

BIRDS ON A WIRE

Their country of birth was in such chaos that the main roads were freeways to death and every side street was an avenue of destruction. Only one narrow and perilous path provided an escape and so they embarked on this journey toward life. Refugees, foreigners, temporary dwellers in a land steeped in strangeness. Birds perched for a moment on a wire, searching the horizon for a safe spot to build a nest. This is reality for millions among us, those, just around the corner of the globe, just across the border. Jesus calls them our neighbors.

We are grateful to be your arms of caring and your message of hope to these battered brothers and sisters. Sons and daughters estranged from a father who waits expectantly and watches intently to see who might be coming down the road toward home.

Admittedly we are all grateful that their plight is not ours. Yet, their vagrant condition ought to be a picture of our own spiritual standing and practice in whatever culture we reside. Peter, remembering the words that Jesus spoke to him: "you do not belong to this world, but I have chosen you out of the world", reminds us that we also are aliens and strangers in our own world. We are the foreign nomads in our familiar neighborhoods — strangers just passing through. Nesting for a season, precariously perched, watching the horizon, destined to fly home.

Perhaps the analogy ends here. The goal of most refugees is to find a place where they can feel at home. To find a place to blend in and have a normal life like those around them. To perhaps one day become citizens, to belong, to feel at home. Whereas, scripture reminds us pointedly and often that entangling ourselves in the ways of the world mandates untangling ourselves from our Father's embrace. "Friendship with the world is hostility toward God." In order to cozy up to the world we must distance ourselves from God. Our goal should never be to feel at home in a place where the things that God calls worthless are valued as priceless.

As those called out, let us come out, move out, and let us embrace our refugee status. Our refuge is not a where but, a whom. We are not in pursuit of a flag but, a cross. We are wanderers. Not hopeless wanderers but, wanderers whose hope is secure. Not homeless wanderers but, wanderers whose homes are being prepared. So pack lightly, too much stuff is just going to weigh you down on this journey down the refugee highway.

Perch lightly, always ready to fly.