

# In Others' Words

*Editor's Note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase. Finally, please note that this January–March 2016 issue is partly composed of material created later in 2016. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience caused by such anachronisms.*

## Refugee Catastrophes

The death rate of refugees and immigrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean has soared dramatically in 2016. During the week of June 10 alone, an estimated 700 to 1000 people have perished at sea. The charts and graphs in the UNHCR's *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response—Mediterranean* report tell 2016's sobering story. In addition, the North Africa–Italy route (with a majority coming from Africa) is chillingly more dangerous, making the odds of dying a staggering 1 in 23 compared to the still unacceptable 1 in 81 for the Mediterranean as a whole. For graphs showing the country of origin, click on the tab “Transit routes” at this link: <http://migration.iom.int/europe/>. Lastly, we recommend “Looking for a Home,” a special report on refugees and migrants in the May 28th, 2016 issue of *The Economist*.

## Historical Perspectives on Mass Migrations

For a distinctly secular but historical vantage point on today's mass migrations, see Robert Kaplan's “How Islam Created Europe” in the May 28, 2016 issue of *The Atlantic*. Kaplan's provocative analysis has already sparked controversy.

The Continent has absorbed other groups before, of course . . . But those peoples adopted Christianity and later formed polities . . . that were able to fit, however bloodily, inside the evolving European state system . . . Today, hundreds of thousands of Muslims who have no desire to be Christian are filtering into economically stagnant European states, threatening to undermine the fragile social peace.

Ironically, in a June 5, 2016 post, author Rod Dreher of *The American Conservative* quotes extensively from both *The Guardian* and *The Daily Beast* to the effect that thousands of Muslim refugees in Europe are actually converting to Christianity. He ends by saying,

Curiouser and curiouser. Who knows what God has planned for Europe. Wouldn't it be astonishing if the revival of Christianity there came through converted Muslim refugees, who remembered the kindness Christians showed them?

## Refugee Reflections

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary efforts. Don't miss Tim Stafford's “Cities of Refuge” in the May/June 2016 issue of *Books & Culture*, which was entirely devoted to immigration and refugees. For nearly three weeks, Stafford and his photographer traversed the hardest hit areas of Europe (Germany, Austria, Croatia, Serbia, and Greece) interviewing refugees directly. These firsthand accounts are beautifully written, poignant, and hard to put down. The issue includes two book reviews of note about refugees: David Neff's account of Nicholas Terpstra's *Religious Refugees in the Early Modern World* and D. L. Mayfield's “Do We Really Welcome Refugees?” Neff highlights some of Terpstra's research that relates to mass migrations in history:

Terpstra reports that the cities that received religious refugees and found paths to peaceful co-existence (though not toleration in the modern sense) prospered . . . Cities that were devoted to purity . . . closed their doors to refugees who were not like them, and thus became monocultural and “were left with smaller populations and economies.” The United States, France, Germany, and England are all struggling with questions of cultural and (to a lesser extent) religious identity as floods of migrants from the world's hot spots knock on their doors.

Mayfield reviews the book *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine* by anthropologist Catherine Besteman who did some of her early field work in Somalia. More evaluations like this one by experienced professionals are definitely needed.

Finally, Tae Sung's “The Study of World Religions in a Time of Crisis” (also in this same issue) is a perceptive interview with Jack Miles, editor of *The Norton Anthology of World Religions* (2015). In an aside, Miles notes that rising sea levels will send millions of Muslim climate-change refugees streaming into Hindu India. How will a BJP-run Indian government (influenced by Hindu fundamentalism) respond? Will there be a repeat of massive Muslim–Hindu religious violence like what happened in the Partition in 1947?

## Muslims Turning to Christ—An Update

The UK's leading Christian magazine, *Premier Christianity*, has published an article by David Garrison in its June 2016 issue entitled “Muslims Turning to Christ: A Global Phenomenon.” This short article is studded with personal vignettes from all around the world, culled from his first-rate interviews of believers from a Muslim background. Garrison, a trained historian (University of Chicago), was asked to research these movements five years ago. After three years of extensive travels (250,000 miles) and research, he published *A Wind in the House of Islam*—still very much a groundbreaking book two years out. **IJFM**