

## GENERAL SYNOD HUSTINGS FOR LAITY QUESTION 3

### How should the Church respond to the current refugee crisis?

<p>BARRON, Mr Alastair</p>	<p>The scale and complexity of this issue is huge. It needs a mammoth effort across Europe to create short term fixes and longer term solutions.</p> <p>I believe the Church can respond in several ways, by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraging churches at local levels to work with local authorities to offer support to refugees coming into their area – a very practical response</li><li>• Engaging with other faiths in UK and across Europe to help build a cohesive approach across all faith communities in those geographies most affected</li><li>• Engaging with the UK national government to depoliticise the whole issue, and informing their decision making and views on the levels of support needed by the refugees</li><li>• Playing a part with all those involved in UK long term planning to ensure the successful integration of the refugees for that longer term. This issue is going to require clear and practical commitment going forward.</li></ul> <p>What is clear is that the Church must play a role and be seen to play a role in both the short and longer term needs these people.</p>
<p>CLIFT, Dr Simon</p>	<p>In line with the <b>Five Marks of Mission</b>, the Church is called to “<i>respond to human need with loving service</i>”.</p> <p>This will involve mobilising the Church for <b>practical action</b>; calling church members and those outside the church family to collect items for distribution to the refugees whether in camps on the Syrian border in Lebanon and Jordan, or in the new Jungle refugee camp in Calais.</p> <p>It will mean ongoing conversations with local authorities so that the Church can play its part in providing homes for those who arrive in the UK and are allocated to our locality.</p> <p>There is also an urgent need for the Church to <b>pray</b> for the UK government as well as other European Heads of State as they grapple with this complex and multi-layered crisis; whether in terms of seeking to address the cause of the crisis stemming the migration of refugees or in terms of finding a fair solution for those who have already fled their homelands.</p> <p>Above all it will mean that the Church continues to <b>speak out</b> on behalf of those who are vulnerable and the marginalised, calling on those in power to act with compassion rather than paralysed by self-interest.</p>

<p>COULTER, Mrs Alison</p>	<p>When Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus fled to Egypt as refugees escaping the infantocide of Herod, I wonder how they were welcomed? Did a family invite them into their home, give them a meal and somewhere safe to sleep?          Jesus said, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." I think the Church should have spoken up louder and sooner on behalf of the refugees, although I was very pleased when ++Justin gave a clear, compassionate response in September.          I think we need to lead by offering practical help and support – providing food, clothing and shelter (we do have those Church buildings after all.....)          We also need to pray for peace to resolve the political instability and war in the Middle East: only God can change people's hearts. And we need to send peacemakers – men and women who can facilitate reconciliation and mediation, the only way to bring lasting peace.</p>
<p>DAVIES, Mr John</p>	<p>Perhaps surprisingly, I do not think the answer to this is a General Synod debate. Too often in the past Synod has passed motions which have resulted in no more than a couple of column inches in a few newspapers and a polite 'we take note' letter from a junior government minister! Not very effective!          We are I think, seeing the beginning of migrations from the Middle East and Africa of historic and biblical proportions – a very complex matter.          Romans 13 tells us to submit to civil authority which also answers to God (whether it accepts this or not). In a democracy we are all part of our government through the ballot box.          So in answer to the question, we should lobby our MPs as individuals, as churches we should reach out and support the vulnerable in our communities (including migrants).          And those who can offer adoption for orphans and accommodation for the most vulnerable should consider doing so.</p>
<p>FRY, Mrs Christine</p>	<p><i>"Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute."</i> (Psalm 82.3)  <i>"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God"</i>. (Leviticus 19.34)          As a church we should continue to speak out against the conflicts causing millions to flee from their homes and help where we can to bring reconciliation and an end to war. We should continue to give money for humanitarian relief, particularly supporting Christian organisations involved in this work and be willing to open our country to help those who are destitute and desperate.          The bible teaches that we have a special responsibility to pray for and help our Christian brothers and sisters who are in need and that priority should be given to orphans and the vulnerable.          As Christians we need to look hard at the facts, for example there are estimated to be 11million displaced people in Syria - a huge number but only 1.5% of the total population of Europe -we can do quite a lot to help!</p>

<p>GREENE, Ms Jay</p>	<p>This enormous, complex humanitarian crisis needs a multi-layered response from our church. Justin Welby's message is being picked up by some diocesan websites like Salisbury and Canterbury:  <a href="https://www.canterburydiocese.org/refugee-crisis-five-ways-to-respond/">https://www.canterburydiocese.org/refugee-crisis-five-ways-to-respond/</a>  Our local clergy and worship leaders need to encourage individuals in the following:  <b>Direct Action</b> This includes donating money as well as supporting grassroots organisations working with migrants in Calais. Tearfund, Christian Aid, The Refugee Council etc need money to continue their work with the many thousands of people displaced by war and climate change.  <b>Get informed</b> Let's educate ourselves in the facts and arguments in order to be able to help break down those barriers which prevent people from seeing Jesus in the "swarms" of strangers.  <b>Challenge, campaign &amp; advocate</b> Churches and church members shouldn't let racist, xenophobic, or 'fortress England' statements go unchallenged. This is the time to write to the papers, e-mail your MP, post your thoughts on Facebook or Twitter.  <b>Pray</b> And above all pray, pray every day that solutions will be found to the root problems which generate the waves of migration and misery.</p>
<p>HUNT, Mr Alan</p>	<p>This crisis is seemingly beyond human wisdom to resolve, so let's keep praying for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the safety and protection of refugees;</li> <li>• compassion, generosity and wisdom on the part of all leaders and nations, especially the wealthy and powerful, as they struggle to respond to the crisis;</li> <li>• the witness of Christians helping refugees and migrants on the move and in transit camps, and those in receiving countries, as they show and tell the love of Jesus;</li> <li>• justice, transformation and peace in the countries from which refugees are fleeing.</li> </ul> <p>As Christians, we should also take what opportunities we have to support Christian organisations engaged in relief work. And we should seek to think and speak 'Christianly' about the crisis, its causes and its effects, especially at a time when opinions are often divided.</p>
<p>KIDD, Mr Christopher</p>	<p>The Church needs to respond with prayer, love, and influence to the current refugee crisis. From Syria alone there are now more than four million refugees, and across the world more than 60 million displaced people. So whilst recognising the complexity of the situation, and realising many may not agree on the best solution, I think the situation is so serious that it demands action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pray:</b> pray for the refugees in their perilous situation, but also pray for wisdom for our political leaders as they try to find solutions to this crisis.</li> <li>• <b>Give:</b> many relief and development organisations are working in Syria and surrounding countries and their special funds provide an opportunity to give towards practical assistance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hospitality:</b> following the lead of the Archbishop of Canterbury in offering some of Lambeth Palace, as churches and individuals we need to consider are there ways we can use what we have to help those in need? For example, Home for Good are collecting names of potential foster carers for unaccompanied children.</li> <li>• <b>Campaign:</b> while there are significant complexities to this current crisis it is important that local Christians are contacting their MP asking them to speak up in support of refugees.</li> </ul>
LALLY, Mr Daniel	The Church should actively help and aid but not become drawn or torn on political matters. We should be helping and assisting where needed and aiding our fellow Brothers and Sisters in Christ.
MAIN, Mr Paul	Following the harrowing pictures we have all seen, we should seek to influence public opinion (as well as politicians) to continue to view refugees as human beings and as our neighbours, as Christian and other faith leaders are already doing. We should, however, avoid putting forward simplistic solutions. The logistics of taking in large numbers need urgent and careful planning to avoid some areas being overwhelmed; and Governments need to consider those who are already in Europe, those who will follow, and the actions of the traffickers.
MOORE, Mrs Lucy	<p>By bearing in mind that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees, that as Christians we are called to act with the compassion of Christ towards the vulnerable and that we are all strangers and sojourners on this earth.</p> <p>Different dioceses and churches have responded in different imaginative ways, encouraging financial giving and giving in kind, which are great responses. Some have offered sustainable hospitality which is a godly, reasoned and thought-through response as it will require a long-term commitment and goes way beyond any kneejerk, sentimental, crowdpleasing approach. Some have quietly put resources into less high profile campaigns which are just as important but less trumpeted in the media, such as the flooding in Myanmar, which takes courage.</p> <p>The immense suffering of all vulnerable people challenges us to pray for them in an informed way, to give sacrificially and to consider our enormous capacity for hospitality in our homes and churches. It also challenges us to pray for healing and resolution around the conflicts that drive people to such desperate measures in the first place and to use our democratic voice and our unique position as the State Church to help our government make wise choices.</p>
NASH, Mrs Abigail	<p>There is no simple solution to a complex cause of the crisis, and so our first instinct is to pray, asking God for his wisdom and provision, both in terms of immediate relief and long-term action for justice and peace. We cannot shy away from it.</p> <p>All human life is of equal value and worth, with Deuteronomy 10:17-19 reminding us of God's love for each person, with particular concern for the fatherless and the widow. We are also reminded that we are people who know God's love and mercy in our lives, and so should extend love and mercy to fellow humans experiencing suffering.</p>

	<p>Any response by the Church may seem small, but we are called to love our neighbours, and we have a great God. Calling on our politicians to respond with compassion, considering what we can give in resources, time or even a home as well as supporting aid agencies in their work, will all impact the lives of those people caught up in this tragedy.</p> <p>The Church also needs to advocate, lobby and pray for diplomatic solutions in countries, especially Syria, where people are fleeing from, to help bring long-term peace.</p>
WILSON, Mrs Cynthia	<p>The UK, as a supposedly Christian Nation, should make every effort to help benighted Christians who are fleeing persecution from every direction. Jews and Christians have lived in the M.E. for centuries and yet now there are hardly any left. Maybe we should also try to help those countries who are shouldering the brunt of the problem, eg Lebanon, Jordan.</p>