Christian Response to the Syrian Refugee Question

Committed Christians are on different sides of this matter. There are some issues that are clearly settled by the Bible. Christians should be pro life. Christians ought to stand for the Biblical/traditional view of marriage. Other issues are a matter of us using Spirit led wisdom to apply Biblical principles. In all things we should major on the majors and love each other.

We are at some extent a land where citizens can shape their country by their vote. We should do what we can to stand for Biblical principles. But in many issues even in our country, a leader or government will act in spite of the will of the people or against our Christian convictions. No matter which side you are on, there may soon be thousands of refugees nearby and our question will be how to live out the Christian life in light of a new reality.

My job is to give Biblical perspectives. There are several Biblical principles that would apply to this situation.

1. Romans 13: Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

   1) The purpose of government is to be God's sword to punish evil, to protect its people. You and I do not have right to pick up the sword on our own. But we do have the expectation that Government will be a terror to evil. This is the basis for the Christian teaching of "just war."

   A good government should be seen as a "terror" too evil, not as something to be taken lightly. Evil must feel that it is facing a just terror in order to be restrained.

   2) God is sovereign over the sovereigns. 13:1. The "Caesar" when Paul wrote these verses was crazy, immoral Nero. Yet Christians were to be good citizens and submit to his authority. (The only exception would be if the government commands you to break God's laws Acts 5:29.) Whether or not the government does what we feel is right, we can know that God is ultimately over the governments. Our faith is not in government but in the God who governs those who govern, the sovereign God.

2. Jeremiah 17:9-The heart is deceitful above all things,
   and desperately sick; who can understand it? Also, Romans 3:23

   We Christians above all else understand the sinfulness and depravity of human hearts. We are not to be "naive". We do not believe people are basically good, but that people are sinful. We lock our doors and take precautions. We ought to realize that many who want to come are coming with bad intentions and take precautions. It would be wise to thoroughly vet or even forbid entrance to people who have evil intents.
3. Deuteronomy 10:19. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

There is a stream of teaching that we are to love those who become pilgrims/refugees in our land. Christians have always been the first to reach out and help the needy. Jesus taught us to help those in need, including the stranger in the land. Matthew 25:35-40

Right now we tend to have a battle between those who stress point one and two and those who stress point three. All are in the Bible! We have to seek God's wisdom in living out all of these truths. I don't have an easy answer.

4. Jesus is known for his love for the undeserving, even his enemies:


Christians have often won their enemies to Christ by loving those the rest would not love.

*Auburn High Religion symposium. I represented Christianity in an assembly for two years along with someone from Islam and Hinduism. One year a woman with her head covering said this. "When I came to America from Egypt, I told all my friends this was the best place in the world. People are truly free. Then 9/11 happened and I was afraid to go to the grocery store because of the threats I heard from people in the store." My reaction: "That breaks my heart. This is a county were the majority of people call themselves Christians. That is not the way a follower of Jesus should react. I apologize to you."

5. Romans 2: For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

God has written his law on every person's heart, whether or not they have ever seen a Bible. Everyone knows from their conscience that murder and rape and beheading and killing innocent victims is wrong. It is possible for someone to deaden their conscience. But we begin with the law written on our hearts.

There have to be many Muslims who see the things being done in the name of Islam that must be questioning their faith now. There would be no better time to put the New Testament in their hands and let them take a look at Jesus and his teaching.

6. Matthew 28:19- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

The Greek word for nations is "ethnos." We might better say today, "all people groups." We have over 150 "unreached " people groups represented in NC today. "Unreached" means less than 2% are evangelical Christians. God tells us to share the Gospel with all people groups. I heard someone say, 'Because we would not go to the world the way Jesus commanded, Jesus is now sending the world to us.' Our responsibility for anyone whose path we cross is to share the Gospel with them.