities across cultures and generations. Help young people see that they do not have to choose between two cultures, but can live freely in Christ. May the younger generation become faithful witnesses of Your kingdom. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

From Recipients to Messengers

Immigrant Churches in North American Cities



Burmese child

Across North America, many urban churches have established support centers for refugees and migrants, offering language classes, housing, practical help, and companionship—enabling those who have left their homes behind to begin again in an unfamiliar place. Through these ministries, many come to know Jesus. In time, they move from being helped to being called—sharing faith, hope, and love with others still far from home.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, one church focuses on serving young Burmese newcomers.

Members meet them at the airport and provide practical, all-around support as they settle in—helping young people who have fled war find stability. Through this ministry, second-generation Burmese Americans born in the United States have also found new connection. As they serve newly arrived Burmese, they engage more deeply with them and reconnect with their own cultural roots.

Amid the global movement of migration, the bilingual and bicultural identity of Chinese believers is especially valuable. Chinese churches in North America are increasingly aware of this. They not only share the Gospel with East Asian migrants, but also build bridges of relationship and blessing with the wider local community.

The language and cultural gifts we have are among our greatest strengths for local mission. May Chinese churches continue to carry the Gospel among their own people in multicultural contexts, and walk together with the global church.

Heavenly Father, we pray not only for brothers and sisters who have just arrived in a foreign land, struggling with language, work, and daily life, but also for those who, in the church, have moved from being helped to serving others. Lord, strengthen them to comfort others through their own stories, and to bear witness through lives that have been wounded and restored by You. May they live out the Gospel with courage in multicultural cities, and help us see that You often use the lowly to accomplish Your purposes. Strengthen every weary heart that longs to serve. May they find in You strength, hope, and vision. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

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📍 P. O. Box 3356
Los Altos, CA 94024-0356 U.S.A.
☎ +1 (650) 968-1866
☎ +60 18-315 7707
✉ info@missionpathway.org
🌐 www.cross-roads.org/eng



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Chief Editor

Yein Yein

Editor

Enoch Lee, Isa Hsu, Joan Chang

Translator

Cindy Wu

Proofreader

Keith Carey

Administrative Coordinator

Priscilla Pua, Novia Lu, Sukin, Maritza

Cover Photo

© Photo by Tim Mossholde on Unsplash

Layout

GF Howe

Publishing

Crossroads Publications

📍 P. O. Box 3356
Los Altos, CA 94024-0356 U.S.A.

☎ +1 (650) 968-1866

✉ info@missionpathway.org

🌐 missionpathway.org

CANADA

CCCOWE Canada

☎ +1 (437) 216-6085 (Ps. Enoch Lee)

✉ missionpathway.ca@gmail.com

TAIWAN

UMOT

☎ (02) 2321-2915

✉ service@umot.org.tw

HONG KONG

HKSTM

☎ +852 52822747

✉ info@hkstm.org.hk

SINGAPORE

CNEC

☎ +65 6280 0312

✉ cnc@cncintl.org