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World Relief Mourns Death, Celebrates Life of Evelyn Mangham, Co-Founder of World Relief's Refugee Resettlement Program

BALTIMORE – The World Relief family celebrates the life and ministry of Evelyn Mangham, who passed away today at the age of 98. Along with her late husband, Grady Mangham, Evelyn began World Relief's refugee resettlement program in the 1970s.

Evelyn Breaden was born in 1922 and spent the early years of her life as the daughter of missionaries in the Middle East. After marrying Grady Mangham, she moved to Vietnam, where the couple lived and ministered from 1947 to 1967 as Christian & Missionary Alliance missionaries, teaching in a Bible school and supporting church planting and discipleship among the Montagnard people. They returned to Nyack, New York, where they worked from the Alliance's headquarters.

In 1975, when Saigon fell, Evelyn and Grady began receiving urgent pleas from people whom they had known in Vietnam who had been forced to flee as refugees. "We had to do something," Evelyn reflected in a 2016 interview. The couple tirelessly worked to advocate for refugees to be welcomed to the U.S., knocking on the doors of both the U.S. government and the various churches that had supported them as overseas missionaries. Evelyn would often work from the hallway of the denominational offices in Nyack, insisting that churches welcome the large number of refugees who were arriving. In a single year, Alliance churches welcomed more than 10,000 refugees who had fled Vietnam and from conflicts in neighboring Laos and Cambodia.

In 1979, this effort that had initially been coordinated by the Christian & Missionary Alliance's Compassion and Mercy Associates (CAMA) Services and then through Lutheran World Relief was brought under the auspices of World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, which had been focused on empowering churches to care for vulnerable and displaced people overseas since its founding, but which began its U.S. refugee resettlement ministry under the leadership of Grady and Evelyn Mangham. Grady Mangham continued to lead World Relief's refugee resettlement program until 1987, resettling an average of 6,300 refugees annually from countries all around the world. Since then, several of Grady and Evelyn's children and grandchildren have served World Relief in various capacities.

The refugee resettlement program that Evelyn Mangham helped to found has now resettled roughly 300,000 refugees to communities throughout the United States. In the coming months, World Relief anticipates receiving between 7,000 and 10,000 individuals who have recently fled Afghanistan in an



evacuation with many historical parallels to the refugee crisis in Vietnam that sparked Evelyn and Grady Mangham's ministry. The local church remains central to our mission, just as it was when Evelyn and Grady founded the program.

The World Relief family throughout the globe grieves Evelyn's death — but not without hope, confident in the resurrection through Christ that was Evelyn's greatest hope. And we celebrate the incredible legacy of Evelyn and Grady's life and ministry.

"Evelyn was a personal hero of mine whom I had the privilege of meeting several years ago when we were both speaking at a Christian & Missionary Alliance event. Her vitality, fierce sense of compassion, warmth, and humor inspired a room full of people who loved Jesus. Many of the Montagnard women who attended that event flocked to Evelyn to give her a hug and to dance and sing with her," reflects **Jenny Yang, World Relief senior vice president for Policy and Advocacy**. "Her love for refugees, for the church and for her Lord were contagious. I and so many others at World Relief count it a privilege to be a part of her legacy. Her impact on the lives of those who are vulnerable will be felt for generations to come, and I know there was a huge celebration for her in heaven as so many people whose lives she touched welcomed her to her eternal home."

"Evelyn spent her life in various parts of the world and knew what it meant to live as a foreigner, and then she devoted many years to welcoming others who had experienced that displacement and liminality into the United States. She lived out better than most the biblical truth that we are all 'foreigners and strangers on earth.' As the author of Hebrews wrote, she was 'longing for a better country — a heavenly one,' and we rejoice that Evelyn now rests in the presence of the Lord, even as we grieve with her family still on earth," reflected **World Relief President & CEO Myal Greene**.

Even into her last years of life, living in Florida, Evelyn always would greet refugees from the Middle East with a smile, singing with them the Arabic songs she remembered from her childhood. As refugee resettlement has become increasingly controversial in recent years, including within evangelical churches, Evelyn was asked how she would advise Christians who felt reluctant to engage in refugee ministry:

Well, respond to what Jesus said, that's all: "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger" — refugee — "and you took me in ... Inasmuch as you did unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did unto me." It's simple obedience.

World Relief honors the legacy of Evelyn Mangham, and our global community of staff, volunteers, and partners will be praying for her family and celebrating her life, grateful for the lasting impact she had on all of us.

About World Relief



World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world's greatest problems – disasters, extreme poverty, violence, oppression, and mass displacement. For over 75 years, we've partnered with churches and community leaders in the U.S. and abroad to bring hope, healing and transformation to the most vulnerable. Learn more at [worldrelief.org](https://www.worldrelief.org).

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