



Borders, Immigration and Multiculturalism

Definitions

Culture

- The stories we tell that express meaning about the world

Immigrant

- Someone who moves to another country with the intention of living there.

Refugee

- A person forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another.

Expatriate

- Someone who lives outside their country of citizenship.

Asylum seeker

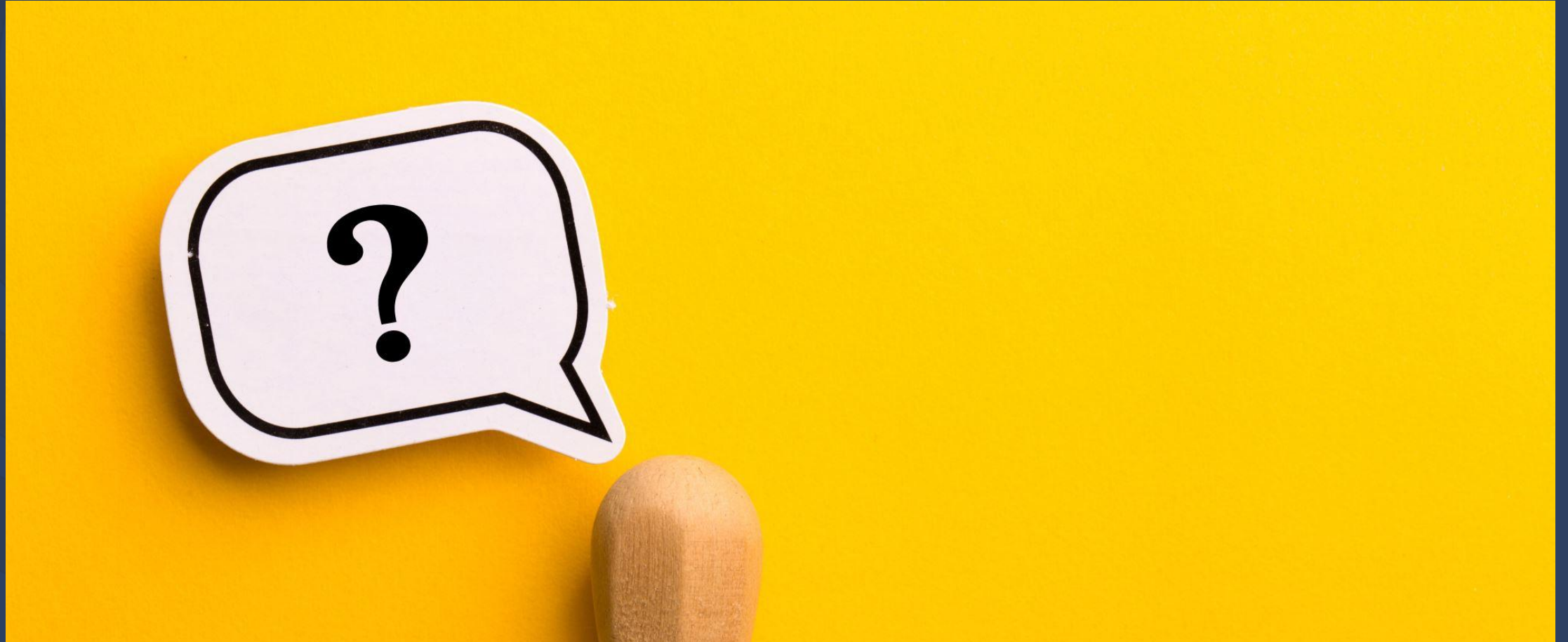
- Someone who has applied for refugee status but has not yet received it

Current levels of Immigration

- ONS figures tell us that in 2023, 1.2 million people migrated to the UK and 479,000 emigrated.
- Net migration of 782,000.
- June 2023 – 11.4 million non-UK-born residents of England and Wales.
- As of 10 February 2025, 1,554 people had crossed the English Channel on small boats since the New Year.

Group response: When you hear the word 'Immigration' what do you think of? How do you react?

What do you think multiculturalism means?



God's original plan for humanity

- Genesis 1:26-28 – command to **fill the earth**
- Divine vision: diverse peoples who fill the earth with a rich variety of cultures is central to God's plan.
- As humans, we fulfill our calling to “fill the earth” in the myriad of ways in which we steward God's creation—that is, in imaging God through our creative engagement with his creation.

Multiculturalism?

“The peoples of the earth are neither to collapse their differences into unitarian sameness (as at Babel) nor to distort their diversity into a hierarchy of oppression and violence, as in the empires against the background of which so much of the story of Scripture unfolds.” Steven M Bryan

Not all cultural
values are equal

In the West,
Christianity has
shaped values like
equality and dignity.

We should be clear:
some values are
better than others.

But we should also
be humble: our
nation does not get
it all right.

“From a Christian perspective, nationalists are not wrong in seeking to cultivate a common culture or in seeing a nation’s unity as more than a matter of shared space. But multiculturalists are not wrong in seeing cultural multiplicity as a positive good.”

- Steven M Byran

Brief history of Immigration to the UK

1948: Commonwealth immigration

Focus on **limitation** and **integration**

1997 – more open borders

2010 – moves to cut net migration

2022 – small boats crisis and Rwanda plan

Headline Statistics - 2025

In 2023, Net migration of 782,000.

11.4 Non-UK born residents of England and Wales

Small boat crossings at a record high.

Asylum system in crisis – costing billions and cumbersome and slow.



Scenario Question – what would you do?

Borders in the Bible



Borders in the Bible

Genesis 15:18

Exodus 16:35

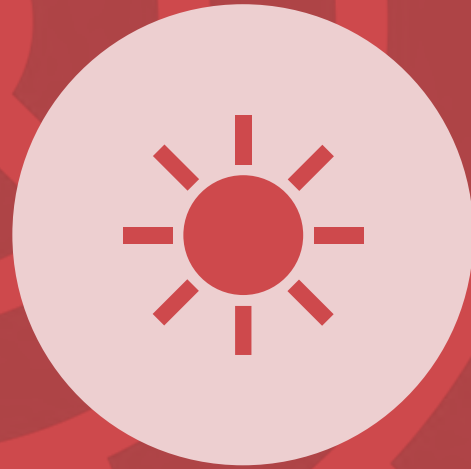
Deuteronomy
27:17

Deuteronomy
32:8-9

1 Kings 4:21

Acts 17:26

Government has a duty to protect life



GENESIS 9:6



ROMANS 13:1-7

Two points of view

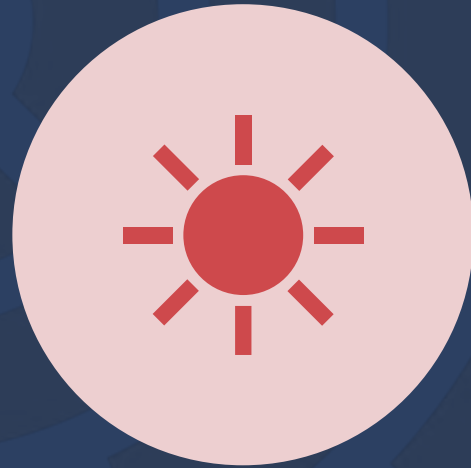
It is legitimate to do civil disobedience and shelter illegal immigrants if they come into our church.

Christians should not shelter illegal immigrants but encourage them to comply with the laws of the land.



Immigration in the Bible

Can anyone spot the apparent contradiction in these texts?



LEVITICUS 25:35-37



DEUTERONOMY 15:3

Ger

Hebrew word *ger*

Obtains legal right to live in Israel.

Could serve in Israel's army (2 Samuel 1:13)

Lives under God's law (Deuteronomy 31:12-13)

Nekhar

Hebrew word *nekar*

Does not seek legal permission to live in Israel

Could be charged interest
– Deuteronomy 15:13

Could be viewed with suspicion – Psalm 144:7-11

James Hoffemeir – Immigration in the Bible

- 'Ger' is equivalent to legal immigrant today
- 'Nekhar' is equivalent to illegal immigrant today
- God's law had lots to say about loving the foreigner – Deuteronomy 10:19 for example
- Even Nekhar must be treated with respect



**What other biblical
principles should shape
our Immigration Policy?**

The Image of God



Guide

Truth and grace

Polite

God's new humanity

- Colossians 3:11; Ephesians 3:10 and Revelation 7:7-11
- The church shows you what God can do! He is fulfilling the original purpose of creation through Christ and the church.
- Immigration opens up huge gospel opportunities.

Final thoughts

- Image of God must be our starting point!
- Government's have a duty to protect borders.
- How we treat illegal immigrants matters as much as our specific policy.
- Beware allowing the media to influence your thinking too much!
- God is creating a new humanity made up of people from every tribe and tongue and nation. The multicultural dream will ONLY be fully realised through the gospel.