A Bridge to Settlement:
An African Ethnic Church in Central Virginia

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explain the connection between an African ethnic church and the settlement of immigrants in Central Virginia by understanding how the African Ethnic Church[1] contributes not only to the religious wellbeing of its congregation, but also to the material adjustment of its attendees and their psychological adjustment to the United States given the cultural familiarities provided within the church. Rather than focusing only on the physical results of the African Ethnic Church's assistance to immigrants and refugees, I seek to understand how the African Ethnic Church understands itself to be a Christian institution that helps Africans as they settle in multiple ways in the United States. As globalization and immigration increases in the 21st century, it is crucial to see how the African Ethnic Church assists in psychological adjustment, by providing comforting spaces, and helping African immigrants make sense of life in America.

Preface

Immigration has been a hot topic in American politics for decades, and debates surrounding the proper ways to integrate immigrants into the United States show no signs of slowing down in the 21st century. In 2015, the Pew Research Center estimated that over 2 million African immigrants were living in the United States, and the estimated growth of that population is expected to increase exponentially.[2] This research project does not make claims to address questions about the long-term assimilation of those millions of immigrants into

[1] In this paper, the phrase "African Ethnic Church" is used in place of the name of the church that I researched.

[2] Anderson, Monica. "African Immigrant Population in U.S. Steadily Climbs." Pew Research Center. February 14, 2017.

America, but instead presents a snapshot of one African ethnic church in Central Virginia which endeavors to assist with the settlement of African immigrants as they arrive in America. In conducting this research, I first discovered that the International Rescue Committee (IRC) had an office in Charlottesville, Virginia, and wondered if religion and religious institutions contributed to immigrant settlement along with the work done by the IRC. I then discovered that the African Ethnic Church on which this research has been conducted maintains a close partnership with the IRC and works to settle new immigrants to the Central Virginia area.

In light of the ongoing and increased settlement of African immigrants in the Greater Charlottesville area, my research focuses on the relationship a single African Ethnic Church maintains between Christianity, immigration, assistance, and settlement. First and foremost, I asked about the extent to which religion plays a prominent role in the settlement of new African immigrants in the Charlottesville area. From that point, I sought to determine whether this African Ethnic Church impacts different facets of immigrant life, including but not limited to finances, social aptitude in the United States, and religious life. The relationship between religion and immigration regards the discussion of whether religious institutions are solely focused on the spiritual growth of their members. I sought to discover if this African Ethnic Church considers the settlement of immigrants through their financial, material, and social success as its role just as much as it desires to contribute to their spiritual success.

In doing a study about immigration, it is crucial to examine the immigrants' identities and situations themselves. Firstly, the individuals and families leaving Africa for the United States needed to be identified. For example, were they voluntary or involuntary immigrants? What is the state of their education? However, beyond an examination of the immigrants'

identities themselves, the crux of this research centers on their relationship to the African Ethnic Church. In the church's relationship to the immigrants, does tribal community, ethnicity, and/or nationality impact the settlement in America and the assistance provided? In what ways does the church customize their assistance to each immigrant and their needs? Looking beyond the borders of the United States, is if the church is motivated to help peoples in Africa? If so, the source of their motivation in respect to assistance is notable for this research as well.

The primary research for this paper was conducted according to an ethnographic style. It required research through traditional participation observation methods, so I attended church services frequently. Early on, I attended these services bimonthly, ramping up to weekly attendance in the final months of the project. These church services ran from an hour and a half to two hours and were always followed up with a fellowship time where church attendees gathered and socialized. In this type of research, church services are a good starting point for participation observation as they are the central meeting location and time for congregants. This African Ethnic Church consistently held church services every week, making participant observation a regular occurrence.

As I became more aware of church dynamics and familiar with the church leadership, I conducted interviews with active participants of the church. During the few months I attended the church, church attendance had fallen drastically. From having weekly services with a few dozen people, this African Ethnic Church shrank to less than ten congregants in the spring. As a result, I was only able to conduct a handful of interviews with consenting church attendees. This appears as a limitation to the research upon first glance. But this research is primarily about the role of the church in settlement as a whole, rather than individual stories of

immigrants. Furthermore, the decrease in participation in the African Ethnic Church could be interpreted as indicative of the relationship the church maintains with the immigrants to whom it provides assistance. As a result, I have chosen to incorporate this unexpected development into my analysis of the church as a whole. Methodologically, despite this limitation in numbers, the available interviewees presented a comprehensive picture of the church and its assistance with immigrant settlement. During the interview process, I asked both church leaders and congregants about their background in relation to their country of origin, migration process to the United States, life in Charlottesville, and relationship to Christianity and to the African Ethnic Church. With these as a starting point, I expanded the discussion to include questions regarding their perspectives of American culture, American Christianity, immigration and refugee circumstances, and racial relations both in their home countries and in Charlottesville. This aspect of the research was highly dependent on building relationships and trust quickly with participants. Fortunately, each interviewee I encountered encouraged me to ask more pressing questions of them, and were profoundly open with their stories and perspectives, often providing information beyond what I initially asked. These interviews provided significant first-person narratives about the church's role in settling African immigrants in the Central Virginia Area.

On top of traditional participant observation, in the process of building relationships with the African Ethnic Church attendees, I contributed to the church as an observer participant. Like Shelly Habecker, I understood myself both as an insider and an outsider to

Lighthouse Baptist Temple.[3] While I am neither African nor have personal experience living in Africa, I have close personal connections to individuals who have lived in Kenya, Congo, and South Africa. This contact enables me to grasp the contexts through which congregants have lived and continue to live. In relation to settlement, I am myself an immigrant to the United States from an Asian country, and can therefore interpret conversations about the immigration process to the United States based on personal experience. Furthermore, I have extensive personal experience with church participation as a result of being raised in a devout Evangelical home. As a result, when attending the church and speaking to its attendees and members, I interacted with them not only as a researcher, but as a Christian and immigrant myself. These intersectional aspects of my identity as a person contributed to my chosen methodology and engagement with the African Ethnic Church as a researcher.

[3] Habecker, Shelly. 2017. "Becoming African Americans: African Immigrant Youth in the United States and Hybrid Assimilation." *Journal Of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 1: 59.

Introduction

Outside of the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, down the back roads and in the countryside, there is a small Baptist church with a vibrant red door. Upon first glance, the building built with white brick looks much like any other church in rural America. It has a rough gravel parking space out front, and a single sign that declares the name of the church to anyone driving by. Walking through the first set of double doors inside the church building, church attendees find themselves greeted by the jovial smile of the pastor from the pulpit. Walking through another set of doors, they arrive in the sanctuary. This simple sanctuary has wood walls and red pews, six on each side of the single aisle. This small church numbers among the over three hundred thousand churches in today's America. However, on any given Sunday, the lively and upbeat sounds of African music can be heard emerging from the little church. Accompanied by an electronic keyboard, attendees of this church sing, dance, and clap along to Swahili worship music.

In Central Virginia, the vibrant sounds of African worship music are unexpected. But this church does not exclusively sing Swahili songs. Their worship includes music drawn from multiple sources, including hymnals, printed handouts, and the memory of congregants. A common favorite is "How Great Thou Art" sung in both English and Swahili; almost every week, the pastor directs the pianist to play "Bwana Mungu Nashangaa Kabisa," as it is known to the congregants. Each time it is sung, the congregation sings a couple of verses in English, and is followed by another couple in Swahili. The mood with a song such as "How Great Thou Art," a famous English hymn, is often aligned with Baptist worship style, solemn and simple. Another popular song choice within the church is a lively worship song, "Amefanya Maajabu na Siwezi

Kueleza," the Swahili translation of "He has done so much for me, and I cannot tell it all." In playing this number, the pianist always adds upbeat percussion to his accompaniment to this song and congregants might clap, move to the beat, or even play the tambourine.

After a number of songs, depending on the mood of the pastor, the church turns to prayer and testimonies. Before he begins praying, the pastor selects a person in the church to assist in the translation needs for the day. Being entirely bilingual himself, the pastor chooses which language he speaks in based on the comfort level of the congregation and his translator for the day. On occasion, when no one is available to translate for him, the pastor will do his own translations. But on a regular Sunday, after praying, the pastor invites his church congregants to share testimonies. These testimonies are stories of God's goodness in their lives, which can range from specific about a family member's health or a financial situation, to as general as the gift from God of waking up in the morning. These testimonies are often offered in African languages and translated to English as necessary. At times, testimonies are even offered in the form of another worship song, with which congregants join in singing based on their familiarity with the music. Depending on the ongoing length of the service, the pastor might offer more prayers and worship for the congregation.

After the testimonies, the African Ethnic Church's pastor enters into his sermon. These sermons always begin with a reading from the Christian Scriptures; the purpose of the sermons is exegetical. Topics range from spiritual gifts to encouraging one another to good works. While these sermons first appear standard to Protestant, and especially Baptist churches, the pastor often finds sermon illustrations that apply specifically to his congregants. In discussing spiritual gifts, the pastor described his family's experiences in East Africa with Pentecostal forms of

Christianity. Other times, he illustrated the love of God for his children with stories of his father's dedication to his good behavior and education. These illustrations were often good-natured, with the pastor laughing at his childhood antics or cultural experiences with which congregants would be familiar. Even though sermon topics are standard, this African Ethnic Church's expression of Christianity is clearly influenced by their Africanness.[4]

What sets this church apart from others in the Central Virginia area is that it was founded by an African immigrant for African people. Whether rain, shine, or snow, this African Ethnic Church meets every Sunday morning to worship in both Swahili and English. Even when the power goes out in the area, they will worship in any available space, even the pastor's own home. Despite being small in number and in building size, this African Ethnic Church maintains programs to assist African immigrants. No matter where they came from, their circumstances in their home countries or in the United States, or even their religious beliefs, these immigrants could always find a helping hand in the African Ethnic Church. With whatever resources they have, the leadership in the African Ethnic Church commits their church to settling immigrants and maintaining African culture in the United States.

The African Ethnic Church in Central Virginia and its Pastor

This African Ethnic Church was specifically founded to serve and assist any African immigrants in their settlement process in the Charlottesville area. Specifically, the church's role in immigrant settlement falls into four categories—material, social, familial, and spiritual. These categories are drawn from scholarly work on ethnic churches to explain the ways in which these specific churches care for their congregations. In the case of this African Ethnic Church, the

[4] See Appendix A on African Christianity

pastor and his family take the forefront role in engaging immigrants to different extents within these categories, depending on their own self-described needs. In this way, the church provides settlement assistance to African immigrants on their own terms. Since the founding of the church in 2011, by its own estimation, the church has assisted over fifty refugees in their search for housing, jobs, and cars upon their arrivals to the United States.[5] This self-provided information only scratches the surface of the work the small African Ethnic Church attempts to conduct in the Central Virginia area in relation to immigrant settlement. In this section of the paper, I examine their consistent desire and success at settling African "newcomers" as a small church congregation.

The use of the term "newcomers" reflects the mentality of the African Ethnic Church in their perception of immigrants. In speaking with the pastor of the church, he explained it to me:

> A newcomer is a new arrival. We would use that word even back in Africa. If someone needs to move to a new village, we would refer to them as a newcomer… So, we wouldn't use the word 'alien'; we don't have the word alien [in our language, and] we don't use the terminology 'foreigner.'[6]

In this way, African arrivals in the Central Virginia are welcomed by the church, even in the chosen terminologies used to describe them. It does not matter to congregants why or how "newcomers" arrived in the United States. Their identity is not wrapped up in their legal status or their possibly tragic past. Rather, each person is a "newcomer," one who has certain needs that must be addressed. The church is there to "bring them [newcomers] to church so we are able to help them."[7] In this way, the church leadership has determined that the best local for

[5] Interview with the pastor; interview with the pastor's wife
[6] Interview with the pastor
[7] Interview with the pastor's wife

their assistance is the African Ethnic Church. Upon the founding of the church, the twin goals of serving God and helping people were designated and have been upheld by the pastor. Regardless of the congregation size at any given time, the church has committed to continue their ministry of helping "newcomers" for the foreseeable future.

This particular African Ethnic Church depends entirely on the vision, guidance, and labor of its pastor to serve the "newcomers." An independent Baptist church in its denominational designation, the pastor is regardless completely essential to the ministry of the church. Even though independent Baptist churches are commonly dependent on their pastors to lead and minister to them, this African Ethnic Church relies on its pastor to a greater extent than would be expected of a church of this denomination. In this case, it is the pastor who sets the vision and does the work; the church absolutely requires a charismatic leader to pursue its mission. The current pastor has devoted this African Ethnic Church to "be a lighthouse to the nations, specifically reaching African immigrants and refugees without leaving other people behind."[8] At every point of his life, the pastor perceives it as his personal duty and purpose to help people and serve God.[9] Both of these goals are expressed through his own devotion to the church and to their ministry. The congregants completely rely on the work of the pastor to create and pursue goals for the church. If he asks his congregation to act for the sake of the church, they do so. At the end of winter in 2018, in one of his sermons, the pastor shared his distress that the grounds of the church were still covered with leaves from the previous fall. He requested that a group of congregants take time on the following Saturday to help rake and collect leaves.

[8] Interview with the pastor
[9] Interview with the pastor's wife

With his leadership and initiation, the area surrounding the church was cleaned by the following Sunday. This example demonstrates the belief in the church that the work of this African Ethnic Church is primarily the responsibility of its pastor.

Even among the deacons of the church, the pastor is held in high regard with respect to his mission and vision for the church. In an interview, one of the deacons described the relationship the church maintains with helping immigrants and refugees as such:

> "In my opinion, there's no church program for anything of that sort. But as a pastor, if somebody walks through that door, immigrant or not, and says, 'pastor, I have not eaten for a week or I am being thrown out because of rent, and you know, my sources of money are this and that, I am new here I know nobody,' he gets compassionate and he helps in the way he can… he established himself with the IRC, that he can translate for Swahili speakers. So, he is a translator there. Me, I'm not a translator; I am not a pastor. So, in the process, they ended up knowing: here, there's a Kenyan pastor here who knows all there is to know for some people from Eastern and Central Africa; if they speak Swahili, he can work with them. I think it's through his translation that his name got around here: there is a Swahili-speaking pastor."[10]

In this answer, the Kenyan deacon explained several different aspects of the pastor's relationship to immigration and the church. First, as he understands it, it is the pastor's duty to help anyone. Regardless of their identity or relationship to the African Ethnic Church, it is required of the pastor to assist them in any way he can. In this way, assisting the settlement process is seen as the obligation of the pastor, and an exemplification of his personal commitment to Christianity.

Furthermore, when beginning this research, I assumed that it was the entire church congregation that acted on behalf of the African immigrants. I originally thought that each

[10] Interview with a Kenyan deacon

member takes different responsibilities in assisting immigrants, whether through providing transportation or translating. However, this conversation with a deacon revealed that even he believed it to be solely the pastor who is responsible for the enactment of immigrant assistance. His perspective is not unique; other congregants mentioned in interviews that it is the pastor's job to help people. In this way, the pastor represents the entire church both in leadership and in action. Unexpectedly, it is almost exclusively the pastor and his family who directly assist immigrants in their settlement process. Church members are not highly active in the day-to-day processes through which the church engages immigrants. Each Sunday, the pastor's son drives over half an hour to the city of Charlottesville to provide rides for those who do not own or drive cars. These usually include the newest immigrants and refugees. He then takes them to the church for their weekly service and back home afterwards. Even though other congregants might be closer in distance, it is the pastor's family who takes the initiative to engage directly with the immigrants. This is not to say that immigrant settlement is not important to the church congregants. Rather, they channel their interest in assisting immigrants through the pastor. The pastor is meant to serve his people, and African immigrants are perceived as an extension of the African Ethnic Church's people. In discussing this African Ethnic Church, I have discovered that it cannot be separated from its pastor; in profound ways, the pastor is the church. The pastor determines the vision and direction of the church, which is entirely integrated with Africanness and African immigration.

As a result of this unexpected discovery, the story of this African Ethnic Church crucially connects to the pastor's own life and immigration story. Having moved to Virginia in the early 21st century from Kenya, the pastor who would eventually found this African Ethnic Church

encountered difficulties associated with moving to a new country. These included an unfamiliarity with American culture, a lack of financial resources, and difficulties finding sustainable income. Once he arrived in Charlottesville, the pastor began the process of setting up the African Ethnic Church with a four-part goal—Biblical teaching, church fellowship, prayer, and evangelism. Along with these explicitly Christian impulses, the African Ethnic Church has purposely assisted with the settlement of African voluntary immigrants and refugees. As a result of its identity as a Christian institution set up by this particular immigrant, an increase of the spiritual and physical wellbeing of African immigrants and refugees are core purposes of the church.

Like the assistance the church provides for the settlement of immigrants, the pastor's presence in Charlottesville predicated the existence of this particular African Ethnic Church. The story of the church is the story of one family of Kenyan immigrants and their own settlement process. It is the story of African newcomers finding a home in American through their pursuit of material, familial, social, and spiritual goals. Their own personal experience as a family prompted the pastor's passion for helping new African immigrants settle and his belief about his own personal calling to be a pastor melded together to center immigrant settlement around the church.

When sharing their immigration journey as a family, the pastor's wife expressed that they had not originally planned to settle in the United States. In the early 2000s, the pastor started a church in their home country of Kenya, and she had a job with a university. They had two young children and close family around them so their first trip to America was made without plans to immigrate. Rather, they were seeking financial assistance to finish building the

church in Kenya. In the process of their month-long trip around the United States, the pastor and his wife met an American Baptist pastor, who encouraged them to consider moving to America and working with his church. On his advice, the Kenyan pastor left his family and made a move to the United States. Even at this point, his wife made clear that they still had no definitive plans to settle.

In the United States, the pastor first arrived in Atlanta, Georgia in 2005 on a missionary visa because he had family in the area. In this time, he found work as a truck driver, met a lifelong friend who would later become a deacon of the African Ethnic Church in Central Virginia, and helped found a Kenyan American church. Missing his family, he encouraged his wife to come to America as well. Because his original pastoral contact was in Virginia, once his family arrived in the United States, they relocated to Virginia, bringing their friend with them. However, upon arriving in Virginia, the pastor's family felt a need to "be on our own because these people don't want to help us." Both the pastor and his wife felt that the promises of being integrated into this particular American independent Baptist church had fallen through. Rarely was the pastor provided with the opportunity to preach in that Baptist church. The pastor's wife was greatly disappointed that they could find little community with whom to fellowship; "we felt like we were isolated and we were the odd ones out." She remembered that members of the American church discouraged her from enrolling her young children in school. In a few months, despite regular church attendance, they felt that their needs had not been met in the United States. The Kenyan deacon explained, "there were a number of immigrant members of the [Baptist] church here. We felt that they weren't having adequate

spiritual acknowledgement from the Muzungu [white] church, and we wanted to have a specifically African kind of worship in the afternoon there."

At first, the group of African immigrants in Central Virginia were content to meet weekly at the independent Baptist church to conduct an African style of worship. This went on for several years, until irreconcilable differences between the two pastors separated the immigrants from the Baptist church. In 2010, "the church started in his [pastor's] house, [while] it did start as an afternoon service in [the American Baptist church], and it started as a service in his house!" These services were similar to the ones currently held at the African Ethnic Church, almost a decade later. They sang in Swahili, the pastor gave bilingual sermons, and they fellowshipped together weekly. In this way, the African Ethnic Church has an inseparable connection to Africa: it was founded by African immigrants, for African immigrants.

The Settlement of African Immigrants

The African Ethnic Church is essential to the settlement of African immigrants in the Central Virginia area. Public perception regarding the settlement both of voluntary and involuntary immigrants is informed by the media. In an article published by the *New York Times* in early 2017, the writer explains that after government screening, more than three hundred agencies and offices of nine nonprofit organizations are explicitly involved in refugee resettlement.[11] Of these nine nonprofits recognized by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, six are broadly religious in nature, but partner with government services to provide their settlement assistance. However, while there

[11] Lieber, Ron. "How You Can Help Refugees in the United States." The New York Times. February 17, 2017.

are guides available on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website regarding the settlement process, there are no actual agencies or organizations that serve voluntary immigrants directly. Immigrants have specific needs throughout the settlement process including material, social, familial, and spiritual. Voluntary immigrants receive little to no official assistance from either the government or nonprofit organizations in any of these areas. Refugees receive direct assistance from organizations such as the IRC for their immediate needs upon arriving in the United States. "For the first 90 days, resettlement agencies work with state and local governments and community organizations to help new arrivals settle into their communities."[12] This assistance includes health check-ups, enrollment in English-learning programs, and stipends. While this assistance is invaluable to the newest arrivals, the IRC's immigrant assistance programs focus on effectively making refugees self-sufficient as soon as possible. As such, the African Ethnic Church in the Charlottesville area has stepped in to address areas beyond the immediate, physical needs both for refugees and immigrants. The African Ethnic Church does not replace the work done by government and nonprofit agencies in the first 90 days of refugee arrival, but it is essential in supplementing the services provided by these organizations to address additional facets of immigrant settlement.

What is Settlement?

In this paper, settlement is a functional definition taken to describe the process by which immigrants take residence in and become acclimated to the United States. Firstly, immigrants who arrive in the United States immediately require material resources such as food and money to begin their settlement process. Beyond the first few days, immigrants

[12] "Refugees in America." International Rescue Committee (IRC).

require jobs and housing. Through the addressing of these physical needs, immigrants can move further along the process of settlement.[13] Beyond these physical needs, settlement includes actions taken by immigrants to integrate into "Americanness." Here, "Americanness" regards the language, culture, values, beliefs, and customs commonly associated with what it means to be American. These include but are not limited to learning English, valuing the abstract sense of freedom, supporting the Constitution, and participating in celebratory events such as the Fourth of July.[14] However, while settlement does include developing loyalty and love for the new country, it does not include an exclusive sense of belonging to America. By this, America is not meant to supersede immigrants' home countries. Immigrants, as such, are able to settle into American life and culture without disrespecting and developing contempt for their own backgrounds. In this way, settlement regards the immigrants' own pathways to inhabit life in the United States in whichever way they themselves deem appropriate rather than their reception by citizens. The settlement process for African immigrants in relation to the African Ethnic Church addresses not only physical and social areas, but also familial and spiritual areas.

Ethnic Churches

This particular church in Central Virginia is intrinsically an ethnic church, a concept that links its identity as a religious institution to its commitment to immigrant settlement. As a concept, the ethnic church contributes to explaining the church in Central Virginia's commitment to assisting "newcomers." In its most literal sense, an ethnic church is a Christian

[13] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

[14] This sense of American is taken from my own sense as an immigrant of America's projection of what it means to be American.

religious institution that gathers not only around its expression of Christianity, but also integrally understands itself as an institution built around a shared ethnic identity. While it can be said that many church congregations in America share an ethnic background, the primary purpose of those churches often does not relate to their ethnicity. However, ethnic churches take ethnicity and culture to be of critical importance in the formation of a place of worship that is a place of belonging despite differences in denominational beliefs or practices. In this way, ethnic church members congregate with the explicit purpose of engaging in Christian practices in harmony with their ethnic identity. While this paper specifically addresses one African ethnic church, scholarship on the ethnic church describes a wider phenomenon regarding the relationship between ethnic churches and their congregations spanning African American churches and Asian ethnic churches. This scholarship indicates the ways ethnic Christian institutions in the United States interact with their ethnic identities to better serve their congregants as they see fit. In many cases, particularly with the Asian American ethnic churches, these institutions play an integral part in providing settlement assistance for immigrants of a similar ethnic identity.

The existence of religious institutions organized around ethnic identity is not a recent phenomenon in the United States. Many churches have been organized along ethnic lines at least since the Civil War. For example, “The Black Church is, perhaps, one of the best-known widely studied ethnic religious institutions. Black congregations emerged [in the] United States during the years immediately following slavery and served as centers of Black community life

'second only to the family' as centers of social and political mobilization."[15] The Black Church not only served as a gathering place for worship services but became a locus for community organization and political activity.

> One of the most comprehensive studies of the Black Church in America in recent years introduced the subject by remarking, "not only did it (the Black Church) give birth to new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development." The Black clergy provided much of the political leadership of the Civil Rights era, and clergymen and individuals with close ties to Black religious institutions continue to figure heavily in the Congressional Black Caucus [and] other leadership positions.[16]

Since the Immigration Act of 1965, the number of minority religious institutions in the United States has increased in relation to the rising number of immigrants. These include Korean American churches and Vietnamese religious organizations. In examining Korean immigrant church participation, Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim discovered, "Whether newcomers or old-timers, professionals or manual workers, assimilated or not, the majority of Korean immigrants are pervasively involved in their ethnic churches. They claim primarily "religious" reasons and secondarily "social" or "psychological" reasons (i.e., meaning, belonging, and comfort) for their involvement."[17] While this research is specific to the Korean ethnic church, Hurh and Kim's findings resonate more broadly. Research into an array of ethnic

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[15] Bankston III, Carl L., and Min Zhou. "The ethnic church, ethnic identifcation, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." *Review of Religious Research* (1996): 19.
[16] Bankston III, Carl L., and Min Zhou. "The ethnic church, ethnic identifcation, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." *Review of Religious Research* (1996): 19.
[17] Hurh, Won Moo, and Kwang Chung Kim. "Religious participation of Korean immigrants in the United States." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1990): 28.

churches reflect that they not only promote “religious wellbeing,” but also reinforce ethnic identification, serve to pass on cultural inheritances, and provide space to continue using language and practice tradition.

Academic literature surrounding immigration demonstrates that, in general, religious institutions can become quite important for immigrants in their quest to adjust to host societies. The study by Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim demonstrates that Korean and Vietnamese immigrants continued attending at ethnic churches in the United States over time. In examining these particular Asian ethnic churches, Hurh and Kim discovered that specific congregants of those ethnic churches claimed primarily religious interests in continued attendance at those churches. Despite these claims, Hurh and Kim refuse to ignore the “social” or “psychological” factors in these immigrants’ religious choices.[18]

> …once the immigrant's "belonging" to a particular church is established through communal and/or associational bonds, this social belonging has very little to do with geographic propinquity. It is not uncommon for Korean immigrants to drive 10-20 miles to their churches every Sunday. In sum, among the majority of Korean immigrants, the religious need (meaning), the social need (belonging), and the psychological need (comfort) for attending the Korean church are inseparable from each other; they are functionally intertwined under the complex conditions of uprooting, existential marginality, and sociocultural adaptation for rerooting. In this sense, the pervasive participation of Korean immigrants in their ethnic churches cannot fully be understood unless the "life-chance" of Korean Americans as an ethnic or racial minority in the American social structure is taken into consideration.[19]

[18] Hurh, "Religious participation of Korean immigrants in the United States." 28.
[19] Hurh, "Religious participation of Korean immigrants in the United States." 31.

These particular ethnic churches in the study assist migrants in psychological adjustment, provide comforting spaces, and help them make sense of life in America. As such, Korean migrants claim both religious and social reasons for their continued involvement in the ethnic church. Furthermore, the ethnic church provides a locale to reinforce ethnic identification, pass on cultural inheritances, continue using one's native language, and participate in traditions.[20] Despite immigrants' own claims of primary "religious" reasons for attending their ethnic churches, Hurh and Kim argue that these "religious" motivations would not have been enough to maintain continued church attendance over a long period of time given the distance travelled. As such, these Asian ethnic churches do more than provide a Christian worship space. They provide "meaning," "belonging," and "comfort." terms that are crucial for the discussion of the African Ethnic Church's role in settling African immigrants in the Central Virginia area.

Many studies on ethnic churches have further questioned whether they provide advantages or disadvantages for immigrants working towards resettling in their adopted country. These questions reflect widespread assumptions that directly relate settlement to upward mobility and material achievement. In other words, people measure the success of immigrants by their accumulation of wealth and achievement of the "American Dream." Adjustment and settlement can be understood as "upward mobility, by providing social supports and constraints to young people that encourage behavior likely to lead to upward

[20] Bankston III, Carl L., and Min Zhou. "The ethnic church, ethnic identification, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." *Review of Religious Research* (1996), 21.

mobility."[21] However, limiting adjustment only to financial and material success fails to recognize the full range of needs immigrants have in settling in their new country.

> Studies of Korean immigrants have found that the sense of belonging provided by Korean churches assists in psychological adjustment to the host society. Korean American churches, like religious institutions of other minority groups, appear to provide comforting alternatives to the unfamiliar host society. In the case of the Vietnamese, Nash argued that their ethnic Catholicism provided its adherents with a unique cultural system that enabled them to make sense of life in America.[22]

Adding to Hurh and Kim's description of ethnic churches supplementing religious reasons for attending a church with belonging and comfort, Bankston and Zhou demonstrated that Korean immigrants in particular were not "Americanized" by the Korean immigrant church. "In general, the adaptation pattern of first-generation Korean immigrants was found to be "adhesive"; that is, ethnic attachment and Americanization are not mutually exclusive but additive."[23] Adoption of "Americanness," as previously described, did not negate the connection these immigrants maintained with their country and culture of origin. In the same way, Bankston and Zhou's study described both socioeconomic status and upward mobility of immigrants as independent from that of their participation with the Korean church. Immigrants' attendance to the Korean church was not correlated with shifts in their material and financial state in the United States.[24]

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[21] Bankston III, "The ethnic church, ethnic identification, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." 21.
[22] Bankston III, "The ethnic church, ethnic identification, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." 21.
[23] Bankston III, "The ethnic church, ethnic identification, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." 28-29.
[24] Bankston III, "The ethnic church, ethnic identification, and the social adjustment of Vietnamese adolescents." 32.

These studies of ethnic churches in America demonstrate the range of assistance they can provide to groups of ethnic minorities. In the case of the African American church, these oldest of ethnic churches provide meaning, belonging, and comfort, later contributing to their organizing efforts as an ethnic minority. Likewise, for Asian ethnic churches, despite their younger age, these churches have successfully developed activities that encourage belonging and comfort in immigrants, even if these immigrants' primary reason for church attendance is religious. Examining the scholarship on these other ethnic churches demonstrates how Christian organizations can specifically connect their ethnic identities to better serve their congregations. Ethnic churches contribute to the sense of meaning, belonging, and comfort throughout the settlement process for immigrants. The African Ethnic Church is no exception for demonstrating the way these Christian institutions integrate religion with ethnicity for the specific purpose of assisting immigrants. In fact, the African Ethnic Church in Central Virginia demonstrates the approach of providing meaning, belonging, and comfort for their immigrants.

Charlottesville, an Emerging Gateway

When discussing immigration to the United States, popular migrant destinations include the states of California, Florida, and New York.[25] However, African immigrants have first been moving to the Central Virginia area in increasing numbers in the past few decades. Upon first glance, the presence of an International Rescue Committee office in the city of Charlottesville provides an indication of the reason for the settlement of involuntary immigrants, otherwise knowns as refugees. The United States government is responsible for deciding where refugees are settled when they first arrive. This process includes the assistance provided for the first 90

[25] See Appendices B and C for discussions on immigration and refugee settlement in the United States

days. As such, the African refugee population in Central Virginia is directly linked to the work done by the IRC office in Charlottesville.

African immigrants settling in the Central Virginia area surrounding Charlottesville are largely East African due to the conflicts that have been occurring in those areas for the past few decades. A number of those immigrants are Congolese refugees, as a result of the continued violence in the area.[26]

> In some of those cases, the children's father is one of the five and a half million people who've been killed during the two decades of war in the region. Just to give you a sense, that's more people killed than the entire population of South Carolina. And for 500,000 Congolese, their survival has meant fleeing their homes, often finding refuge in camps in neighboring countries, where education is limited, malnutrition is rampant, and sexual assault and rape are common.
> Suffice it to say, the Congolese face some of the biggest challenges of all refugee groups. They arrive in Charlottesville with severe medical and mental trauma issues. Most don't speak English, few have ever driven a car, and one in five don't read or write in their own language. But 96 percent of them are Christian.[27]

Because such a large percentage of Congolese refugees are Christian, their particular relationships with the African ethnic church in America is noteworthy. Upon arriving in the United States, the immediate challenges that face these particular Congolese immigrants are their lack of financial and social resources. They know no one, often are unable to communicate in English, and have nothing beyond the few possessions with which they landed in America. Beyond questioning the origin of their next meal, refugees are faced with material needs—jobs, cars, education. While many of these refugees receive direct fiscal aid from organizations such

[26] See Appendix D for more information on Charlottesville's immigration statistics
[27] Yager, Jordy. "Preparing for the Next Wave of Refugees." WMRA and WEMC. March 2, 2016.

as the IRC, framing their lives in these physical terms neglects their mental and spiritual wellbeing. The African Ethnic Church has provided different dimensions of assistance to refugees to contribute to their settlement beyond the first 90 days of their arrival. At the church itself, the bilingual services help the newest arrivals become acclimated to English, while the pastor's close connection to the IRC enables him to closely connect with refugees and tailor assistance to their specific needs. In the past few years, many of these refugees have been moving away from Charlottesville to seek better economic or educational opportunities, but as long as African refugees arrive in Charlottesville, the church and its pastor plans on continuing the work of immigrant settlement.

The other group of immigrants that settle in the Charlottesville area are voluntary immigrants. These are individuals and families that chose to come to the United States through various visa programs, such as education, work, and missionary visas. Currently many of the attendees of the African Ethnic Church belong in this category. Many of these immigrants have some level of higher education and were already familiar with English prior to their arrival in United States. While their immediate physical needs of housing and transportation are similar to that of refugees, long-term desires such as furthering education in higher academia tend to be different. Should these immigrants remain in Charlottesville, the church and its pastor continue to provide them with assistance for years following their arrival. Almost a year after she landed, a Rwandan immigrant described the pastor's assistance with her enrollment in the local community college and teaching her to drive. In the first place, she had chosen to come to Charlottesville because she had a friend in the area, who also connected her to the African

Ethnic Church.[28] In these ways, the very presence of the church contributes to the status of Charlottesville as an emerging gateway.

As the African migrant population increases through the settlement both of voluntary and involuntary immigrants, Charlottesville has become a more desirable location for African "newcomers." While they may settle in the Central Virginia area permanently, Charlottesville continues to be a gateway for immigrants as they arrive in the United States. Some of these migrants are settled here by the government in coordination with the International Rescue Committee. Others come to Charlottesville because of ties they already have in the area, whether that be friends or family. As these immigrants have arrived, the African Ethnic Church has been invaluable in providing settlement assistance of different natures. Even as many Africans have moved out of the Central Virginia Area, often to Texas and other states further west, many still maintain relations with the African Ethnic Church. In this way, the church is a bridge between home countries and the United States.

Conclusion

Despite the presence of government and nonprofit agencies in the Central Virginia area to assist with immigrant settlement, this African Ethnic Church is integral to the material, familial, social, and spiritual settlement of African immigrants in the Central Virginia area. Over its existence for close to a decade, the church has maintained a deep commitment to material, social, familial, and religious assistance to immigrants from Africa. Being an ethnic church, this particular religious institution supplies multifaceted help beyond spiritual guidance. It continues to choose not only to serve its congregants spiritually by providing a space to worship according

[28] Interview with a Rwandan immigrant

to their beliefs, as would be expected of a Christian church, but also to facilitate the settlement of immigrants. In response to the ongoing influx of African newcomers to the Central Virginia area, the African Ethnic Church provides material items such as phones to these newcomers, but also provides "a community of people of like language and customs where they could meet together."[29] The church acknowledges that "newcomers" not only need food and shelter, but a sense of meaning, belonging, and comfort as they settle in the United States. This African Ethnic Church provides invaluable assistance for the settlement of African immigrants in Central Virginia.

Epilogue

In addition to the discussion of this African Ethnic Church and its relationship to immigration settlement, I stumbled upon a current shift in vision the pastor has expressed on behalf of the church. It involves the identity of the church as an African Ethnic Church. For background information, in its legal documentation, this particular church has never had the inclusion of "African" in its legal title. However, in colloquial, everyday speech, the church has always been identified as an "African" church. This inclusion of ethnic identity in the very name of the church reflects an awareness of the deep connections the African Ethnic Church had with Africa—their pastors are African, their members are African, their church services are conducted in Swahili. However, recently the church has begun re-branding itself to exclude explicit associations of Africa with the church. Besides removing "African" from their name, the church has made efforts to hold services primarily in English, with Swahili translation for attendees who are less familiar with English. This move has not come uncontested. Some

[29] Yager, Jordy. "Preparing for the Next Wave of Refugees."

members of the church feel that the church needs to be African, for the African people. However, this movement can indicate a move toward multi-ethnicity that appears to be growing in American Christianity. This debate between being a specifically ethnic church and a pan-ethnic church would be worth looking into in further research.

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Appendix A: African Christianity in America

African churches in the United States exist to serve their African Christian immigrant populations. While the Christian church understands itself as a universal and unifying church, the reality in America is that churches have been and continue to be highly segregated along racial and ethnic lines. As a result, "Just as Americans often worship in racially similar environments, African immigrants often choose congregations based on nationality and ethnicity, even when the immigrants have to cross denominational lines."[30] While American churches often divide over racial, denominational, or political lines, African ethnic churches tend to focus on their unique abilities to connect with their attendees along ethnic lines. These churches unite over common language, culture, and values, just as Americans do. In this way, "Africanness" can be defined in this paper like "Americanness." This "Africanness" expresses itself in church through their distinct worship style, language use, and tackling of issues related to Africa, race, and immigration.

> While services in most African-American churches are conducted in English, some of the established African immigrant churches conduct their worship services or at least part of them in African languages ranging from the Yoruba language of western Nigeria, Krio of Sierra Leone, Bassa of Liberia, Twi of Ghana and Bambara and French for populations from Ivory Coast, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso (Swigart, 2001). In these services, pastors in African immigrant congregations not only attend to their congregants' spiritual needs, but also use their sermons, given in native tongue, to address issues of immigration and homeland politics. Prayer time is not only used as an opportunity to beseech God for personal problems, but to pray about civil wars, ethnic conflicts, distress and resettlement, issues that contrast to the domestic, racial and socio-economic concerns of most African-American congregations (Olupona and Gemignani, 2007).[31]

Even though the specific immigrants may arrive from different countries, be from different tribes, and speak different languages, they still share a Pan-African identity. This identity has not been created recently in response to their shared circumstances as immigrants. Rather, Pan-African identity has been contributing to black unity both in Africa and in other parts of the world since the mid-20th century. "In well-articulated studies, one is reminded of the major 1945 fifth Pan-African Congress that took place in Manchester, United Kingdom, during which cooperation was forged between indigenous African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), and Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Nigeria), among others, and such stalwart

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[30] Alex-Assensoh, Yvette M. "African immigrants and African-Americans: An analysis of voluntary African immigration and the evolution of black ethnic politics in America." *African and Asian Studies* 8, no. 1-2 (2009): 113.

[31] Alex-Assensoh, Yvette M., "African immigrants and African-Americans," 113.

Diaspora-based black leaders as Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois (USA), George Padmore (Caribbean), and C.L.R. James (Caribbean) and others (Nkrumah, 1957 & 1963; Esedebe, 1982; Walters, 1993)."[32] Meetings such as this one were not completely inclusive, clearly neglecting parts of the continent such as Northern Africa and Southern Africa. In addition, these meetings actualized pan-Africanism either due to identifications of similar ethnic and cultural characteristics or pragmatic acknowledgements of the perception of Africa in world politics. Whether the creation of a pan-African identity is due to internal or external causes related to the continent and its people, the existence of pan-Africanism contributes to the church attendance decisions African immigrants make upon arriving in America. Immigrants' desire to connect around a shared "Africanness" surpasses specific denominational, ethnic, or linguistic differences that might otherwise divide them.

"Evangelical"

The term "evangelical" maintains an observable difference between "American" and "African" implications of being an "evangelical church." The point of being "evangelical," for African Christians, is to pursue the goal of the conversion of people to Christianity. "African Christians" are "evangelical" in that one of the primary focuses in being a church community is spreading the gospel, the original root meaning of the word.[33] It is not perceived as an identity that has social and political implications. "Evangelical" is primarily a religious identity about the Christian beliefs a person professes. The beliefs center on four things, Biblical authority, Jesus Christ as the savior from sins, individual salvation through a profession of faith, and the preaching of the gospel.

[32] Alex-Assensoh, Yvette M., "African immigrants and African-Americans," 114.
[33] Gornik, *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City*, 23.

Appendix B: Immigration Act of 1965

The Immigration Act of 1965 was a series of amendments to the Immigration and Nationality (McCarran-Walter) Act of 1952. The McCarran-Walter Act had continued United States immigration policy along racial and nationality terms. Immigrants from Western European countries such as Britain, Germany, and Ireland had higher national origin quotas encouraging people from those countries to come to the United States; the act assigned 81.6% of the total numerical quota to Western Europe. "Unused quota could not be transferred from one source country to another."[34]

Since 1965, immigrant demographics shifted to Hispanics, South and East Asians, Middle Easterners, and Caribbean migrants as a result of the 1965 Immigration Act.[35]

> The 1965 Hart–Celler Act (effective July 1, 1968) represented a distinct break with the past. The most important change was the abolition of the country quotas based on the national origins formula. Instead, there was an overall limit of 170,000 for the Eastern Hemisphere with a cap of 20,000 for those born in any individual country and its colonies. The Asia–Pacific triangle was scrapped, and the countries that comprised it were included under the Eastern Hemisphere quota. Also, because it was now a hemispheric pool, the transfer of unused quota was no longer an issue. The preference system was reorganized under eight preferences, compared with the previous five (Table 1). Four of these were classes of non-immediate relatives, two were based on skill or occupation, and one brought refugees formally into the preferences system. As in earlier legislation, immediate relatives (spouses and children) were exempt from the numerical limit, although this was now extended to include the parents of US citizens. A major change was the introduction of an overall quota of 120,000 for the Western Hemisphere, which had not previously been subject to a quota, but initially without an individual country cap. No system of preferences was applied to the Western Hemisphere until 1976, and the two hemispheres were merged into a worldwide numerical limit of 290,000 in 1978.[36]

The act transformed immigration policy in the United States. Firstly, the annual ceiling of 170,000 immigrants applied equally to every country outside the Western Hemisphere; the United States government no longer maintained individual quotas for different countries based

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[34] Hatton, Timothy J. "United states immigration policy: The 1965 act and its consequences." *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 117, no. 2 (2015): 347-349.

[35] Reimers, David M. "An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Immigration Act and Third World Immigration to the United States." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3, no. 1 (1983): 9.

[36] Hatton, "United states immigration policy: The 1965 act and its consequences," 350.

on a skewed perception of the immigrants' innate abilities to assimilate to American culture or their race. The Act also emphasized family relationships as a basis for the selection of immigrants, with a focus on the reunification of families. The final important policy change regards employment clearances by the Secretary of Labor regarding immigrants seeking work in the United States. The Secretary now had to certify that an immigrant worker would not harm the job market for Americans—"no worker shall enter the United States unless the Secretary of Labor certifies that there are not sufficient able and qualified workers in the United States and that the alien would not adversely affect wages and working conditions."[37] These reforms culminated in the reorganization of the preference system for immigration to prioritize family reunification and skilled workers.

Preference System, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act)

(1) First preference: Highly skilled immigrants whose services are urgently needed in the U. S. and the spouse and children of such immigrants.
50% plus any not required for 2nd and 3rd preference.
(2) Second preference: Parents of U. S. citizens over the age of 21 and unmarried sons and daughters of U. S. citizens.
30% plus any not required for 1st and 3rd preference.
(3) Third preference: Spouse and unmarried sons and daughters of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.
20% plus any not required for first or second preference.
(4) Fourth preference: Brothers, sisters, married sons and daughters of U. S. citizens and an accompanying spouse and children.
50% of numbers not required for first three preferences.
(5) Nonpreference: Applicants not entitled to one of the above preferences.
50% of numbers not required for first three preferences, plus any not required for fourth preference.

Preference System, Immigration Act of 1965

(1) First preference: Unmarried sons and daughters of U. S. citizens.
Not more than 20%.
(2) Second preference: Spouse and unmarried sons and daughters of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.
20% plus any not required for first preference.
(3) Third preference: Members of the professions and scientists and artists of exceptional ability.
Not more than 10%.
(4) Fourth preference: Married sons and daughters of U. S. citizens.
10% plus any not required for first three preferences.
(5) Fifth preference: Brothers and sisters of U. S. citizens.
24% plus any not required for first four preferences.
(6) Sixth preference: Skilled and unskilled workers in occupations for which labor is in short supply in U. S.
Not more than 10%.
(7) Seventh preference: Refugees to whom conditional entry or adjustment of status may be granted.
Not more than 6%.
(8) Nonpreference: Any applicant not entitled to one of the above preferences.
Any numbers not required for preference applicants.

Source: *Report of the Visa Office*, 1968, Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, Department of State, p. 68.

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[37] Keely, Charles B. "Effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 on Selected Population Characteristics of Immigrants to the United States." *Demography* 8, no. 2 (1971): 159-160.

[38] Keely, "Effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 on Selected Population Characteristics of Immigrants to the United States," 160.

Congress did not intend to transform the immigrant demographic to the United States in their reform of immigration policy in 1965. They were under the impression that immigrant demographics would not transform radically due to their action. Emanuel Celler (D-NY), in defense of the 1965 Act, argued,

> The thrust of this bill is no appreciable increase in numbers… With the end of discrimination due to place of birth, there will be shifts to countries other than those of northern and western Europe. Immigrants from Asia and Africa will have to compete and qualify in order to get in, quantitatively and qualitatively, which, itself will hold the numbers down. There will not be, comparatively, many Asians or Africans entering this country . . . since the people of Africa and Asia have very few relatives here, comparatively few could immigrate from those countries because they have no family ties in the United States . . . no one can come without the individual certificate from the Secretary of Labor guaranteeing that the American workman will not be displaced . . . few of them can even pay the cost of the ticket to come here. There is no danger whatsoever of an influx from the countries of Africa and Asia (US Congress, 1965, pp. 21,757–21,758).[39]

Congress believed that populations outside of Western Europe would be unable to qualify for the strict employment preferences. Furthermore, there were few immigrants from outside of Europe in America to qualify for family reunification. However, over the next decades, immigration has shifted dramatically from European countries to Asia, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Despite the impression that African migration would not increase dramatically after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the percentage of immigrants coming from the African continent, while not increasing as drastically as those from Asia, has increased from 0.7% to 7.4%. Scholars have conducted studies on the impacts Asian and Latin American migration has on the immigrant communities. Likewise, this increase in the African population of voluntary migrants to the United States must be studied in response to the growing demographic of African immigrants.

[39] Hatton, "United states immigration policy: The 1965 act and its consequences," 351.

Table 2. *Source region composition of US immigration 1920–2009 (percent)*

	1920–1929	1930–1939	1940–1949	1950–1959	1960–1969	1970–1979	1980–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009
Europe	59.6	63.5	55.2	56.2	35.3	19.4	10.7	13.8	13.1
Ireland, Germany, UK	21.7	29.9	31.2	32.8	14.6	5.2	4.2	3.2	3.0
Other NW Europe	10.2	9.2	10.9	7.0	4.9	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.2
South Europe	15.9	14.7	8.0	10.0	12.0	9.4	2.5	1.5	0.7
East Europe	11.9	9.7	5.1	6.3	3.8	3.2	2.7	8.1	8.2
Asia	3.0	2.7	4.0	5.4	11.2	33.1	38.3	29.3	33.7
East Asia				2.8	5.1	12.0	12.3	8.6	10.1
Other Asia				2.7	6.0	21.1	26.0	20.7	23.6
America	37.0	32.9	38.3	36.9	52.1	44.8	43.2	52.6	43.1
Canada	22.1	23.3	18.8	14.1	13.5	4.2	2.5	2.0	2.3
Mexico	11.6	4.7	6.6	11.0	13.7	14.6	16.2	28.2	16.5
Caribbean	1.9	2.6	5.4	4.6	13.3	16.7	12.7	10.3	10.2
Central America	0.4	1.0	2.4	1.6	3.1	2.8	5.4	6.2	5.7
South America	1.0	1.4	2.3	3.1	7.8	6.4	6.4	5.8	8.3
Africa	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.7	1.7	2.3	3.5	7.4
Oceania	0.2	0.5	1.7	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.6
Not specified	0.0	–	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.3	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number (000s)	4,296	699	857	2,499	3,214	4,248	6,244	9,775	10,299

Source: *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2010, Table 2.

Notes: Percentages of decade-total immigrants admitted based on country of last residence. East Asia does not include Vietnam.

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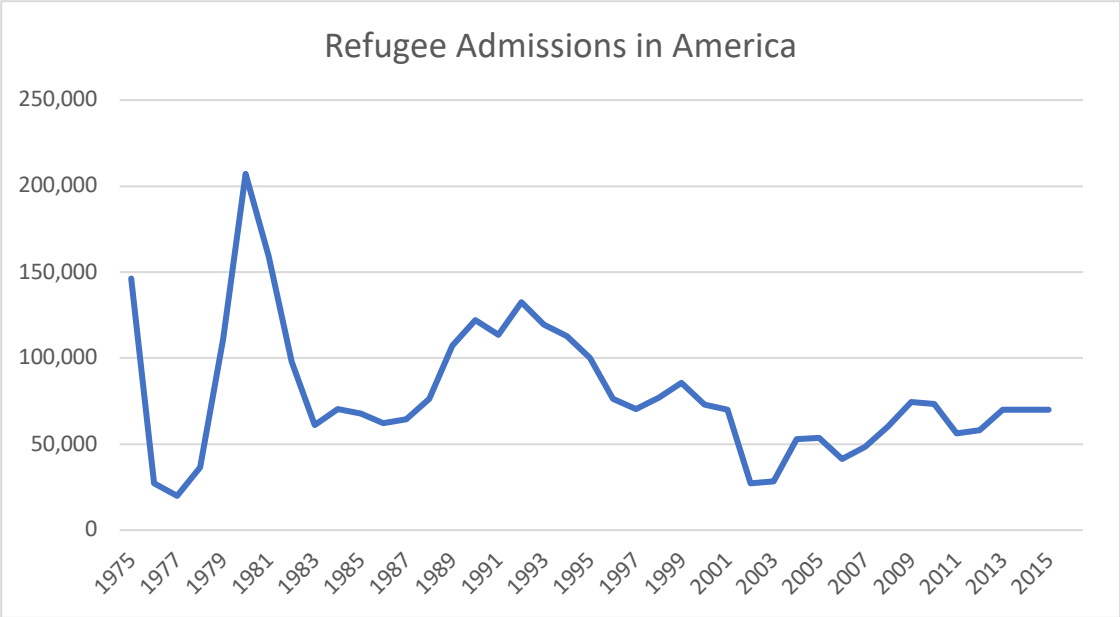
[40] Hatton, "United states immigration policy: The 1965 act and its consequences," 353.

Appendix C: Refugee Admission and Resettlement in the United States

Modern refugee admission policy in the United States began after World War II, centering around people fleeing Nazi, Fascist, or Soviet persecution. This increase in displaced peoples culminated in the passage of the first refugee legislation of the post-war era, The Displaced Persons Act of 1948. Following passage of that particular refugee act, the next thirty years witnessed the passage of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, the Refugee Escape Act of 1957, the Fair Share Law of 1960, and the Refugee Assistance Act of 1962. These policy implementations were not meant to be permanent structural systems for refugee admittance and resettlement in the United States. Rather, they were a series of temporary responses to emergency crises stemming from the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. Between 1965 and 1976, a series of amendments and reform proposals attempted to address a need for a more permanent refugee admission policy. The modern refugee admission program arose from the effects of the Vietnam War on refugee policy in the United States. In 1975, over 130,000 refugees were evacuated from Southeast Asia, prompting the Ford administration to promote refugee reform to accommodate the sudden influx of migrants. As the new reform bill was crafted, the United States continued admitting refugees, with over 90% arriving from Asia.[41]

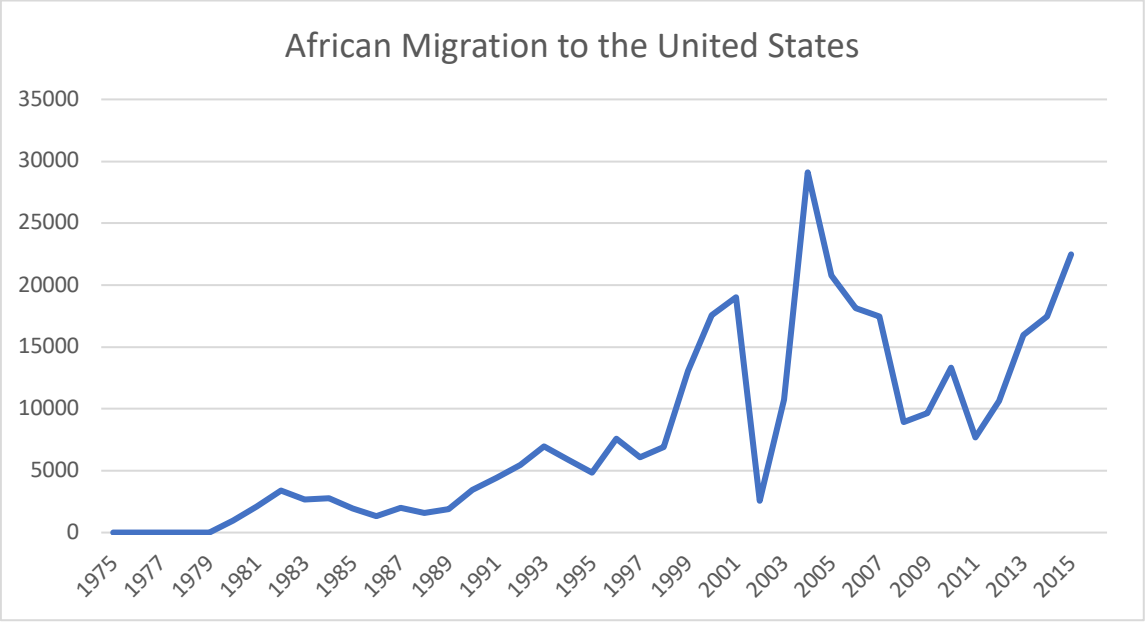


[42]

The ongoing proposals, amendments, and reforms carried out between then 1960s and 1970s resulted in the most comprehensive policy enacted by Congress in the 20th century concerning refugee admission and resettlement, Refugee Act of 1980. It expanded the definition of refugee, incorporating “the international definition of refugee from the United

[41] Anker, Deborah E., and Michael H. Posner. "Forty Year Crisis: A Legislative History of the Refugee Act of 1980, The." *San Diego L. Rev.* 19 (1981): 9.
[42] "Cumulative Summary of Refugee Admissions." U.S. Department of State. December 31, 2015.

Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees… [formally eliminating] geographical and ideological preferences" and allowed for up to 50,000 "normal flow" refugee admissions annually, while permitting the President to add to that number as necessary out of "special concern."[43] Immediately, the number of refugees spiked to over 200,000 in 1980, with almost 80% arriving from Asia, continuing the trend in refugee admissions in relation to the aftermath of the Vietnam War. That year, 955 refugees arrived from Africa as the first African refugees admitted under the Refugee Act of 1980.[44]



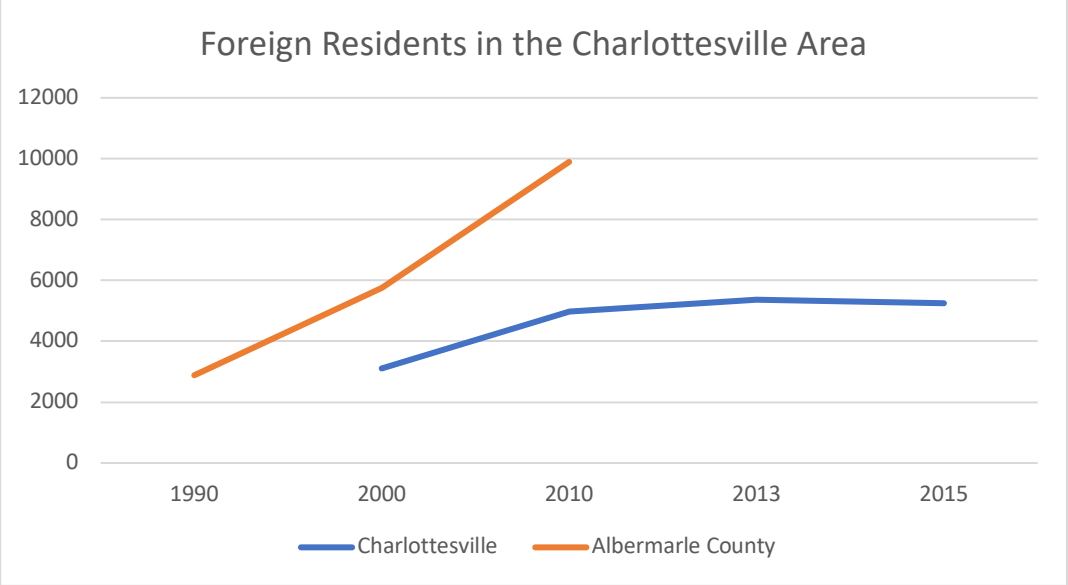
[45]

Refugees from the African continent gained the ability to seek legal status as a result of the Refugee Act of 1980. As a result, the number of refugees from the African Continent has fluctuated but steadily increased since that year. Between 1975 and 2015, over 300,000 refugees have arrived from Africa to the United States. The concern surrounding this new demographic of American residents often focuses on addressing material and financial needs. However, immigrants and refugees, like any other people, require more than the addressing of their physical needs. As a result, this paper seeks to better understand the relationship between religion and the settlement of African immigrants, particularly regarding the group of refugees that has arrived in the United States in greater numbers since the beginning of the 21st century.

[43] Anker, "Forty Year Crisis: A Legislative History of the Refugee Act of 1980, 11.
[44] Anker, "Forty Year Crisis: A Legislative History of the Refugee Act of 1980.
[45] "Cumulative Summary of Refugee Admissions." U.S. Department of State. December 31, 2015.

Appendix D: Charlottesville, An Emerging Gateway

At first glance, Charlottesville appears to have been an unlikely place for many immigrants and refugees to settle. Between 2016 and 2017, larger and/or populated states like California, Texas, and New York hosted the most refugees in their initial arrival. During this time, Virginia failed to appear in the top ten states to be the initial state of residence for refugees.[46] Central Virginia lacks the infrastructure and available jobs for new immigrants and refugees, unlike major cities such as Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Houston. Even in Virginia, a majority of immigrants settle close to Washington D.C., the country's capital. However, despite the trends of immigrants in the United States, the foreign-born community in Charlottesville is growing; "The 2014 update to the 2010 U.S. Census estimates that nearly 12 percent of Charlottesville residents and 10 percent of Albemarle County residents are foreign-born… An estimated 10 percent of students in Charlottesville Public Schools speak a language other than English at home."



[47]

Furthermore, the International Rescue Committee that assists with refugee resettlement in the United States maintains offices not only in large cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, and New York, but also in Charlottesville, VA. According to Harriet Kuhr, the director of the IRC's Charlottesville office, "Since 1998, Charlottesville has welcomed over 3,000 refugees from 32 countries as new members of the community. Families who escaped violence and deprivation now live in the safety and security of this small, friendly city. Many now own their own homes or run successful businesses. Refugee children flourish in the excellent local schools."[48] Above being a welcoming place for voluntary immigrants, the Charlottesville office of the IRC has encouraged the resettlement of refugees in central Virginia.

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[46] Zong, Jie, and Jeanne Batalova. "Refugees and Asylees in the United States." September 28, 2017.
[47] McKenzie, Bryan. "In Charlottesville, refugees find a place to call home." The Daily Progress. July 2, 2016.
[48] "The IRC in Charlottesville, VA." Rescue.org.