



Monthly Reflection, October 2015

Showing hospitality to strangers

By Esther Gregory

Two years ago, in March 2013, [the monthly reflection](#) was focussed on migrants and asylum seeking families who were living in destitution– likening the situation to that which led to the start of The Children’s Society in 1881.

The writer then links this to Hebrews 13.1-2, which reminds us that in showing hospitality to strangers, “some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it”.

Two years later and I could write the same thing.

I am amazed by the divide of opinion in the UK at the moment – some based on feelings of compassion or fear, some on fact, some on propaganda.

However, the problem is still the same for those seeking refuge: They are desperate.

We have seen the images in the news, heard the stories.

In the month where many celebrate Halloween, and revel in being scared, I find it somewhat ironic that often we shy away from facing real fears, or acknowledging others’. We hide behind costumes and party, choosing to turn away from the images of real people with no mask to hide behind.

Putting aside any political stance, or personal feelings about immigration laws, I can’t help but give attention to the children caught in the messiness across our world.

The Children’s Society has been working with migrants and refugee young people for years. This is not a new situation! Take a look [at their website](#) for some of the excellent projects which they are running around the country.

However, over the years, another aspect of this work has become increasingly urgent to discuss:

In August, a new report was released called ‘[Not a Temporary Fix](#)’. It focusses on children separated from parents/carers and therefore arriving to this country alone and in need of support. The report highlights the need for a long-term plan of care which includes what happens at 18, when they leave those care systems.

As it has always done, The Children’s Society is continuing to ensure that real stories, important questions and practical ‘durable solutions’ are being focussed on, in order that the maximum number of children and young people receive support.

But what can we do?

We are surrounded by conflicting news coverage, emotive media input and awareness that, although on our doorstep, solving these problems lies beyond our capacity as individuals.

If you haven't already seen it, the #refugeeswelcome campaign aims to raise the profile of this crucial issue and of the people directly affected by decisions and actions. The Children's Society are in full support of this campaign and encourage you to take a look at the Save the Children website for how you can get involved.

There are many other blogs, articles and ideas of how we can practically do more. I would like to add one comment to the mix:

James 2.14-26 challenges us that we should be practically living out our faith; that to bless someone but not feed or clothe them is a contradiction. I don't know what this practical 'living out' looks like for you, with your time, finances and energy, but I do know this:

To worry about someone without praying for them is also not helping them!

We are repeatedly reminded to give our concerns to God (Phil 4.6) and not to worry (Matt 6.25-27).

Perhaps you will join me in praying for our neighbours over the next days, weeks and months:

childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/your-church/pray-worship-reflect/pray/topical-prayers#asylum