

## BIBLICAL VIEW OF IMMIGRANTS

### Pharaoh

- Joseph was an involuntary migrant, sold into slavery and forced across a border, a victim of human trafficking.
- New Pharaoh (Exodus)
  - Motivated by fear, and responds, ultimately, with horrific hostility.
  - Oppressing Israelites as slaves and brutally murdering their children.

### Missional Opportunity

- God, in his sovereignty, allows people to be moved across borders (Acts 17).
- Christian migrants cross borders and bring the gospel with them to their new country.
- Others arrive who do not yet know Jesus, who would be very unlikely to ever encounter the gospel or even know a Christian in their countries of origin.
- By one estimate, there are more unreached people groups present within North America than in any country besides India or China.

### Biblical Principles

- Beyond the many biblical characters who were themselves migrants, God gives specific instructions to his people about how to treat immigrants: Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Psalm 146:9, Malachi 3:5, Matthew 25:40.
  - Three categories of vulnerable people – orphans, widows and immigrants. They are mentioned over and over again in the Old Testament as people whom God loves.
  - A significant share of migrants who come to the U.S. and Canada in recent years are fellow Christians, some of whom were persecuted and forced to flee.
  - Immigrants, like all people, are made in the image of God. We each have been endowed by God with potential – to create, and to contribute.
  - The command to love our neighbors – the parable of the Good Samaritan.
  - The call to love our neighbors has no caveats.
  - Romans 13, where Paul instructs the church in Rome to be subject to governing authorities, noting that God established government for a purpose.
    - That passage isn't about migrants particularly, but it's relevant because, in most countries, some immigrants are present unlawfully.
    - Many Christians struggle with this apparent tension: should we love, welcome and share the gospel with such immigrants, or should we follow the law?
    - This situation is more complicated for Christians who are themselves undocumented.
    - Many evangelical leaders in the US – who want to both honor the law and be compassionate – have advocated for changes to laws.
  - When Romans 12:13 commands us to “practice hospitality,” or *philoxenia* in the Greek, it literally means to “practice loving strangers.”
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