

Why People Make the Hard Choice to Migrate - Part 2

La versión en español está disponible [aquí](#).

Many people in the U.S. might wonder why, if it is so difficult, uncertain and dangerous to migrate, so many do so.

Motives for migration are often classified as either “push” or “pull.” Economics, which I discussed in [part one](#), “pulls” a migrant to a new nation.

Another significant factor is experiencing violence due to indifferent and corrupt governments that do not care about them, or ineffective governments that are not capable of dealing with their own issues.

Thus, many abuses have arisen that threaten people’s lives and “push” them to migrate.

I just heard the story of a young 16-year-old Honduran woman on the news. Gangs from her original town threatened to kill her if she did not make money for them by way of prostitution or selling drugs.

Faced with these threats, she left everything and decided to migrate north to the United States. This is just one example, among many.

Often, death is around the corner for many of these people. What is the alternative? Die there or die on the way to the search for a better life.

The second option, though tainted with the possibility of suffering and passing away, at least provides some sense of hope.

It is well known, too, among immigrants and refugees, that many would prefer to stay in their countries of origin if they could find ways to support their families or if they could experience safe and peaceful living conditions (spiritual, material, physical and emotional).

What can we do as churches to help them flourish where they are?

While it is true that the common U.S. citizen, like you and me, cannot do much to

change worldwide economic dynamics or challenge governments that sometimes are corrupt and that do not protect their citizens from gangs and violence, I believe that individuals and churches can do something by sharing our resources.

By doing so, we can improve the personal economy of the people, the quality of life of families and, hopefully, of complete towns.

It is also true that often as individuals and churches, we feel we do not have enough resources for us - and much less to share.

However, the truth is that people in the U.S. have been blessed with many resources.

So many that often we hear a call in this country to live in more simple and modest ways in order to avoid overspending these resources.

For Christians, the biblical message is clear: When a person was blessed with something, it was to bless someone else.

How can we bless people beyond the mobilizations to pray and protest? One option is to share ourselves and our resources in community development projects that involve:

1. Economic issues.

While it is good to give money or goods to people, it is better to help them find ways to provide for themselves.

Thus, initiatives that support and promote local economies - such as cooperatives, micro lending and fair trade markets - are good ways to help responsible individuals, families and local groups to find means to support themselves continuously.

2. Educational issues.

Due to issues of violence and poverty, people do not have regular access to basic education. This lack of education most of the time leads to a life of poverty.

Is there a way for churches to provide some basic education to needy communities? What about supporting efforts to teach a trade such as sewing, plumbing or furniture building? This knowledge will provide hope to individuals

and families, as well as a door to escape extreme poverty.

3. Health and mental care issues.

Supporting the provision of basic health care will help communities to develop a better quality of life.

In addition, a community that fosters the practice of healthy activities (crafts, sports or artistic expressions) among all people but especially young people, may be subject to less manifestations of violence.

Thinking about the millions of needy people in the world can become very overwhelming for any of us.

What if we think and invest ourselves only in a small community? Perhaps, a church here in the United States can find a sister church in a needy country and partner with them in these kinds of efforts.

When Jesus inaugurated the reign of God on this earth, he dealt not only with the spiritual lives of people, but with the complete lives of people.

Thus, as followers of Jesus, who seek to pattern our lives after him, we need to preach at home and abroad not only the spiritual side of the good news, but also the practical, holistic side that involves all of the areas of life.

If we do this, many vulnerable people in the world will truly understand and experience God's immense love, right there, in their own land and with their own families and friends.

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part series. Part one is available [here](#).