

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group May 2015

The Bible speaks into our world; challenging our thinking and calling us to be people who reflect the heart of the God we serve. How we treat those risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean in flimsy craft is a case in point.

Exodus tells the story of God's intervention in the lives of an oppressed people, foreigners in a strange land, at the mercy of their hosts. God rescues them. From oppression and alienation they find liberty and security in Him as their God.

God has transformed their status and He defines Himself as a liberating God, on the side of the oppressed and vulnerable and who in turn demands that the people He has liberated should treat the vulnerable and marginalised - defined as the orphan, the widow and stranger - just as He has treated them.

"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not ill-treat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, (WHY?) for you were foreigners in Egypt. (WHY?) I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:33-34

The treatment of the vulnerable and marginalised in their society then becomes an indicator of their obedience to God. And the prophets continually bring us back to that. For example the prophet Zechariah (7:9-10): ⁹ *'This is what the Lord Almighty said: "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. ¹⁰ Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor."*

So we begin to get a picture of a God who moves to liberate His people. And who expects, indeed demands, that those who claim allegiance to Him protect those who are far from home; those who do not have the support network of their families and who are seeking to survive in a strange land.

The tragedy of the Mediterranean is that we have not been quick to protect the vulnerable. As a society we have been more concerned with protecting ourselves, our interests and our borders than protecting the lives of those who are vulnerable in the extreme.

The God of the marginalised and oppressed calls His people to repentance and to share His heart in calling for our Governments to address both the immediate humanitarian problem and the longer term underlying issues driving people to such extreme measures.

Contributed by Richard Kerr

This month we give thanks for:

- God's love to all people who He created in his image
- Each life which is precious in God's eyes
- Gifts and opportunities we have to help oppressed and vulnerable people

We pray for:

- People who are crossing the Mediterranean Sea in the hope of a better life
 - European governments who create immigration legislation
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EMBRACE NI

Building a Welcoming Community
48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ
Tel: 028 9066 3145 E: info@embraceni.org