



Chinese International Missions, Inc.

07.01.20223

Love Thy Neighbor

~Theresa Poon
CIM Board member

In Mark 12:31, God gave us the second greatest commandment, "... *Love your neighbor as yourself...*" Yet I do not think God uses the term "neighbor" to refer to people who live right next to us or even in our neighborhood only. To be a neighbor, according to Jesus, means to "come alongside someone".

According to the United Nations refugee agency, during 2010-2020, about ten percent of all refugees who escaped to America landed in California, second only to the state of Texas. Since 2017, more than fifty percent of all refugees are of the Islam faith. That speaks greatly of how God has already brought some unreached people groups to our midst, without us having to apply for travel visas, and without us having to give legitimate reasons to dwell in some countries.

For many Chinese Americans, they immigrated to the U.S with their families. With relatives already living here or jobs waiting, many planned for the move, even though that process could sometimes take years to happen. In contrast, a refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country to another country because of persecution, war or violence." Often there wasn't much time to pack up or say goodbye, depending on the severity of the situation of the hostility. They often had to flee with nothing more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones, not knowing what awaits them in the new place. Escaping to a foreign country where the refugees do not speak a word, or much, of the new language is enough to make them feel helpless and hopeless, disillusioned and disoriented, and can do nothing but wait for others to help them.

This is exactly where we, as Christ believers, could come in. In a recent webinar by OMF, members from churches in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Texas shared that they have already been reaching out to the refugee communities—help them to receive benefits, apply for medical assistance, find housing, enrolling their children to schools, helping them to find jobs, helping teens to join short-term camps, having workshops for new immigrants etc. A church in North Dallas invites children of refugees to Kids Club, playing soccer and other sports and games. Even when the church put in some gospel message with the practice sessions, those parents are still willing to send their kids to participate.

The biggest challenge in refugee ministry is, naturally, language. Only a very small percentage of refugees can communicate in English. Most of them have difficulties in functioning in the language. Some are even illiterates. Translators are certainly needed for this ministry. But through prayers and seeking God for His direction, He will provide. In one case, God even provided a missionary who has spent ten years in Afghanistan to work with a particular church. Don't forget that perhaps one of the best communicators is still love.

"How do I get involved in reaching out to the refugees who are mostly Muslims?" Many Chinese churches have long focus mainly on outreach of the Chinese population. They hesitate how to do cross-cultural ministry when they haven't even been that immersed in same-cultural ministry. Our church has been in partnership with an American Afghan church in the Bay area. During last year's Easter, we put together and handed out a gift bag for each family at their Easter Egg Hunt. Then we also went to apartments in an area where many Afghans reside and passed out more gift bags, which also include a Bible each in their native language. During the time we went from floor to floor and room to room, there were Afghan families who politely refused the bag and said they only worship Allah. That's alright, we just do our part and let God do the rest. I even encountered a few Chinese families who were surprised that as fellow Chinese, we were reaching out to the Afghans. I shared with them that we believe in a God who loves all people, regardless of their race or nationality. Praise the Lord.

It's challenging to get the congregation involved as most are still with the mindset of reaching out to Chinese only and they all lead a busy live. Usually only a small percentage of the congregation join in missions work or some are more drawn to attend during their annual missions conference. The best way to get people involved is to get them to try. Once they take that first step, their experience would hopefully draw them into being part of the Great Commission. It's also imperative to get the young people involved.

Since the refugees are brought to our doorstep already, we cannot say we don't see, or we can't help. I want to encourage churches and believers in Christ to

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stand up and see opportunities and duties God is giving us. May He receive all the glory and praise.



PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Rev Douglas Wu needs three months to recover after the thigh operation and get a follow-up visit. He will stay at Whitney's brother-in-law's home to rest and to recuperate. Please pray that God will grant more peace to them and bless them even more, and to protect him for smooth recuperation and recovery.
2. Thanks to the Lord, the blackout situation in South Africa has recently improved slightly from 8-10 hours to about 4 hours in the past few weeks.
3. PECCC is planning a monthly co-worker training. May the Lord lead the co-workers and brothers and sisters to participate and prepare their hearts to participate in the service.
4. Pray that the Lord will lead Pastor Alex Ko to give him and Nicole wisdom in the care and counseling of relationships between a husband and wife and a parent and child, and the Holy Spirit will work among each of them. Pray that the Lord will also allow them to allocate their time well and make good preparations.
5. Pray for the Discipleship Training Class every Tuesday night at the Belo Horizonte Church in Brazil; for the Bible study led by Claudia at Mr. Xiao's house every Friday night; and for the spiritual growth of the Youth Fellowship.
6. Pray for Pastor Vasyl and Pastor Vlad from Ukraine to share in Canada. They will be there from September 14th to October 2nd, and together will travel to multiple churches in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver for sharing sessions. Pray for travel mercy and financial needs for the journey of the September event.
7. Please continue to pray for peace in Ukraine. The invasion rages on and innocent lives are lost each day. Pray for House of Mercy as they take care of refugees, physically and spiritually. Pray that there will be donors for our Ukraine Crisis Fund as there are tremendous needs for the refugees.
8. Pray for the pastors and teachers that we support in Ghana and Togo. Inflation is still greatly affecting their lives. Pray that there will be donors for our benevolent fund so we can help with some of their physical needs. Pray for the formation of STM teams this summer and for 2024.
9. Pray for the recruiting effort underway to fill job vacancies in CIM for a Director of Ministry to oversee STM and daily operations, and an Executive Director successor. If you know of anyone who is interested and qualifies, please contact us.
10. Pray that God will move more brothers and sisters to join the ministry so God's kingdom would be more prosperous. Pray for God's abundant provision for all the financial needs of CIM.

NOTE

Please call 408-596-4567 to contact CIM for questions or comments. Thank you for your continual support.

FINANCIAL REPORT

May 2023

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General	\$30,942	\$6,162	\$24,780
Missions	\$75,806	\$55,876	\$19,930
Total	\$106,748	\$62,038	\$44,710

To contribute to CIM ministries:

- 1) Make checks payable to "CIM" and mail to: P.O. Box 700185, San Jose, CA 95170-0185, USA
- 2) Donate online via credit card, go to: www.cimusa.org Click on "Give" and follow directions. Thank you!



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