

Included in this document are statements of support of the refugee and immigrant in response to the [Executive Order](#) issued by President Trump.

1. Gary Walter, President of the Evangelical Covenant Church
 2. David Parkyn, President of North Park Seminary
 3. Carl Nelson, President of Transform Minnesota
 4. Bob Oehrig, Executive Director of Arrive Ministries
 5. Tim Breene, CEO and Scott Arbeiter, President of World Relief
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GARY WALTER, PRESIDENT OF THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

January 29, 2017

<http://covenantcompanion.com/2017/01/29/walter-we-reaffirm-our-commitment-to-serve-refugees/>

CHICAGO, IL (January 29, 2017) – The Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), which has been mobilizing resources for refugee resettlement amid the Syrian crisis, is assessing the rapidly changing developments regarding President Trump’s moratorium on refugees entering the United States from certain Middle Eastern countries.

The ECC and its local congregations have worked with partner organizations to serve refugees abroad as well as to resettle in the United States, and that work will continue, said Covenant president Gary Walter. The ECC is committed to living out the values of the kingdom by extending God’s compassion and mercy while pursuing biblical justice for everyone.

World Relief, one of the ECC’s principal partners on the ground, expressed disappointment over the refugee ban through a recently [released statement](#) calling for its quick overturn. Covenant World Relief (CWR), the ECC’s global humanitarian aid ministry, is primarily engaged in ministry to refugees outside the United States, and director David Husby expects that work to become even more urgent in the days to come.

We have the opportunity to provide safety to some of the world’s most oppressed and vulnerable families in Jesus’s name. It is crucial that we get going again as quickly as we can.

This fall, the Covenant Executive Board recognized the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as a new mission region for the ECC’s Serve Globally mission priority. One impetus was the desire of ECC congregations to have better pathways to participate in refugee resettlement from the region, as well as support persecuted Christians in MENA, many of whom are seeking refugee status. Covenant churches have a long tradition of supporting refugee resettlement efforts as a biblical mandate.

“Now more than ever, we reaffirm our commitment to serve the refugee families and individuals who have been forced into often horrific situations,” said Walter. “World Relief leaders have said it well—we do indeed live in a dangerous world and it is right to take security seriously. But compassion and security do not have to be mutually exclusive.”

Walter added that the political divisions in the U.S. and around the globe should not distract the church from its focus on serving the most vulnerable. “Most refugees from the Middle East

are women and children who have suffered terribly. We have the opportunity to provide safety to some of the world's most oppressed and vulnerable families in Jesus's name. It is crucial that we get going again as quickly as we can."

DAVID PARKYN, PRESIDENT OF NORTH PARK SEMINARY

January 30, 2017

Dear Students and Colleagues,

On Saturday afternoon I attended a memorial service for Professor Frank Steinhart. Others from North Park joined me including a group of students and many from our faculty and staff. Frank was our teacher, colleague, and friend. Dr. Steinhart began teaching at North Park University in 1973. He planned to retire this summer after more than four decades of service as faculty member in sociology, registrar, and assistant dean. Professor Steinhart loved North Park, completely.

Yet there is something more. I learned at this service that Frank was born in Latvia. When he was six months old his mother (along with his aunt, grandmother, and great-aunt) fled with Frank from their home, reaching Hamburg, Germany. For several years little Frank and his mother lived in camps for Displaced Persons. They were refugees, who eventually settled in Chicago when Frank was eight years old. Is it any surprise that Professor Steinhart's doctoral work at Loyola University Chicago focused on immigrant single mothers with children?

I now know why Frank loved North Park so completely. He saw himself reflected in the lives of so many of his students; his story as a refugee immigrant to America alone with his mother was also their story.

In a twist of irony, on the same weekend as Frank's memorial service, our nation imposed an indefinite halt of immigration for citizens from Syria, a 90-day suspension of immigration for citizens from seven countries, and a 120-day suspension of refugees from anywhere in the world. While sitting in the service on Saturday afternoon, hearing these stories about Frank, it struck me so clearly: if eight year old Frank and his mother, refugees immigrating to America, landed at O'Hare Airport today, they would be turned away, sent back, not welcomed in our country. Any potential little Frank held for teaching students at North Park for 44 consecutive years would be crushed, forsaken, quashed.

As students and educators at North Park we have little immediate influence over executive orders issued in Washington, DC. What we can do, and must do, is ensure that North Park continues to be a place of welcome to all who desire to study with us.

Recent changes in our national policy and practice relative to those who come to America from other countries raise real and significant concerns for some students on our campus today. This is true for international students who study with us for one or more semesters. It is disproportionately true for students recently new to America, those who have come with their families over the past decade or two. Documented or not, they face increased uncertainty about the level of welcome they can expect from America. It is also true for Muslim students whose religious commitment has been so mistakenly and despicably caricatured as inherently

violent and terroristic.

As a Christian university we acclaim—shout loudly from the cupola of Old Main—our enduring welcome. Immigrant, refugee, undocumented, Dreamer, Muslim: our campus is yours, our classroom doors are flung wide open for you to enter. You are invited to learn with us. You are welcome at North Park.

It is for this reason that some weeks ago I signed a letter, along with presidents of 600 other colleges and universities cross the country, to affirm our support for the continuation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program, and in support of our undocumented immigrant students.

We must do more than acclaim, however. We must turn our rhetoric into reality by actually receiving and welcoming all who study at North Park and whose residency in our country may be uncertain. Though meaningful, a signed letter is far from a sufficient institutional response. More significant is the daily care we extend to each other on campus. As president I'm calling on all of us at North Park to be especially alert to the uncertainty and fear that now unsettles and disrupts the lives of some who study with us this year. We must care for each other.

Later this week I'll be meeting with students who have expressed interest in having North Park declared as a "sanctuary campus." Some colleges and universities across the country have already identified themselves in this manner, others have considered it and opted for alternative ways to support students, and many others are actively considering the potential for responding in this or other ways. I'm grateful for the initiative of our students to prompt this topic for discussion by our campus; certainly it merits careful deliberation both for its real and symbolic value. Perhaps other students (as well as faculty and staff) will want to add their voice to that of these students as our campus discussion unfolds. In doing so we may also find other ways to stand by those students who are personally unsettled today.

Why should North Park care in this way? Perhaps because if Frank Steinhart were here he would be a champion of refugees, both documented and otherwise. Or perhaps because David Nyvall, the founding president of our school, deeply believed that at North Park "hospitality should be especially insisted upon." Both are good reasons.

Yet there is a deeper reason for loving the stranger among us—the immigrant, displaced person, refugee, dreamer, or person of a faith different from my own. Simply this: Jesus calls us to love God and love our neighbor.

Who is our neighbor? Our neighbor is the person in need within our reach. This commitment to the care for others is a common thread in Scripture. "The alien who resides with you in your land . . . shall be to you as the citizen among you." "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."

This week, this semester—let's love God and welcome our neighbors as Jesus taught us to do.

May God's light, enkindled through our lives, shine brightly along Foster Avenue.

David L. Parkyn, President

CARL NELSON, PRESIDENT OF TRANSFORM MINNESOTA

February 1, 2017

<http://transformmn.org/explanation-of-our-support-for-refugees/>

Explanation of Our Support for Refugees

While we have seen a lot of support for refugees from evangelical grassroots and national leaders in recent months, others are asking important questions about the safety of refugees coming to America.

I encourage you to use the following information to talk with fellow Christians about the real fears that some people have. It's important to our Gospel witness that Christians are seen as people motivated by the Bible and credible information.

On Monday I participated in a press conference with other religious leaders, and I explained why we as evangelical churches are standing with refugees. Our official statement and a video of my verbal remarks are available [here on our website](#).

Here are some common questions Transform Minnesota has been asked about our support for the refugee program, along with our answers:

We need to find out who we are letting into the country.

- The U.S. Government knows more about a refugee than any other traveler entering the United States. Refugees undergo a thorough vetting process of interviews, background and biometric checks, and security reviews using multiple intelligence, military and law enforcement databases. The process typically takes 18-24 months.
- There is no documented evidence that refugees are unsafe to allow into the U.S. According to a [new report](#), the chance of a being killed by a refugee terrorist in the U.S. is one in 3.64 billion. The US Refugee Admissions Program has a remarkably strong record; of approximately 3 million refugees admitted since the Refugee Act of 1980, zero has ever taken the life of an American in a terrorist attack.

This is a temporary ban and gives the President time to make sure that America is safe.

- Protecting our homeland from terrorist threats is really important. But halting the program when there is no evidence that there is a security risk has serious consequences in the lives of real people who are seeking safety. We need to base our decisions on verifiable information about the refugee program, rather than letting fear dictate our refugee policy, which can have grave consequences on people's lives.
- Because the U.S. refugee program is a complex, secure process, halting it for 4 months will likely disrupt the safe and orderly acceptance of refugees for many more months.

Why should we let refugees into the U.S.?

- Among core values as evangelicals are the Sanctity of Life, Religious Freedom, and

Mercy. These values, drawn from our faith and belief in the Bible, compel us to offer compassion to those suffering the most, to vigilantly defend each other's religious freedom, and to protect the lives of refugees who are made in the image of God.

- Americans are watching how Christians respond to refugees. It is a powerful Gospel witness when we are motivated by Biblical love to overcome our fears and welcome a person or family in desperate search for hope.

What are other Christians saying about refugees?

- Many evangelical organizations and leaders are urging President Trump to lift the refugee ban, while encouraging effective security procedures. The [National Association of Evangelicals](#), the [Southern Baptists](#), [World Relief](#), [World Vision](#), and many evangelical denominations are advocating for the U.S. refugee program to continue.
- In Minnesota more than 130 congregations are actively engaged in helping refugees through [Arrive Ministries](#), our refugee resettlement affiliate, and the number is growing.

How can I help refugees?

- Smile! Many refugees and immigrants who we talk to are fearful and anxious. It means a lot when someone expresses kindness towards them by smiling, saying hello – and if you know them well enough say that you are glad they're here.
- Secondly, refugee organizations like [Arrive Ministries](#) need additional financial support at this time. While they may not be serving as many newly arrive refugees at this moment, there are hundreds of refugee families already in Minnesota who need the help of a local church team. The ban on refugee arrivals will disrupt some of the grant funding that allows Arrive Ministries to serve refugees and the churches that help refugees.

Here are some credible fact sheets regarding the process of vetting refugees:

- [World Relief Fact Sheet: Who is a refugee and what do they go through to get to the U.S.?](#)
- [White House Infographic: The Screening Process for Refugee Entry into the United States](#)
- [U.S. State Department: The Refugee Processing and Screening System Infographic](#)
- [Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services: Refugee 101](#)

Sincerely,

Carl Nelson

President, Transform Minnesota

BOB OEHRIG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ARRIVE MINISTRIES

February 1, 2017

Executive Order- Refugee Resettlement: what it means for refugees and Arrive Ministries

Hello friends,

As you are probably aware, President Trump signed an Executive Order one week ago which made substantial changes to the Refugee Resettlement Program in the U.S. We are saddened by the decisions that have been made, as many of our refugee friends now feel afraid, unwelcome, and unwanted and others who were ready to travel and be reunited with families will have to wait even longer.

As the body of Christ, we need to show our refugee friends they are loved and welcomed. As an organization we feel a special urgency now more than ever to empower the church to love the refugees who are in our community and beyond. We believe that God has prepared Arrive Ministries for such a time as this.

As you read what is below, please know that in both the short and long-term Arrive Ministries is looking at immediate ways to continue to match refugee families to RLM church teams, New Neighbors and Somali Adult Literacy Training (SALT) volunteers as we call on even more churches and volunteers to join with us to reach out in practical ways. This means that we will be helping newly arrived refugee families, as well as other families who arrived earlier, with the unique support and friendship that church volunteers have always provided, as they demonstrate the love of God to displaced peoples..

What the Executive Order says:

- **No new refugees can travel into the US for 120 days** while the US government evaluates its security and vetting processes.
- The total number of refugees this federal budget year to be resettled to the US will be a **maximum of 50,000** a significant drop from the planned 110,000.
- The resettlement of **Syrian refugees** in the U.S. stops indefinitely.
- **All travel is banned, for 90 days, by any individual** from the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. After 90 days, the travel ban may be lifted for some people or other countries could be added to the list.
- Sometime in the next 120 days, the US government **could decide to stop resettling refugees in the US from additional countries.**

How we can respond:

- **Pray** for our country's leaders, refugees around the world, and the church.
- **Love** your friends, neighbors, and coworkers who who as refugees. They are likely feeling afraid right now and unsure of their future. They may even have relatives

overseas that have been affected by this policy change. Visit them and ask them how they are doing. Reassure them that you love and care about them. You can also go to visit a Somali mall or Iraqi restaurant or Karen supermarket. As you buy something from the shop, talk with the people there and listen to them. Let them know that you are happy that they are fellow Americans.

- **Advocate** for refugees. Many are writing their representatives asking that the Executive Order be reversed.
- **Donate** to Arrive Ministries, We have lost grants connected to the actual number of refugees we resettle. Since we will have no arrivals for 4 months, we need your help to bridge the gap. We do not want to lose capacity and staff expertise before refugees start to arrive again.

While we mourn with refugees around the world, we also trust that God is still reigning in heaven. The darker our surroundings are, the brighter the church can shine. Let's shine, church, as we love and welcome refugees in the name of Jesus!

Thank you for your support and prayers.

Bob Oehrig

Executive Director

TIM BREENE, CEO OF WORLD RELIEF AND SCOTT ARBEITER, PRESIDENT OF WORLD RELIEF AND OVER 5,970 SUPPORTERS (INCLUDING PASTOR ANNE)

<https://welcomerefugees-worldrelief.nationbuilder.com/>

Evangelical leaders call on President Trump and Vice President Pence in support of refugees

Dear President Trump and Vice President Pence,

As Christian pastors and leaders, we are deeply concerned by the recently announced moratorium on refugee resettlement. Our care for the oppressed and suffering is rooted in the call of Jesus to "love our neighbor as we love ourselves." In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus makes it clear that our "neighbor" includes the stranger and anyone fleeing persecution and violence, regardless of their faith or country.

As Christians, we have a historic call expressed over two thousand years, to serve the suffering. We cannot abandon this call now. We live in a dangerous world and affirm the crucial role of government in protecting us from harm and in setting the terms on refugee admissions. However, compassion and security can coexist, as they have for decades. For the persecuted and suffering, every day matters; every delay is a crushing blow to hope.

Since the inception of the refugee resettlement program, thousands of local churches throughout the country have played a role in welcoming refugees of all religious backgrounds. Ministries to newly arrived refugees are ready, and desire to receive many thousands more

people than would be allowed under the new executive order.

As leaders, we welcome the concern expressed for religious minorities, including persecuted Christians. Followers of Christ face horrific persecution and even genocide in certain parts of the world. While we are eager to welcome persecuted Christians, we also welcome vulnerable Muslims and people of other faiths or no faith at all. This executive order dramatically reduces the overall number of refugees allowed this year, robbing families of hope and a future. And it could well cost them their lives.

As Christians, we are committed to praying for our elected officials. Our prayer is that God would grant President Trump and all our leaders divine wisdom as they direct the course of our nation. We also pray for the vulnerable individuals whom their decisions directly impact.

Sincerely,

Tim Breene, CEO, and Scott Arbeiter, President, and 5,971 Supporters

World Relief