

Leader's Guide for Syria: *The Burden of Memory and The Hope of The Gospel*

Week Four

Part III offers a framework for a response to the conflict, based on Christian values.

Begin or end with the singing of the hymn at the end of Part III (found in the hymnal *Glory to God*, page 372). Optional: Hymns 346: For the Healing of the Nations, or Hymn 340: This Is My Song.

Questions for discussion

1. Do you think the church should be involved in U.S. foreign policy? Why or why not? In what ways should the church affect foreign policy?
2. Many Syrian church leaders have held to a position of non-violence and refused to arm themselves, even for defense. What does it mean to “Love your enemies” in the context of Syria and the Middle East?
3. Amnesty International says there are 3,636,617 Syrian refugees in Turkey, 948,849 in Lebanon, 252,526 in Iraq, 671,551 in Jordan, and 132,871 in Egypt. (Most updated official data as of January 24, 2019.) Added to these numbers are the unofficial refugees who were not counted. Discuss how this differs from the refugee numbers welcomed in the U.S. since this conflict began. What has been the response of the U.S. to refugees, especially those from majority Muslim countries? What is your local community doing for refugees now?
4. How do you understand the Burden of Memory, and why is it important to take it on? What is the burden of memory: for the U.S.? For Syria? For proxy groups? What can we expect will follow our working through this burden? How?

5. What are some concrete ways our church could contribute to the reality of "Gospel Hope"? How can a local community such as yours contribute hope for refugees? How can you personally contribute to Gospel hope?
6. Now that the war in Syria appears to be nearly over, the prospect of rebuilding the nation is taking center stage. It will be an immense challenge: involving the physical infrastructure, the economy, political restructuring, and reconciliation at both community and individual levels. What obstacles, foreign and domestic, do you think Syrians face in rebuilding their country? What role can the American church play in helping the Syrian people exercise their right to self-determination? Can the U.S. government be of help without controlling what happens?