

MINISTERING TO INTERNATIONALS

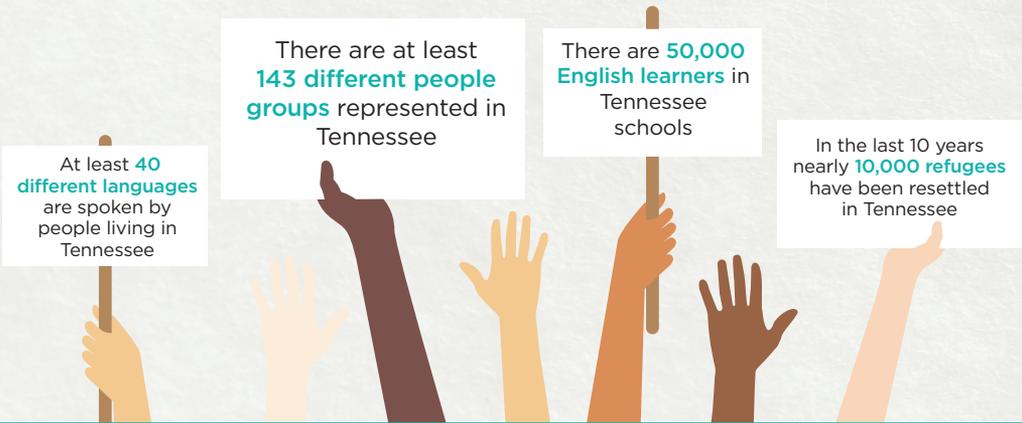
WE SERVE *Churches*
AS CHURCHES SERVE *Others*

MINISTERING TO INTERNATIONALS

"From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." - Acts 17:26-27

God is bringing the nations to Tennessee. We have a unique opportunity to share the gospel with people who, otherwise, may have never heard. This resource has been developed to help you better understand your international neighbors, what the Bible says about loving the stranger and sojourner, and how your church can reach the nations in Tennessee.

DID YOU KNOW?



At least **40 different languages** are spoken by people living in Tennessee

There are at least **143 different people groups** represented in Tennessee

There are **50,000 English learners** in Tennessee schools

In the last 10 years nearly **10,000 refugees** have been resettled in Tennessee

UNDERSTANDING DISPLACED PEOPLE

Forcibly Displaced	Vulnerably Displaced
Internally displaced Asylum seekers Refugees	Human Trafficking Homeless Orphans
Purposefully Displaced	Naturally Displaced
International students Immigrants Migrant worker	Natural disaster Famine Disease

According to the United Nations, a **refugee** is someone who has fled his or her home country and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The government legally assigns the status of refugee after an extensive referral, application, and interview process. (UNHCR)

Asylum seekers are also fleeing persecution in their home country, but they apply for asylum either at the border or from within the U.S. Seeking asylum is not something that can be done from an embassy or from their home — individuals may file for asylum only if they are physically in the United States or at a port of entry. (UNHCR)

A **migrant** is a person who leaves his/her country of origin to seek residence in another country. (USDHS)

An **international student** comes to the United States to pursue a full course of study in an approved program in either an academic or a vocational or other recognized nonacademic institution. (USDHS)

Immigrants, also known as permanent resident aliens, have been admitted to the United States as lawful permanent residents. (USDHS)

A THEOLOGY OF THE STRANGER

While the government may decide the specific classification of internationals living in Tennessee, Acts 17:26-27 tells us that it is God who determines the times and places where people live. God's desire is that people may find Him, and he has seen fit to bring many people to Tennessee so that we can share the hope of Jesus with them.

It is clear throughout scripture that the responsibility of God's people is to welcome, care for, and love the strangers in our midst. Our own salvation experience of being a stranger to God who was brought near, by Jesus, should directly inform our response to the strangers, the internationals, the migrants, and the refugees living in Tennessee.

What did God say to Israel in the Old Testament?

- Exodus 23:9 "Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt."
- Leviticus 19:33-34 "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."
- Deuteronomy 10:18,19 "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."



Other Old Testament passages that speak to God's provision and concern for the stranger and sojourner

- Exodus 22:21
- Leviticus 23
- Numbers 15
- Deuteronomy 12, 24, 26

In the New Testament Jesus welcomes all who come to him in faith. He reminds his followers in Matthew 25 that everyone will be held accountable for how they loved others.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."
- Matthew 25:35-36

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
- Matthew 25:40



HOW CAN MY CHURCH MINISTER TO INTERNATIONALS IN OUR COMMUNITY?

MEETING NEEDS:

Refugees often arrive to our country with little to nothing. Partner with a local resettlement agency to provide clothing, furniture, food, water, or housing.

Many international neighbors do not speak English fluently. Consider offering English Language Learning at your church or a local ethnic restaurant. The TBMB Compassion Ministry team can connect you with resources to begin or train volunteers in teaching English.

Often children of non-English speaking parents, struggle to complete homework. Perhaps your church can provide homework help to the children of internationals in your area.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

Invite an international neighbor to your home for dinner or fellowship.

Frequent local ethnic restaurants or markets and build friendships with the employees.

Connect with a nearby university or one of our Baptist Collegiate Ministries about ways you can encourage an international student.

Mentor a refugee family and walk alongside them as they adjust to American culture.

Start a sports ministry, or other activity, for international children in your area.



SHARING THE GOSPEL

Pray for internationals living in your community. Pray for opportunities to build relationships with them and to share the gospel. Practice and be ready to share how Jesus has changed your life.

3 questions to help you tell “your story.”

- 1 What was your life like before you followed Jesus?
- 2 How do you decide to follow Jesus?
- 3 How has Jesus changed your life?

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Pray regularly for a church planter working with internationals.

Partner with one of TBMB ethnic church plants as they work to reach the nations.

Many of the internationals living in Tennessee are followers of Jesus and some attend our churches. Your church might consider hosting a Bible Study or worship time in another language.

Host a community outreach event at your church, specifically for internationals in your area.

For more information on ministering to internationals in your community contact the Compassion Ministry Team

Beth Moore, Compassion Ministry Specialist
at bmoore@tnbaptist.org or

Anna Yadkowski, Compassion Ministry Assistant
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For more information on ethnic work in your area contact

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Through gifts to the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions, the Compassion Ministry Team serves churches as churches serve others through networking, resourcing and equipping.



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