



Minneapolis Area Synod

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

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Statement by Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Yesterday, we heard the story of a mother resettled here by Lutheran Social Service – a woman who gave birth in a Uganda refugee camp *after* her refugee case was approved. Because the newborn wasn't part of the *approved* case, the mother had to leave her newborn with a friend – being assured that she could file for her child's immigration once she got to Minnesota. It's been four years since the request was made. Finally, it was approved. Her daughter was to leave today for the U.S. – something now in jeopardy because of the executive order.

The world faces the largest refugee crisis since World War II. There are some 60 million displaced persons in our world. The Lutheran church has a long history of both helping refugees **and** working for fair and generous immigration policies.

We believe the calling of government is to serve the common good. Our country has a calling to welcome our fair share of refugees – persons who have a well-founded fear of being persecuted – and to welcome them to the U.S. without discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin. Friday's executive order explicitly discriminated – closing the doors to any refugee from seven nations.

No, our government has not specifically banned refugees on the basis of religion, but we seem to be treading awfully close. As we seek to be faithful today, it is wise to remember the words of another Lutheran in a country where there was official discrimination on the basis of religion – the religion of Judaism. In critiquing the German government, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "We are not simply to bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself."

May God grant us the wisdom to be moral leaders and courageous citizens in our day.

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