

God's People: A People on the Move...
A resource for churches in solidarity with uprooted people

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How to use this kit

This fact sheet series is designed to promote faith based reflection on migrant rights in Canada. Each fact sheet consists of an easy-to-read introduction to an issue, a bible study, and action ideas. Geared to adults and older youth, the ten fact sheets are ideal for use in facilitating a bible study, coffee hour discussion or Sunday school class. Alternatively, they can also be used as a starting point for developing a workshop on migration issues.

The tenth fact sheet offers a longer theological reflection and a worship service outline to help you celebrate "Migrant Sunday" at your church. While the fact sheets can be used individually to raise awareness about particular issues, you can also use them as a complete series to build momentum for a larger event or worship service.

In addition to the fact sheets themselves, this resource includes a backgrounder on migration for facilitators, a glossary of terms that might be unfamiliar, as well as a poster that you can use to advertise your migrant rights discussions or events. Please feel free to photocopy the fact sheets and glossary for distribution to participants.

If you're looking for advice, or would like to give us some feedback on this resource, please contact Alfredo Barahona, Refugee and Migration Program Coordinator, at 1-877-403-8933 X251 or abarahona@kairoscanada.org KAIROS would love to hear what worked for you in educating about migrant rights, and to receive your suggestions about how to make our resources better.

Acknowledgements:

This truly ecumenical resource was made possible by many collaborators who contributed thoughtful bible studies and offered feedback on content. Special thanks to the following people for bible study contributions: Sr. Noreen Allossery-Walsh (Roman Catholic Diocese of London), Rose Dekkar (Christian Reformed World Relief), Huda Kandalaf Kanawati (The Presbyterian Church in Canada), and Ed Wiebe (Mennonite Central Committee). Thanks to Maya Shapiro (Justicia for Migrant Workers) for the content for the Seasonal Agricultural Workers fact sheet content. Thanks to the KAIROS Refugee and Migration Working Group and KAIROS colleagues John Dillon, Julie Graham, Dale Hildebrand and Rusa Jeremic for general advice and feedback on the entire resource. Thanks also to KAIROS interns Tanya Keusen and Sahar Vermezari for their help with proofreading.

A note about case studies:

Except where the source is specifically noted, case studies used in these fact sheets are fictional. While they are true to the issues, they do not represent specific people.

A note about the illustrations:

All illustrations in this resource are by Rini Templeton. Over a period of 20 years, Rini drew activists in the US, Mexico and Central America as she joined with them in taking action for social justice. She called her drawings "xerox art" since they were intended to photocopy well for use in leaflets and flyers. Social justice advocates are invited to use Rini Templeton's drawings free of charge for non-commercial purposes. To access these drawings, visit www.riniart.org.

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Backgrounder for facilitators

This backgrounder is intended to supplement the information provided in the fact sheets. While there is some overlap with the fact sheet content, the backgrounder includes additional definitions, statistics, and analysis, as well as discussion questions around the intersection between racism and migration.

Who are migrants? Why do they need our support? Simply defined, a migrant is anyone who moves to another country without being granted the right to stay there permanently. In many cases, migrants move in search of employment. Worldwide, 175 million migrants live outside their home country (World Economic and Social Survey 2004).

Canadian churches tend to be more familiar with refugees than with migrants. They have sponsored refugees and welcomed them into their communities. They have founded reception centers to provide shelter and guidance to asylum seekers. They have advocated for refugee rights.

Less well understood are the needs of migrants. A few city churches have been involved in outreach to domestic workers from the Philippines. Spanish speaking priests in rural areas have worked with their parishes to offer welcome and support to migrant agricultural workers from Mexico. Yet much remains to be done to counter prejudice and gather migrants into our circle of care.

We often assume a clear distinction between refugees, who are forced to move, and economic migrants, who choose to move. The reality, however, is that economic migrants experience widely varying degrees of choice. With those varying degrees of choice come varying degrees of privilege. While some economic migrants experience a high degree of freedom and privilege, many more suffer exploitation and abuse due to limited guarantees and protection of their rights.

Migrating for opportunity

Some highly privileged migrants move to seize hold of a business opportunity or to gain international experience. International trade agreements have made it easier for business people and professionals to cross borders. For example, the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) "Mode 4"



About the photograph: *Tired, dusty feet. The feet of the poor and oppressed around the world and across the ages. Feet driven by disaster and injustice but also by courage and determination. Feet seeking hope and a future in a new land. These are the feet of the migrants you will encounter in this resource. While not all migrants are poor, KAIROS has chosen to focus our education and advocacy efforts on those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. May their stories inspire you to solidarity.*

Special thanks to Samuel Lobato of Church World Service for permission to use this photograph of the feet of an indigenous man in the Andes region of South America.

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facilitates the temporary migration of highly skilled personnel, especially those transferred as an adjunct to foreign direct investment (Sands, 2004). Similarly, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has eased the temporary entry requirements for business people from the United States and Mexico and expedited the application process for professionals and intra-company transferees (Clark, 2000).

Canada's foreign worker program also allows employers to offer temporary jobs to workers from other countries when these jobs cannot be filled from within the domestic workforce. Many of these employers are seeking highly skilled workers. A case in point is the information technology sector, which has brought in close to 3000 foreign workers since 1997. All told, some 90 000 temporary foreign workers enter Canada each year, with the largest number coming from the United States (www.cic.gc.ca). These workers enjoy many privileges, including the right to bring their families with them.

Migrating for survival

Other migrant workers are much less privileged. For them, migration is not a choice but rather a necessity, a survival mechanism. They have been obliged to move by forces beyond their control - free trade policies that have destroyed the livelihoods of small farmers and entrepreneurs, a mine or dam that has forced them from their land, an environmental disaster. Such movements are best described as forced migration, since those who move have no choice in the matter. We can also talk of human displacement, emphasizing the active role of people in constructing policies and projects that oblige other people to move.

Migrants who move for survival are vulnerable. The immigration policies of industrialized countries are

“Today it is very difficult to name *one* particular cause of migration because the political, economic, social and historical forces leading to uprooting are interrelated. At the center of this relationship is an escalating culture of violence - systems of oppression and domination (capitalism, militarism, patriarchy, racism and colonialism) that depend on each other to reproduce themselves. The culture of violence... is best evidenced in the growing number of wars, armed conflicts, militarization of economies, political upheavals, struggle for control of resources and widespread poverty and an ethic of the global market economy that compels people to be more aggressive and competitive to ‘succeed.’ Those who do not fit this culture are not only marginalized but excluded and forced to leave their homes.”

Helene Moussa, *The interconnections of globalisation and migration with racism and colonialism*. Toronto: 2000.

highly selective, prioritizing those with post secondary education and/or money to invest. While there are exceptions for refugees, those forced to move for non-refugee reasons have few options. In fact, Western countries invest huge sums of money in exclusionary practices such as intercepting would-be migrants overseas. This has led one scholar to speak of a system of “global apartheid” (Richmond, 1994). This system “is based on an ideology that protects certain interests in the dominant western countries by setting rules and regulations that will ensure that people from another race or ethnic group (ie, the Third World) do not have freedom of movement” (Moussa, 2000).

Poor migrants take the most difficult and dangerous routes to Canada. Sometimes, they are forced to rely on smugglers and traffickers to cross borders. Other times, they come through temporary work programs. Poor migrants are vulnerable to workplace exploitation after they arrive, since their long term status in Canada is uncertain and they have little or nothing to return to if they're treated

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In March 2005, Canadian church representatives from across the country traveled to Mexico as part of a KAIROS delegation to bear witness to the ongoing impacts and consequences of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Delegates were moved by the countless stories of men and women who were either migrating internally or taking tremendous risks to cross the border in order to ensure their families' survival. They also heard about the hardships experienced by Mexican migrants working in Canada through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. On their return to Canada, the KAIROS delegation submitted a series of recommendations to the Canadian government in a report entitled "A Cry for Justice: The Human Face of NAFTA's failure in Mexico." For a copy of this report, contact Rusa Jeremic, Global Economic Justice Coordinator, at 1-877-403-8933 X225 or rjeremic@kairoscanada.org.

unfairly by their Canadian employer. By creating special programs for low-status workers such as caregivers and farm workers, and by turning a blind eye to the exploitation of undocumented workers in sectors such as construction and the garment industry, Canada constructs a second-class category of migrants with inferior rights and protections.

KAIROS has identified three migrant populations of particular concern around which to focus our education and advocacy work: live-in caregivers, seasonal agricultural workers and non-status persons. What these three groups all share is a common experience of wage

exploitation, privacy violations, inferior housing conditions, limited access to services, and barriers to family reunification. Abuse and exploitation is linked in each case to temporary or uncertain status in Canada.

The following sections of this backgrounder explain the Live-in Caregiver Program, the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, and the challenges faced by non-status people in Canada. They offer analysis, statistics and definitions to supplement the information provided in the fact sheets on these topics. You will also find definitions in the glossary at the end of this resource.

Unpacking racism: Questions for facilitators

The majority of live-in caregivers, seasonal agricultural worker and non-status persons are persons of colour. As you read more about the situation of these three groups, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the assumptions underlying government policy and practice about the rights of migrant workers (mostly racialized) as compared to Canadian workers (mostly white)?
- Where do you see racism in public attitudes towards migrants?
- How has your own thinking been influenced by growing up in a culture of racism? What steps are you taking to "unlearn" racism?

As you facilitate discussion around the fact sheets, invite your participants to reflect on these questions and to identify other forms of discrimination affecting migrants.

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Live-in Caregivers

Under the Live-In Caregiver Program, around 4000 domestic workers enter Canada each year to provide child care, senior support care, or care of the disabled (Alcuitas-Imperial, 2005).

Applicants are subject to the following program requirements:

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must speak either English or French and have at least a Grade 12 education, plus six months of formal training or 12 months of relevant work experience.
- **Terms of employment:** Caregivers must work flexible hours and live in their employers' home
- **Applying for permanent residence:** In order to apply for landed status and bring family members to join them, they are required to complete 24 months of live-in work within a strict three year deadline. Those who do not fulfill this requirement must return home voluntarily or face deportation.

The live-in service requirement and the three year deadline for completing it make caregivers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. While there is a standard employment agreement which covers wages, hours of work, duties, and room and board, there is no monitoring or enforcement. The federal government takes responsibility for recruitment, but leaves the issue of working conditions to the provinces. In some provinces, domestic workers are excluded entirely from minimum employment standards. At any rate, the private nature of the workplace conceals practices that would not be accepted in another work context (Grande, 1996). Live-in caregivers often hesitate to make a complaint, fearful of dismissal and a poor reference that would make it difficult to find a new job and complete the required 24 months of live-in service within the three year deadline. Fears of deportation are not unfounded. After failing to complete the 24 months, domestic workers may receive a deportation order without any hearing or investigation into their circumstances (NAPWC, 2005).

Even those who complete the requirements for landing face additional obstacles before they can be reunited with their families:

- Processing fees, such as the \$975 right of landing fee (Diocsan, 2005).
- Processing delays, that can extend the total waiting period to a total of 5-7 years.

Many live-in caregivers come to Canada from the Philippines. In fact, an estimated 93% of those who entered Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program between 1998 and 2003 were Filipina (NAPWC, 2005b). Economic crisis in the Philippines has generated strong migratory pressures:

- **Structural adjustment programs** have meant wage restrictions and a general erosion of labour standards in order to attract foreign investment, as well as public sector lay-offs and the replacement of local products with imported goods.
- **Government labour migration programs** send workers abroad in an attempt to bolster the national economy with wage remittances. Wage remittances in fact amount to some \$8 billion/year, or a full 10% of GDP (Martin, Abella, & Midgley, 2004).

Almost 100 000 Filipinas have come to Canada since the 1980s to work as domestic workers (NAPWC, 2005b). A drop in numbers in the 1990s has led to speculation that new requirements may have led increasing numbers of women to seek entry to Canada as undocumented workers rather than through the Live-in Caregiver Program.

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Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, approximately 18 000 migrant workers come from Mexico and the Caribbean each year to fill labour shortages on Canadian farms. Over 80% work in Ontario, with the remainder spread across every province except Newfoundland (Preibisch, 2004: www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca).

Bilateral agreements give sending country governments responsibility for recruitment and selection of workers. Applicants are subject to the following program requirements:

- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be experienced agricultural workers. In Mexico, the government gives preference to the neediest applicants - those with low levels of education and no land of their own. Men with families are favoured over single men, since they are considered more likely to return home at the end of the growing season (Basok, 2003).
- **Terms of employment:** Individual contracts may last for up to eight months. During that time, workers are housed on the farm in accommodation provided by the employer. The workers are expected to work long and flexible hours, often without overtime pay.
- **Applying for permanent status:** Unlike caregivers, farm workers never have the opportunity to apply for permanent status. With employment trajectories of up to twenty growing seasons, many spend the better part of their working lives in Canada without ever having the opportunity to bring their families over to join them.

Temporary status makes farm workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Common problems include low wages, unsafe working conditions and crowded and unhealthy accommodations:

- **Wages:** Migrant farm workers are frequently paid less than their Canadian counterparts, in violation of their standard employment agreement. The 2004 general farm labour average wage for Canadian residents was \$9.00/hr. Migrant farm workers in Ontario were paid on average \$7.85/hr (UFCW, 2004). From these wages, deductions are made to help repay employers the cost of worker's air travel. Payroll deductions are also made for Employment Insurance, despite the fact that workers are ineligible for most benefits.
- **Unsafe working conditions:** Many migrant farm workers are required to work with pesticides without proper training or safety equipment. A 2002 survey conducted by the North-South Institute showed that of those who used pesticides, 43% had not used a protective mask, 57% had not used other protective clothing, and 44% had not received training in the use of chemicals. Until recently, agricultural workers were excluded from Ontario health and safety legislation. The issue continues to be relevant, since there is no mechanism in place to ensure access to the specifics of the new legislation by workers of varying literacy and language capacities.
- **Crowded and unhealthy accommodations:** It is not uncommon for eight migrant workers to be housed in a small trailer with two bedrooms and one bathroom. Accommodations may be attached to greenhouses, creating problems of dampness and humidity, as well as seepage of chemicals and pesticides. Workers who experience health problems often face difficulties in accessing health care, particularly when they are dependent on employers for transportation and translation. This dependency is a key factor in shaping the conditions of "un-freedom" that characterize the experiences of migrant agricultural workers (UFCW, 2004).

Workers can and have been sent home for filing complaints. Furthermore, if a worker has not been requested by name and is sent home before the halfway point of their contract, they are required

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to pay their own airfare. There is no appeal (UFCW, 2004). As a result, many workers put up with low wages and unsafe working or living conditions.

Non status persons

Non-status newcomers are people who do not have the legal documents to allow them to remain permanently in Canada. When we think of non-status people, we often think of undocumented workers - those with no papers at all from Immigration Canada. Not all non-status people, however, are undocumented. Some are in fact legally present in Canada. Others entered the country legally, but later lost their status. In all cases where people are present in Canada without permission, it is important to remember that it is their situation that is illegal, not the person.

Non-status persons legally present in Canada include refugee claimants awaiting a decision on their claim and rejected refugee claimants who have not been asked to leave yet.

Non-status persons illegally present in Canada are people who have made a clandestine border crossing or who have gone underground after being refused permission to stay in Canada. This group includes visa-overstayers, as well as rejected refugee claimants and humanitarian and compassionate applicants.

Many myths and misunderstanding exist about the non-status population. The stereotype is that of the immigration "queue-jumper" out to steal "our" jobs or take advantage of our welfare system. The reality is that the Canadian immigration system privileges people with education and money. It fails to offer any kind of "queue" to less privileged individuals - often people from the global South who do not fit the refugee definition but have compelling reasons to leave their country in search of some kind of future for themselves and their families. Migrating for survival, these individuals are willing to take jobs that Canadians will not take, at wages that Canadians will not accept. They pay taxes, yet are ineligible for benefits and services that Canadians take for granted - including welfare. They are not deported, both because we do not have the resources to do so and because they play key roles in our economy, yet neither are they given legal recognition and rights.

It is difficult to estimate the number of non-status immigrants living in Canada. Estimates range from 20 000 - 200 000. Most non-status people are concentrated in large cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Important sectors of these urban economies - such as the construction and garment industries - rely heavily on the exploited labour of non-status people.

Fear of deportation prevents non-status persons from asserting their rights and stands in the way of accessing important services such as health and education. Although all children have the legal right to attend school in Canada, non-status children have been denied access to public schools. Others have been kept out of school because their parents feared being identified as non-status persons. Since non-status persons are not covered by provincial health insurance, they may also refrain from going to the hospital at all for fear that their immigration status will be reported to the authorities. Similarly, women may choose not to call police to intervene in cases of spousal abuse, when that intervention could mean deportation.

What all non-status persons share is the experience of temporariness, insecurity and vulnerability to exploitation and abuse (www.ocasi.org/status). In order to reduce that vulnerability, advocates are calling for regularization measures which would offer people the opportunity to apply for and gain status. For more information about particular campaigns, see *Fact Sheet #9: Living without status*.

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Websites

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

www.cic.gc.ca

Human Resources and Development Canada

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca

Status Coalition

www.ocasi.org/status

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Fact Sheet # 1:

Globalization and Migration



Illustration: Rini Templeton

We live in a time of contradictions. Globalization means growing mobility for capital and goods, but increasing restrictions on the movement of people. As free trade and privatization widen the economic divide between North and South, a

growing number of migrants face increasingly harsh border controls.

The contradictions breed hostility and prejudice. Migrants from the global South are labeled “economic migrants,” “bogus refugees,” and even potential “terrorists.” 9-11 serves as a pretext for racial profiling and blanket suspicion. In its aftermath, the United States moved immigration functions to a new department of “Homeland Security” and exerted pressure on its neighbours to beef up enforcement. Mexico implemented Plan Sur, militarizing its southern border in order to keep out Central American migrants. At the same time, Canada signed the Smart Border Accord, assigned responsibility for enforcement to a new Canadian Border Services Agency, and increased funding for detention and deportation.

Meanwhile, the migrants continue to come. Driven by war, poverty, and environmental disaster, they seek elsewhere the livelihood denied them at home. Propelled by courage and determination, they defy a world which refuses them the rights that are set out in international covenants but remain absent from their daily lives.

International refugee law provides protection for those facing political persecution, but not for those fleeing economic or environmental threats to their lives or livelihoods. For those whose experience of suffering and displacement does not fit the refugee definition, there is little choice but to turn to smugglers, or resort to temporary work programs. Illegal or temporary status undermines fragile hopes, exposing migrant workers to exploitation and abuse. With government-funded settlement services largely restricted to those who arrive with permanent status, migrant workers have few places to turn for help. Churches are called to welcome and assist migrants.

Migration facts

- 175 million migrants live outside their home country.
- Remittances to developing countries total at least \$79 billion and exceed levels of official international development assistance.
- Despite recent growth, rates of migration to major receiving countries are lower today than at the turn of the previous century.
- The share of world governments with policies designed to lower immigration grew from 7% in 1976 to 34% in 2003

World Economic and Social Survey 2004

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Bible Study: And who is my Neighbour?

Read: Luke 10:25-37

Discuss:

1. Who is my neighbour? The question of this parable takes on new urgency in a time of increasing migration. In Canada, we believe that we have a responsibility towards our fellow citizens - our neighbours. We are proud of a health care system that expresses this commitment to each other. *But what happens when newcomers arrive? Are we responsible for their well-being? What does this parable teach us about extending the boundaries of our solidarity?*

2. In this parable, the model for neighbourly relations is not an Israelite, but rather a Samaritan – an outsider. *In what ways do migrants care for our well being? Do we recognize their contributions to our communities and our country?*

3. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” *If the migrant is our neighbour, how can we love migrants as we love ourselves? What does that mean in practical terms for individuals, churches, governments?*

Seeking Change: Trade and Migrant Labour

The General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) came into effect in 1995 as part of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Under GATS, WTO members negotiate on four “modes” of supply. Mode 4 covers the temporary movement of people to provide services in another country. Current Mode 4 commitments facilitate movement of highly skilled personnel, usually within multinational corporations. Less skilled workers - the comparative advantage of developing countries - are currently not included in GATS, which is the only global trade deal to address movement of people. Meanwhile, bilateral agreements which allow caregivers and migrant farm workers to enter Canada fail to protect migrants from exploitation and abuse.

Learn more: Sign up for the KAIROS trade e-bulletin to receive more analysis and action ideas. Contact Rusa Jeremic, Global Economic Justice Coordinator, at 1-877-403-8933 X225 or rjeremic@kairoscanada.org.

*Holy God,
You are a God on the move.*

*You move in the world and in
our lives.
You shape and direct
Creation, and us.*

*Your people have always been
on the move.
Moses led your people out of
slavery in Egypt.
The Holy Family fled to Egypt
with Jesus to escape the
murderous King Herod.*

*Today, people continue to
move.
War, poverty, oppression and
injustice drive people from
home and country.*

*We pray that you will move
with today's refugees, forced
migrants, and internally
displaced people.
Comfort and save them.*

*We pray for all those who
serve those forced to move in
our world.*

*Hear our prayer
For the sake of your own
uprooted Son, Jesus Christ.*

*Adapted from John Newbury
© International Catholic
Migration Commission*

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Fact Sheet # 2:

Forced Migration: More than refugees

Refugees deserve our compassion. Refugees have no choice but to leave their country in order to escape persecution, torture, even death. This we know. Many of our own churches have sponsored refugees to come from overseas. We have heard their stories of suffering and flight. But what about migrants?



Illustration: Rini Templeton

Sometimes we assume that there is a clear distinction between refugees, who are forced to leave their country, and economic migrants, who come voluntarily. The reality, however, is much more complex. People are displaced for many reasons, and not all are related to persecution. Development projects like highways, hydroelectric dams and mines displace vulnerable populations, pushing them back onto flood plains or steep ravines where a hurricane or earthquake spells disaster. Free trade agreements drive down prices for basic agricultural products, making it impossible for small farmers to compete.

Two brothers, two paths

Pedro and Juan are brothers. Both fled the civil war in Colombia to look for safety and a better life in North America. A smuggler helped them to make their way to Miami, where they worked together for one year. On the advice of a friend, Pedro decided to continue north to Canada to apply for refugee status. Juan, whose new partner was expecting a child, decided to stay and try his luck with the US asylum system. Two years later, Pedro had his landing papers and was working in a settlement organization in Toronto, while Juan was still dodging immigration officials in Miami. Same family, same history of violence, different futures.

The refugee definition is interpreted differently by different countries and even by different adjudicators within the same country. 80% of Colombian refugee claimants are granted asylum in Canada, compared to only 30% in the US.

Meanwhile, promises of new jobs lead to nothing more than precarious and underpaid employment in sweatshops run by foreign companies in the free trade zones. Families increasingly rely on money sent home by migrant workers abroad in order to survive. In countries like the Philippines and El Salvador, where neo-liberal economic policies dominate, family remittances are the number one source of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Economic migrants are severely criticized for using the refugee system as a “back door” into Canada. Meanwhile, Canada’s “front door” remains firmly shut to vulnerable people fleeing chronic poverty or environmental disaster. Our points system for economic immigrants gives priority to individuals with post-secondary education and money, leaving disadvantaged migrants few options. Some access temporary programs for domestic or agricultural workers. Others decide that their suffering does indeed merit filing a refugee claim. Others still are driven to illegal entry and work, often under highly exploitative conditions.

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Bible Study: That we may live and not die

Read: Genesis 42: 1-2

Discuss:

1. In this text, Joseph sends his sons to Egypt to find food. *Is this migration voluntary? Why or why not?*
2. Jacob's sons do not go begging. They set off to buy grain in Egypt. Much resistance to migration stems from public fear that migrants will burden our social security net. *How reflective is this of reality? What are the forgotten contributions of migrants to our economy and our communities?*
3. The Bible is full of stories of people on the move. *What other stories can you think of? What does it mean to us to realize that God's people is a people on the move?*

A Prayer of Confession

Spirit of God, forgive us. For 2000 years, we Christians have failed to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Instead of sharing with our sisters and brothers, instead of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and healing the sick; we have stored up treasures and sent the vulnerable, sick, hungry and homeless from our door.

Lord, have mercy

from a prayer by Janet Chishold, vice chair of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, USA

Seeking Change: The Points System

Since 1967, Canada has used a points system to assess the employability of immigrants applying under the skilled worker program. In the past, the system was used to target individuals who would fill identified labour shortages. In 2002, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act introduced changes to the skilled worker program, giving priority to factors such as education and language skills over particular occupations. This change was meant to overcome the difficulties associated with trying to predict specific labour needs and to target immigrants with the transferable skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing economy. In practice, however, the revised points system has given priority to professionals with highly specialized skills that are often wasted because Canadian licensing bodies do not recognize foreign credentials. Meanwhile, employers resort to temporary programs or non-status workers to fill chronic labour shortages in sectors such as agriculture, home childcare, hospitality and construction. This results in a two-tiered immigration system where individuals with education and money have access to permanent status, while less privileged migrants, often racialized migrants from the global South, are given temporary status or no status at all.

Share new insights: The next time you read a newspaper article criticizing “economic migrants” for using the refugee system as a back door into Canada, write a letter to the editor pointing out that there is no front door for many who bring needed job skills to Canada.

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Fact Sheet # 3:

Refugee Rights, Migrant Rights

The UN human rights system is based on the idea that human rights are universal and indivisible. In other words, all rights belong to all people. States are responsible for protecting the rights of their citizens. When state protection fails, it is up to the international community to fill the gap. This is why we have refugee law. The 1951 Refugee Convention guarantees international protection to people whose rights are not protected in their home country.

A closer look at the refugee definition shows that not all rights are equally protected by the international community. By signing the 1951 Convention, countries agree to offer protection to any person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country

of his [or her] nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country."

Lives are threatened by such forces as economic injustice and ecologically destructive development - not just persecution. However, those fleeing violations of economic, social and cultural rights are ineligible for the kind of international protection accorded to refugees. This contradicts the key human rights principle of "indivisibility" - all rights for all people.

Many people of faith have refused to accept this contradiction. In a pastoral letter entitled *Strangers no Longer*, the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States affirm the following principle: "**Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.** The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right."

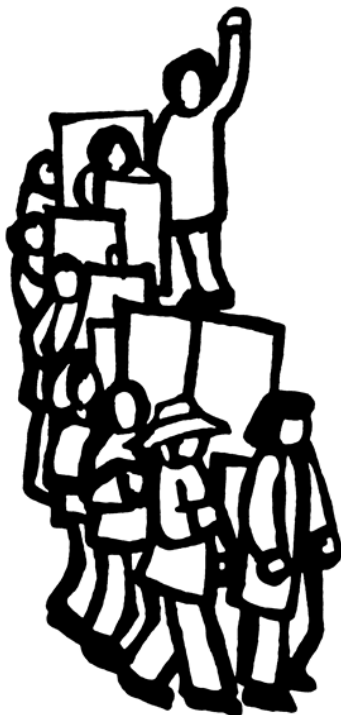


Illustration: Rini Templeton

All Rights for All People...

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind."

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2.

"Many people are displaced due to violations of their economic, social and cultural rights, both individual and collective. However, current international law has tended to recognize only victims of certain political rights - refugees - as needing protection and assistance. Contrary to the notion of indivisibility, those victims facing denial of economic, social and cultural rights - that often threaten their very survival, as communities as well as individuals - have no such recognition."

Patrick Taran, International Labor Organization.

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Bible Study: Love the stranger as yourself

Read: Leviticus 19:33-34

Discuss:

1. In the Old Testament, the words "alien", "stranger" and "foreigner" are used almost interchangeably to describe those who were not native-born to the "children of Israel". *How do these words sound to us today? How would the "strangers" in our midst describe themselves?*

2. Under Old Testament law, strangers could obtain rights equal to those of citizens. They were required to observe the same laws, and enjoyed the same civil rights, including property rights. *Discuss the relative rights of migrants and other strangers in today's Western world. As societies, how welcoming are we?*

3. *What are the risks to the stranger and to us, when we curtail civil rights such as access to education, healthcare and housing, and when we enact discriminatory labour laws?*

*Liberating God,
your Son taught us to pray
for your kingdom to come on earth
as it is in heaven.
Let your kingdom come;
let justice roll like a river
and righteousness like a never-ending
stream.
Let your will be done;
let those who mourn be comforted
and those in bondage be set free.
Strengthen our hope in you, O God,
for we long for your everlasting reign. Amen.
From: Hymnal: a Worship Book. Copyright
1982, Arlene Mark. Used by permission.*

Seeking Change: The UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

The Migrant Worker Convention states that receiving countries have a responsibility to offer certain protections to migrants, even if they do not fit the refugee description or qualify for immigration. It affirms the right of migrants to leave their home country and to enjoy protection of human rights in their destination country - regardless of their legal status. These rights include fair pay and safe working conditions, emergency medical care, and education for children. Those in a documented or regular situation are given additional rights.

The Migrant Worker Convention entered into force in July 1, 2003, after the required twenty countries signed it. As yet, however, all of the signatory countries are sending countries, not receiving ones like Canada. This considerably limits the ability of the Convention to protect the rights of migrants.

Take action: Write to the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Justice, asking that Canada ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Send your letters postage free to: House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa ON, K1A 0A6.

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Fact Sheet # 4:



Illustration: Rini Templeton

Canada and Human Displacement

We like to think of Canada as a just and compassionate country. However, the truth is that we do not always live up to those values. Like other countries in the north, Canada contributes to the causes of human displacement through unjust trade policies, exploitative business activities and irresponsible development practices. Meanwhile, Canadians benefit from the cheap labour provided by the migrants we help to uproot.

Mexico	The Philippines	China
<p>Miguel, a peasant farmer from Chiapas, now picks tomatoes for an Ontario grower. Canada is partner to the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has made it virtually impossible for small farmers like Miguel to survive. Over 50 000 Mexican farmers are forced to leave their land every year.</p> <p>Under NAFTA, Mexico can no longer collect import taxes on corn coming in from US agri-business, and has removed domestic supports to small farmers. With tons of US corn sold in Mexico at well below cost, small farmers have been unable to sell their produce and sustain their livelihoods. Some are forced to sell their land.</p> <p>Landless peasants then work for agri-business at starvation wages, migrate to cities to work in assembly plants or the informal sector, or head north. Every year, some 10 000 Mexicans work for sub-standard wages on Canadian farms through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.</p>	<p>Flora taught school in the Philippines before her family was displaced by a mining operation and she moved to Canada to work as a live-in caregiver. Mining has forced people from their homes in many parts of the Philippines. Among the many companies linked to mining-induced displacement is Canadian corporation TVI Pacific.</p> <p>Without the free, prior and informed consent of the majority of local Subanon people, TVI has proceeded to develop a mining operation on traditional indigenous lands in Canatuan. In 2005, TVI began to serve eviction notices to local residents.</p> <p>Around the world, displacement related to large scale projects is one of the greatest causes of impoverishment. The economic crisis in the Philippines has led the government to rely far too heavily on labour export. Over 75% of participants in Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program come from the Philippines.</p>	<p>Ming paid a smuggler to bring her to Canada, where she now works in a garment factory. Ming, together with 1.2 million other people, was forced to leave her home to make way for the controversial Three Gorges Dam Project. The \$14 million feasibility study which gave the green light to the dam project was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency.</p> <p>Upon completion in 2009, the Three Gorges dam will be the world's largest concrete dam, with a 400 mile long reservoir that will flood thousands of villages. The government resettlement program, begun in 1994, is forcing people onto poor land where they face crowding and few job opportunities.</p> <p>Internal displacement is often a first step towards out-migration. Non status Chinese women play a major role in the low-paying garment industry in Canada.</p>

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Bible Study: Learn to do Good

Read: Isaiah 1:12-17

Discuss:

1. **Seeing Jesus, Seeking Justice.** Exploited workers, detained refugees, abandoned children, and trafficked women are just some of the “products” of a globalized economy. Scripture challenges us to repent of the blood on our hands, to wash ourselves clean, and to take action for justice, recognizing the presence of Christ in the most vulnerable. *What changes can be made to the global economic system to promote the common good?*

2. **Rescue, Defend, Plead.** In the work of justice, the scriptures give us light for the journey and clear instructions for action: we are to rescue, defend, and plead for the rights of the poor, the marginalized and the displaced. *What “rescue” attempts have you or your faith community been a part of? What gifts do you have which can be used to plead for or defend the rights of displaced persons?*

Prayer for the Bombed Out, Burned Out, Driven Out

Lord God, we pray for all the bombed out, burned out, driven out, relocated, wondering, wandering, unwilling pilgrims in this world.

Forgive us for our part in uprooting them. Restore their lives, make us partners with them in the rebuilding of their lives. We pray in the name of the Son of Man, who had no place to lay His head.

(by Arnold Kenseth and Richard Unsworth, printed in Good Soil, Decade to Overcome Violence, Australia)

Seeking Change: Immigration Detention

Far from acknowledging responsibility towards those we have helped to displace, Canada criminalizes many people who come to our shores looking for an opportunity to rebuild their lives. In the summer of 1999, 599 Fujianese migrants arrived by boat on the west coast of Canada, fleeing poverty and the one child policy in China. Most were detained and later deported, on the basis that they did not fit the refugee definition. Two years after their arrival, 11 of the migrants were still being held in Canadian prisons, for no other crime than exercising their right to leave their home country.

Canada detains people pending deportation. Canada also detains people for not having satisfactory identity documents, or when there is even a suspicion that they might present a security risk. Since 9-11, Canada has widened its net and increased its budget for detention, while also tightening restrictions on NGOs visiting detainees. This means that more innocent people undergo the stress and humiliation of immigration detention - with less support.

Take action: Support prison ministries. Educate chaplains in your area about the special needs of those experiencing immigration detention. For more information, contact Alfredo Barahona, Refugee and Migration Program Coordinator at 1-877-403-8933 X251 or abarahona@kairoscanada.org

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Illustration: Rini Templeton

Fact Sheet # 5:

Human Trafficking



People who can't make ends meet at home face huge obstacles when they decide to pursue a better future in another country. Industrialized countries like Canada offer few legal migration opportunities for the poor. In fact, they invest a great deal in preventing economic migrants from reaching their shores. They impose visa

requirements on countries of the global South, threaten airline companies with fines if they transport passengers without proper documents, and even intercept ships on the high seas.

This situation pushes vulnerable migrants into the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Both smuggling and trafficking represent dangerous options for those who place their lives in the hands of criminal profiteers in a desperate attempt to cross an international border.

Smugglers, who are often paid in advance, may not have a vested interest in the health, safety or even the actual arrival of those who use their services. Central American migrants have been abandoned by their smugglers in the Mexican desert, to die of exposure.

Traffickers exact their fees through forced labour. Women and children are trafficked into prostitution and sexual exploitation. Men and women are trafficked into a variety of "3-D" jobs: dirty, dull and dangerous.

Who are the victims of trafficking?

Kristina, a single mother from Eastern Europe, was promised a good job in Toronto. She now works in a strip club. Her employer holds her passport.

Alice, a young woman from the Philippines, submitted her name to a "friendship office" in British Columbia. She corresponded with and later married a middle aged man from the northern interior. Her husband now abuses her but she sees no way out.

Manuel, a young man from Brazil, works for starvation wages at a construction site for the brother of the man who brought him to Canada.

Kristina, Alice and Manuel are all victims of trafficking. The UN defines trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbour or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion ... for the purpose of exploitation."

It is difficult to determine numbers of smuggled and trafficked persons, since the activities are illegal and the definitions disputed. The UN estimates that up to one million people are trafficked throughout the world each year.

Canada and other countries have responded by ratifying the UN Convention against Transnational Crime, together with supplementary protocols dealing specifically with smuggling and trafficking. However, these protocols, as well as their implementation in Canadian law, have focused on the criminalization of smuggling and trafficking activities, without providing adequate protection for the victims. Trafficked persons are routinely detained on immigration related charges and quickly deported without access to specialized counseling or assistance. Such actions revictimize trafficked persons without doing anything to address the economic disparities which pushed them to migrate in the first place.

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Bible Study: Let the oppressed go free

Read: Luke 4:16-21; Deuteronomy 23:15-16

Discuss:

1. In Luke 4, Jesus announces His mission: to proclaim release to the captives and freedom for the oppressed. *Is today's church faithful to that mission?*
2. Most trafficked persons are poor, unemployed or underemployed, and desperate to escape their conditions. They escape one form of captivity only to fall into another. *For trafficked persons, what would true freedom look like?*

3. The Deuteronomy passage states that escaped slaves should be offered protection from their former masters and be allowed to take up residence in the place of their choosing. *In what ways does trafficking represent a modern-day form of slavery? What does this passage suggest about the way we should respond to victims of trafficking?*

God of freedom,

We remember the many people in our world that have been trafficked and held captive. We remember their oppressors as well. We pray that the captives be set free and that the oppressors be liberated from the slavery of greed and power.

Today we carry in our heart every person caught in trafficking and we believe that Jesus Christ shall break the chains.

Amen. So be it.

(School Sisters of Notre Dame, NAMA)

Seeking Change: The Purple Rose Campaign

The Purple Rose Campaign is an international campaign to end sex trafficking of Filipina women and children. In Canada, campaign organizers have highlighted the role of globalization in forcing women to leave the Philippines to support themselves and their families. They have raised awareness of the vulnerability experienced by Filipina migrants to Canada. As mail-order brides, domestic workers, and entertainers/sex trade workers, their status in Canada is too often dependent on a man whom they have never met - whether he be their husband or employer. This puts them at risk of sexual exploitation.

Among the demands of the Purple Rose Campaign are the following:

- That the Philippine economy be weaned from dependence on the export of people and that it pursue development using local capital.
- That Filipinas and all women who are sex trafficked be granted legal status and given protection so that they may testify against their traffickers.

Join the campaign: Wear the purple rose pin and sign the commitment card. For more information about how to support the campaign, contact Connie Sorio, Asia Partnerships Program Coordinator at 416-463-5312 X 240 or csorio@kairoscanada.org.

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Fact Sheet # 6:

Migrant Rights in Canada

Migrants flee poverty at home, only to find themselves in precarious working conditions in Canada. Without permanent resident status, migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation. Common rights violations include sub-standard wages, long hours without adequate rest or overtime pay, and verbal or physical abuse. In the most extreme cases, travel documents are withheld.

For these workers, globalization has failed to fulfill its promise. Policy makers assured hesitant voters that free trade would open up new global markets and create new jobs. Instead, "free" trade has increased dominance by rich countries and undermined the freedom of millions of workers around the globe. Migration has become a survival mechanism, with remittances becoming the primary source of income for many families in sending countries. Meanwhile, here in Canada, employers resist advocacy for better wages, benefits and job quality by threatening to move production overseas. In fact, Canadian employers increasingly offer part time, temporary, and contract work - with reduced benefits. Those with the least desirable jobs turn to migrant workers as a cheap and compliant labor source.

Researchers report severe exploitation of non-status workers, some of them trafficked persons, in Canadian agriculture, sweatshops and the sex trade. Non-status persons are also denied basic social and health services. Children may be denied access to education. Migrants without status are among the most vulnerable of Canada's poor.

Temporary migration programs offer Canadian employers legal access to migrant labour, with few protections for the worker. The Live-in Caregiver Program allows affluent families to hire nannies to care for their children and dependents. Another program, the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program allows Canadian farmers to contract offshore workers for up to 8 months of the year to fill labour shortages. Caregivers and farm workers often find themselves on call 24 hours, living in accommodation provided by the employer, with little or

KAIROS Principles

- It is unacceptable to deny migrants legal entry or access to permanent status and then to exploit those same people to fulfill a structural need for cheap and compliant labour.
- Migrant workers, regardless of legal status, deserve just wages and fair treatment from employers. No migrant worker should be required to perform forced labour. To protect this right, migrant workers should be free to hold their own documents, to live in accommodation of their choosing and to change employers when not satisfied with the terms of their employment.
- Migrants, regardless of their legal and employment status, possess an inherent human dignity that should be respected, and basic human needs that should be met.

Source: KAIROS draft policy framework on migration

no privacy. When status is linked to employment, the fear of deportation makes it extremely difficult for workers to demand their rights.



Illustration: Rini Templeton

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Bible Study: Cornerstones of the Global Harvest

Read: Matthew 21:42-43

Discuss:

1. **Rejecting the cornerstone:** The central truth or “cornerstone” of Jesus’ message was God’s special concern for the poor. Jesus’ mission was to reveal the value and dignity of those rejected by society. *What are the cornerstones of a healthy society? How do migrant workers serve as a cornerstone in Canadian society?*

2. **Producing fruit:** The symbols of fruit and harvest are used extensively throughout scripture. In their commonness it is easy to overlook the meaning they contain. We are challenged constantly to deepen our awareness of the harvest of grace in our midst. *How is God’s love made manifest in the fruits of migrant labor? How do I concretely benefit from the work and skills of migrants in my daily life?*

3. **Crushing injustice:** The vicious cycle of human rights abuse can only be corrected by the living out of justice understood as right relationship. *What have you heard about the abuse and exploitation of migrant workers? What are the pathways to correct this treatment?*

Seeking Change: Workplace Rights

In Canada, the policies that shape the working conditions of migrant workers fall under the jurisdiction of both federal and provincial governments. The federal government is responsible for recruitment and provides migrants with standard employment agreements. However, working conditions are covered by provincial law. For the most part, migrants work in those sectors of the economy which have the least protection and monitoring of labour rights.

Nevertheless, migrants and their advocates have celebrated several victories in recent years. In Ontario, a court challenge pushed Ontario to extend health and safety legislation to agricultural workers. At the federal level, years of lobbying by caregivers has prompted the government to undertake a review of the Live-in Caregiver program. In the Philippines, Congress passed a resolution calling on the Special Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs to conduct an investigation into reports of abuses suffered by Filipino caregivers in Canada.

Celebrate: December 18 is international migrant rights day. In your church, remember God’s special concern for migrants as you light the “Love” candle in your advent wreath. Don’t forget that every day is migrants’ day, with new people being forced to move. If December 18 doesn’t work for you, set a more convenient date to hold a special church service or public event focused on migrant rights.

God of Creation,

*We praise you for all that exists.
We praise and thank you for the lives
and presence of migrant peoples in
our midst. We thank you for the
dedicated labor of migrant workers, for
their sacrifice, service and untold
contributions within our communities.*

*Grant us strength to stand with
migrant workers in their struggle for
justice. Inspire us to be courageous
disciples for all the poor and
displaced. Help us make visible those
who remain nameless and invisible
among us. Deliver us from the traps of
our blindness and greed.*

*Fill us with gratitude for these workers,
the cornerstone upon whom we
depend. Teach us to recognize your
love in the fruits of their labor. We ask
this loving God, through the name of
Jesus our brother, defender of the
poor, source of our freedom.*

Amen. Blessed be.

Prayer by Sr. Noreen Allossery-Walsh, OSU
Office for Social Justice - RC Diocese of
London

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Fact Sheet # 7:



Illustration: Rini Templeton

Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Every year, Canadian agricultural communities become a temporary home to over 18,000 migrant workers from Mexico and the Caribbean. Through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker's Program, these "offshore" workers are recruited to labour in Canadian fields for up to eight months. Some return every growing season for up to 20 years, without ever having the opportunity to gain permanent status or bring their families over to join them. Since 1966, the Canadian government has relied on this program to fill severe shortages in agricultural labour - shortages created by low wages and poor working

conditions that few Canadian workers will accept. Over the years, at great personal cost, migrant farm workers have made significant contributions to Canadian communities.

Unfortunately, the sacrifices and contributions made by these individuals are not always appreciated by rural Canadians. Workers report encounters with racism both on the job and in their spare time. The agricultural work required of them can be dangerous and physically taxing. Workers have to battle harsh elements, damaging chemicals and long hours of demanding work. Meanwhile, the voices and complaints of these workers are too often silenced by the threat of being sent home before the end of their contract. Knowing that their families depend on their overseas income, migrant workers are in no position to argue.

Feelings of fear and social isolation drive workers to endure unacceptable conditions on the farm, and contribute to the sense of loss that characterizes life away from home. Many workers have missed the birth of their own children while on contract, and many more have been absent for the marriages, funerals and religious ceremonies that mark milestones in the lives of their friends and neighbours. All pay the personal cost of being away from loved ones for the duration of their contracts in Canada.

Churches and their communities can help alleviate feelings of loss and isolation. And they can take action with, and on behalf of, seasonal agricultural workers to make significant changes in the program and to achieve justice for migrant workers in Canada.

Health and Housing: Two Worker's Stories

Unable to pay his children's school fees, Eduardo came to Canada to work in a greenhouse. He sometimes worked fifteen hours a day, despite the extreme heat and heavy concentration of chemicals. Eduardo knew that the rash he developed at work was from the pesticides that were sprayed on the tomato plants, but he dared not ask to visit a doctor. Eduardo was afraid that missing work would result in early repatriation to Mexico.

William had been leaving his native Jamaica to work on a Quebec tobacco farm for twenty-three years. Because of his seniority, he was often asked to advocate on behalf of his peers. Housed one summer in a single room with 11 other men, he decided to approach the supervisor about the problem of overcrowding. William was warned that if he continued to complain, there would be consequences. The next summer, William learned that he had not been 'named' by the farmer to return to Canada. He was out of a job - with no opportunity to appeal the decision.

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Bible Study: Do not withhold the wages

Read: Deuteronomy 24: 14-15

Discuss:

1. Seasonal agricultural workers, like Canadian-born workers, depend on their wages to support their families. Yet they are regularly paid less per hour than temporary Canadian workers hired to do the same job. Reflect on this situation:

- How do *migrant workers* benefit by working for Canadian farmers? What injustices do they face? How do *farm owners* benefit? What problems do they face?
- How might Christians in these farming communities respond to the inequities?
- How should the Canadian government respond?

2. The last part of our reading says, "You shall pay them; otherwise they might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt."

- How is this Old Testament text relevant today? How might migrant workers "cry to the Lord" against unjust treatment? What guilt do we as Canadians bear for that unjust treatment?
- How does it affect our spirits if we withhold rights and proper pay from migrants?

3. One Canadian farmer stated, "We can't survive without seasonal migrant workers."

- What do you think he means by this? If we can't survive without migrant workers, what are our responsibilities for ensuring their rights are respected?
- God calls us to protect the poor and downtrodden. How does the disadvantaged position of migrant farm workers call us to respond as a church/Christian community?

Seeking Change: A Voice for Migrant Farm Workers

Migrant farm workers face many obstacles to voicing their difficulties and demanding their rights. For many, there is a language barrier to overcome. There is also the vulnerability that comes from temporary status. Workers know they can lose their jobs and be sent home for criticizing their employer. There is no appeal and no collective body to advocate on their behalf. Migrant farm workers do not have a legal right to form or join a union.

Listen: Show the NFB documentary *El Contrato*, which tells the stories of seasonal agricultural workers both in Canada and at home in Mexico. Initiate a conversation on what could be done in agricultural communities to make workers from Mexico *and* the Caribbean feel welcome and supported.

Raise your voice: Contact your MP and voice your concern over the government's neglect of this essential workforce. Ask that your MP take action to ensure that: 1) Migrants have access to a fair and impartial appeal process in the case of early termination of a contract.
2) Migrant workers have the legal right to form or join a union.

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Fact Sheet # 8:

Live-In Caregivers

Around the world, women tend to be poorer than men. Globalization has widened and deepened the poverty of women. With its emphasis on privatization and social cutbacks, it has reinforced the age-old reliance of the global economy on the unpaid and underpaid caring work of women. In the global South, many women find themselves obliged to migrate and take jobs as domestic workers in order to support their families.



Illustration: Rini Templeton

In Canada, many women struggle to balance the demands of work and family due to the lack of an accessible and affordable national child care system. For dual income families, hiring a live-in caregiver is an attractive option -- more convenient and less expensive than paying for day care. Few Canadians are willing to do this type of work due to the low pay and difficult working conditions. In response, the government has allowed the entry of foreign domestic workers into Canada. This means liberation for some privileged Canadian women, but can mean hardship for the mostly Filipino women who work as live-in caregivers in Canada.

Under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), foreign domestic workers must complete 24 months of live-in work over a period of 3 years in order to be eligible to apply for landed status. This live-in arrangement, together with temporary status, makes many caregivers

vulnerable to abuse. Caregivers commonly experience excessive hours of work, less than minimum wage rates, non-payment or under-payment for overtime work, added tasks and responsibilities that were not part of the employment agreement, degrading treatment, and sexual harassment. Many are too fearful to complain, not wanting to lose or leave their jobs, jeopardizing their chances of completing their two years of service within the required time period. Not only that, it can be difficult to find another job. Proof of financial independence is another requirement for being accepted as a permanent resident.

Some caregivers are unable to complete the 24 months of required live-in work within a three year period. Among the many contributing factors are illness or the decision to leave an abusive employer. Though these factors are beyond their own control, caregivers who do not meet the requirement receive a deportation order without any hearing or investigation into their circumstances.

Caregiver stories

Leticia Capinpin, a former midwife from the Philippines, worked for over ten years as a domestic worker in Taiwan, Dubai and Canada before being reunited with her husband and five children. The years of separation took their toll on the family. "It was in Canada that my marriage broke down," said Leticia. "I suppose it broke down since I was always away."

Albert Lopez, son of a domestic worker, was reunited with his mother after four years of separation. Obligated to work two jobs to make ends meet, his mother had little time to support and guide Albert. As a result, Albert dropped out of high school and got involved in drugs and gangs at the age of 16.

Albert is not alone. Filipino youth in Vancouver have an estimated 60% high school drop out rate.

Source: NAPWC

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Bible Study: A partnership of strangers

Read: Lev. 25:23, 1 Chron. 29:14-15

Discuss:

1. These passages remind us that we are all “aliens and tenants” or “strangers and guests” in a land not our own, a land that belongs to God. *How does it change the nature of our relationship with migrants to think of ourselves also as strangers and guests?*

2. For live-in caregivers, being a guest in their employer’s home sometimes means that they are expected to be grateful for small favours, rather than demanding their rights as workers. *How does this distort the Biblical notion of hospitality to strangers? If we all share equally in God’s hospitality to us, what should our hospitality to others look like?*

3. The Bible teaches us that we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to our care. Live-in caregivers are entrusted with the most precious resource of our country - children. They offer care to these children, often at the expense of their own families. *What do caregivers have to teach us about stewardship? What responsibility do we have to ensure that they have the opportunity to care for their own children?*

God Our Host,

We give You thanks for Your hospitality, that welcomes both migrants and the native-born as guests and stewards of a land not our own.

Grant us the grace to be generous in our hospitality, responsible in our stewardship and humble in our partnership with fellow strangers in this land that is Yours.

Amen.

Prayer by Tanya Chute Molina (inspired by Gemma Tulud Cruz)

Seeking Change: Family reunification

Many live-in caregivers wait 5 to 7 years to be reunited with their family. First, caregivers must complete their 24 months of live-in work within 3 years to apply for landing status. Then they must wait for their landing and family sponsorship applications to be processed. Processing delays often prolong the waiting. By the time that children arrive, they and their mothers are often strangers. Youth struggle to adapt to a new culture. Rebuilding family ties is often difficult.

The Filipino community is the most severely affected. Since the 1980s, almost 100 000 Filipinos have come to Canada as domestic workers. The National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada (NAPWC) advocates for domestic workers to be granted permanent resident status upon entry in order to prevent exploitation and family separation. In March 2005, KAIROS presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration calling for new measures to facilitate family reunification. The brief supported the NAPWC demand that domestic workers enter Canada as permanent residents.

Lobby your MP: Make an appointment with your MP. Express your concern about delays in family reunification affecting live-in caregivers, as well as refugees. Contact Alfredo Barahona, Refugee and Migration Program Coordinator at 1-877-403-8933 X 251 or abarahona@kairoscanada.org for a copy of the KAIROS brief on family reunification.

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
129 St Clair West
Toronto, ON
M4V 1N5
www.kairoscanada.org



For more information, contact:
Alfredo Barahona
Refugee and Migration Program
abarahona@kairoscanada.org
1-877-403-8933 X 251

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Fact Sheet # 9:

Living without status

Growing global inequality is forcing more and more people to migrate for survival. At the same time, the immigration policies of many industrialized countries are becoming increasingly restrictive. Many of those forced to move have no legal options. The result is a growing number of clandestine migrants – estimated at 30 to 40 million worldwide. Though precise numbers are difficult to determine, researchers estimate that there are between 20 000 and 200 000 people living without full legal status in Canada.



Illustration: Rini Templeton

People end up living without status for many reasons. Some are refused refugee claimants. Others overstay a temporary visa. Still others enter the country without a visa and never make an application for status because of fear or lack of resources and assistance. Ineligible for social assistance and without a work permit, most non-status people end up working for low wages in the most undesirable sectors of the economy. Non-status people do the jobs that no one else wants to do, often known as 3-D jobs (dirty, dull and dangerous). They are construction workers, office cleaners, garment workers, and caregivers.

Canada benefits from this cheap and compliant labour. If all of the non-status workers were suddenly deported, Toronto's construction industry would collapse and thousands of children would be out of day care. In 1993, Toronto alone was home to an estimated 30 000 non-status nannies. Despite this enormous contribution to Canadian society, non-status persons face severe problems in confronting workplace exploitation and in accessing government services. Since they do not have health cards, non-status persons

Wendy Maxwell Edwards

Wendy Maxwell Edwards, a rejected refugee claimant, was sexually assaulted by a security officer in 2001. When she reported the crime to the police, it almost got her deported. Part way through the trial, the Crown decided that her testimony was not needed. As a non-status woman, she was reported to the immigration authorities. Though Wendy managed to avoid deportation in 2001, she continued to live in a very vulnerable situation. Four years later, she was arrested by the Toronto Police while selling cookies at an International Women's Day event and quickly deported. Immigration authorities gave no consideration to the many letters sent by her supporters, nor to the fact that Wendy had a Humanitarian and Compassionate Application in process.

Source: *No Status, No Service, No More*
by Maria Amuchastegui

have to pay up front for health care. Children are sometimes denied access to schools, in contravention of Canada's international obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Non-status persons and families live under the constant stress of being found out, of waking up one morning to the sound of immigration officers pounding on their door to enforce a deportation order. That's why advocates are calling for a regularization program, to give people legal status and recognize their human dignity and contribution to Canadian society.

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Seeking Change: The Struggle for Regularization

The term regularization refers to a government program to give legal status to those who are in the country without official papers. The idea of a regularization program is not new. At various points in history, particularly when the immigration system was undergoing major changes, the Canadian government has offered programs to give status to those caught in the gaps of the old system. Many of these programs have had very selective criteria. Advocates take many different approaches in seeking to guarantee greater security and well-being to non-status persons. One current campaign urges cities like Toronto to adopt a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, whereby municipal police and human service providers would commit to offering services without asking about the recipient's immigration status or passing on any such information. Other campaigns have sought to address the situation of limbo experienced by refused refugee claimants who cannot be deported because the government considers their country of origin to be too dangerous. This was the struggle of the Action Committee of Non-Status Algerians, which eventually won a Special Regularization for Algerians Residing in Quebec. Other advocates work for a broad based regularization program which would address the needs of all non-status persons in Canada.

Educate: Show the KAIROS video "Borderless" in your church or community group. Use the video guide to engage people in discussion about the problems faced by non-status persons. To order, contact Fahira Golich at 1-877-403-8933 X 221 or email orders@kairoscanada.org.

Seeking Change: The UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

The Migrant Worker Convention states that receiving countries have a responsibility to offer certain protections to migrants, even if they do not fit the refugee description or qualify for immigration. It affirms the right of migrants to leave their home country and to enjoy protection of human rights in their destination country - regardless of their legal status. These rights include fair pay and safe working conditions, emergency medical care, and education for children. Those in a documented or regular situation are given additional rights.

The Migrant Worker Convention entered into force in July 1, 2003, after the required twenty countries signed it. As yet, however, all of the signatory countries are sending countries, not receiving ones like Canada. This considerably limits the ability of the Convention to protect the rights of migrants.

Take action: Write to the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Justice, asking that Canada ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Send your letters postage free to: House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa ON, K1A 0A6.

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Fact Sheet # 10:

Strangers no longer

Much faith based reflection on the theme of refugees and migration focuses on the Biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” The stranger, by definition, is outside our community, set apart by different beliefs, customs, and ways of speaking. Often the stranger inspires fear. The Biblical call to welcome the stranger invites us to go beyond our mistrust and suspicion in order to welcome newcomers into our community.



Illustration: Rini Templeton

But what happens when the stranger in our midst remains forever a stranger? People of colour, both new immigrants and Canadian born, are too often treated as if they don't belong. They face systemic barriers in accessing employment, housing and social services. They find themselves forever labeled as “immigrant” rather than Canadian. Even citizenship represents no more than a fragile hold on belonging. Mahar Arar, the Syrian-born Canadian deported to Syria on false allegations of terrorism, discovered that the rights of “strangers” are easily suspended in the name of national security.

Don't call me a stranger

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we step on is the same;
But mine is not “the promised land”

Don't call me a stranger;
The color of my passport is different;
But the color of our blood is the same;

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different,
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat of our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separation that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways
But our God is the same.

Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus,
Philippines, 1995 (Abridged version)

The Bible clearly speaks against this kind of discrimination. In Leviticus, we read: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you” (Lev 19: 34). When we recognize the stranger as fellow citizen, then their well being is no longer seen as a matter of charity, but as a matter of rights and entitlement.

In order to truly welcome the stranger, we must recognize the stranger as one of us. The borders and barriers between “us” and “them” are merely human constructions that serve to justify exploitation and violence. The truth is that we are sisters and brothers, one people under God. Paul writes to the Ephesians: “So God came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near... So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2: 17,19).

Demographically, this is already true – migrants are not far off strangers but rather our neighbours. May it also be true in our hearts and in our practice, as we relate to migrants as full members of our communities.

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Migrant Sunday Liturgy

Call to Worship

Leader: Peace to you who are far off

All: **Peace to you who are near**

Leader: Peace to the migrant

All: **Peace to the native born**

Leader: We are no longer strangers

All: **We are members of one body
one church, one household of God**

Prayer of Approach

O God,
Open our eyes to see the needs of migrants
Open our ears to hear their cries for justice
Open our hearts to assist sojourners near and far

Show us where love, faith and hope are needed
Use us as ministers of your healing

Let us not be afraid to defend the weak
because of the anger of the strong,
Nor afraid to defend the poor
because of the anger of the rich

Sustain us in the coming days that we may be able
to do some work of peace for thee. Amen

*United Methodist Committee on Relief
(based on a prayer from South Africa)*

Hymn: For the healing of the nations

Prayer of Confession

Why, O God,
do our neighbours have to exhaust their strength
to come work in our fields, care for our children,
and build our homes?

Why, O God,
do we ask the most vulnerable to endure the
hardship and abuses of work we will not do
ourselves?

Why, O God,
do we allow the pursuit of profits
to outweigh our sense of fairness?

O God, have mercy on us.

Based on a prayer from National farm worker ministry, US.

Readings

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9, 33-34

Ephesians 2:14-22

Matthew 25: 31-35

Sermon: No longer strangers

Use the reflection on the reverse of this fact sheet
as a starting point for a sermon about welcoming
migrants as full members of our communities.

Prayer of Intercession

Jesus, full of love and mercy, watch over our sister
and brother migrants. Have compassion and protect
them as they suffer mistreatment and humiliation
along their way, as they encounter distrust and
marginalization. Touch with your goodness the
hearts of all those who see them pass by. Help us
to respect them and treat them with dignity.

Take care of their families until they return home.
Grant them the grace to return safely, not with
broken hearts but with their hopes fulfilled.

*Prayer on the wall of the Community Centre for Migrants in Altar,
Mexico*

Hymn: In Christ there is no East or West

Offering

As we present our offerings, we also offer ourselves
to the work of justice for migrants everywhere. We
remember the words of Mexican-American migrant
rights activist Cesar Chavez:

"What do we want the church to do? We ask for its
presence with us, beside us, as Christ among us.
We ask the church to sacrifice with the people for
social change, for justice and for love of brother and
sister. We don't ask for words. We ask for deeds."

Hymn: What does the Lord require?

Sending:

Loving God, as you send us into the world you love
to build our futures together, give us grace to go
thankfully and with courage in the power of your
Spirit. Amen

National Council of Churches in Australia

Glossary

deportation - the removal of a foreign national who has not complied with some aspect of immigration law. A person deported from Canada is barred from entering the country again in the future without special ministerial consent.

family reunification - the process by which family members of a foreign national who is a permanent resident in Canada can also be granted permanent resident status so as to rejoin their family in Canada.

forced migration - "a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects" (International Association for the Study of Forced Migration). The term is also used to describe situations where people are forced to move for economic reasons beyond their control.

free trade - trade between nations without protective customs tariffs (import taxes).

free trade zones - designated area of a country where tariffs are eliminated and many regulations and requirements waived in order to attract foreign companies to set up business there. As a result of deregulation, working conditions are often poor in the assembly plants and sweatshops of the free trade zones.

globalization - "The term 'globalization' describes the increased mobility of goods, services, labour, technology and capital throughout the world. Although globalization is not a new development, its pace has increased with the advent of new technologies, especially in the area of telecommunications" (Canadian government). Economic globalization is closely linked to the promotion of free trade and privatization.

humanitarian and compassionate application - an application process that allows people to apply for permanent resident status from inside Canada, on the basis of reasons of hardship and of integration into Canadian society.

migrant - anyone who moves to another country without being granted the rights of permanent residence.

migration - the movement of people either across an international border or within a state.

neo-liberalism - an economic philosophy that focuses on free markets, reduced public spending on social services, deregulation and privatization.

non-status people - people who do not have the legal documents to allow them to remain permanently in Canada.

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permanent resident status - permanent residents have the right to enter and remain in Canada. Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least 730 days within a five-year period or risk losing their status. Permanent residents have all the rights guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* such as equality rights, legal rights, mobility rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association (Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

points system - the system by which applications for immigration under the skilled worker class are evaluated. Points are awarded for factors such as education, language ability and work experience. Applicants must meet a "pass mark" of 67 points to be accepted. Applicants must also prove that they have sufficient funds to support their family for six months after arrival in Canada.

racialization - the treating of groups as if there were inherent differences between them, and as if some were of greater value than others. The term comes from a body of theory that questions the category of race, saying that there is no biological basis for dividing people into distinct races and that race is a social construct.

refugee - a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his (or her) nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself (or herself) of the protection of that country" (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees). There are two ways that refugees come to Canada. Some are selected in overseas camps and urban areas serviced by the UNHCR. They are sponsored by the government or a private sponsor to be resettled in Canada. Others find their own way to Canada as refugee claimants and go through our refugee determination system.

regularization - any process by which a country allows non-status immigrants to obtain legal status and thereby permission to stay in that country.

remittances - money earned or acquired by foreign nationals that is sent back to their country of origin.

repatriation - the forced return of a temporary worker to his or her home country, on the basis of non-compliance with the terms of their work contract.

smuggling - "the procurement ... in order to obtain a financial or material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident" (UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants).

trafficking - "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbour or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion ... for the purpose of exploitation" (UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons).

