

LIFE ON THE MOVE

Reflections on migration

In 2013, **Abraham Darly** was working at an Ugandan LGBTQ youth center. He was also in a same-gender relationship with a minister. When another pastor discovered Abraham's relationship, he feared it would shame the entire church. Several pastors forced Abraham into a car and brought him to the police, who interrogated him about his relationship. The pastors threatened Abraham and banned him from their churches.

A few months later, the Ugandan government passed a bill making homosexuality punishable by life imprisonment. Local newspapers published Abraham's name, photograph, and workplace. In 2014, while Abraham was at work, he heard the police were looking for him at his home. Fearing for his life, Abraham fled to Kenya.

"When I think of churches in Uganda, I tell myself, 'They are just people, like you. God did not reject you; the people did.' There are other ways to find God without church. My heart is just coming back to religion now—slowly, slowly.

"I expected to come to the U.S. and start my life. Instead, I got \$300 of government assistance every month, for eight months—people pay \$300 a month for parking here! There's no housing, no jobs, and I've encountered racism. You feel like there is no future.

"I heard about PSR through Jess Delegencia [Asian American and Pacific Islander Roundtable Coordinator, PSR's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS)]. I thought, 'Let me join the institution that is aiming to change this country.' Hate doesn't change people. I was hated in newspapers, by my family; I didn't stop being gay. Love changes everything.

"This pain I have every day—I don't know when it started or when it will end, and there's no medication for it. That's why I'm trying, every day, to improve the lives of other people."

As a summer intern for CLGS, Abraham coordinated a convening for LGBTQ refugees and asylum-seekers.



"Migration is a game that the government plays. Thousands of people are coming to the U.S.—some of us are LGBT seeking asylum. Many are survivors of war, often wars that the United States is involved in. As long as immigration is a political issue used to get votes, it will never be resolved."

"By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" *Psalms 137: 1-4*