

## Love The Sojourner: An Exploration of the World Refugee Situation and how the EFC Might Respond

A Background Paper by the Social Action Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada  
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### Introduction

“Love the sojourner... for you were sojourners”. This phrase in Deuteronomy 10:19 is one of many Biblical references to refugees. Leviticus 19:33 states: “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong.... you shall love him as yourself”. Leviticus 24:22 states: “You shall have one law for the sojourner and for the native; for I am the Lord your God”. Deuteronomy 19:10 called for cities of refuge to which people could flee, “lest innocent blood be shed”. The story of God giving a home to a refugee people is basic to the Old Testament. Jesus was a refugee when his family fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s killing of infants according to Matthew 2:13ff. Hebrews 13:2, states: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”. In Matthew 25:34-35, Jesus refers to the last judgment and says to those who are saved: “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom ... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me”.

However clear these teachings may be, the current world refugee situation is almost overwhelming. At the end of 1996 there were nearly 15 million refugees in the world, mainly in the Southern Hemisphere. Another 19 million were “internally

displaced”. Millions more are said to be in “refugee-like” situations. The relatively higher number of internally displaced reflects the trend that some borders, in both the richer north and the poorer south, are being closed to refugees, meaning that sometimes they have to stay in their own countries, trapped in war zones. The report for 1997 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says that even when they are allowed into a neighbouring country, they tend to get less protection, meaning that refugee camps may be controlled by militia groups who abuse women and force men and boys to become ‘resistance fighters’. And sometimes refugees are forced back into their home countries before the conditions from which they fled are resolved.<sup>2</sup> This paper is an attempt to identify the issues and trends in the world refugee situation. It includes background material, a survey of “refugee producing situations” and a section on causes and various responses. The objective is to help the EFC to consider whether there are actions it ought to undertake. Some groups associated with the EFC have long been active in refugee work, both in Canada and abroad. And churches in the EFC include many new Canadians who come from refugee situations overseas. These factors, together with the Biblical teachings, provide a basis for the EFC to consider this issue.

### II. Background Developments

#### *Migrations in Canadian History*

A brief review of migrations to this country may help to introduce the subject. A most obvious early migration is that of people from Europe. (An Aboriginal person has observed, facetiously, that if they had had more restrictive immigration policies they might have saved themselves a lot of trouble.) Before the 1860s, slaves from the United States found refuge in Canada. Later in the nineteenth century Canada brought men from China to help build the railways, though when that

task was completed Canada erected barriers, both financial and legal, to restrict immigration from China.<sup>3</sup> In the early decades of the twentieth century, the government worked hard to fill the prairies with immigrants from Europe and the US. The record year was 1913 when over 400,000 came.

After World War I the government was more restrictive. It excluded immigrants deemed undesirable because of Canada's social, educational, or labour requirements or because the prospective immigrants' customs might hinder their assimilation.<sup>4</sup> The *Immigration Act* of the time allowed the government to refuse "immigrants belonging to any nationality or race deemed undesirable". People from the USA and the UK were preferred. Nevertheless, more than twenty thousand Mennonites from Russia were admitted in the 1920s. In the 1930s, however, when people were fleeing Naziism in Europe, Canada's record in accepting Jews was worse than that of other western countries; even Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil took more.<sup>5</sup> It can be noted that the Anglican and United churches, who had long been involved with serving newcomers, did call on the government to open the door more widely.<sup>6</sup>

After World War II Canada became somewhat more open but the cautions continued. Prime Minister Mackenzie King said in 1947 that "the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make any fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population ..."<sup>7</sup> Despite these cautions, groups with connections to the millions of displaced people in Europe called for more admissions, as did other Canadians. In 1947 Mennonites, Lutherans, German Baptists and Catholics formed the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees and received significant government funding for their refugee work.<sup>8</sup> Still, for about ten thousand Mennonite refugees from Europe the door to Canada was closed; they then went to Paraguay.<sup>9</sup>

Gradually, and in part because of Canada's new labour needs, more people were allowed in. Between 1947 and 1951 over 100,000 "displaced persons" from Europe were admitted under a labour program.<sup>10</sup> Many of these soon brought relatives under the sponsorship provisions of the time. However, the international community was somewhat critical that Canada was taking mainly 'the cream' and leaving the devastated countries of Europe to care for the rest.<sup>11</sup> Eventually, Canada did take some of the more difficult cases including individuals with tuberculosis. However, according to one scholar, Canada's policy toward refugees "was determined primarily by economic and political circumstances. Generosity

and humanitarianism, while reflected in the policies, played secondary roles".<sup>12</sup>

In 1956 when Soviet troops crushed the Hungarian uprising many Canadians, including churches, called on the government to respond generously. It then brought in some 37,500 Hungarians. Since two-thirds of these were Catholic, Canadian Catholics were particularly active in helping to resettle these newcomers. In 1968, when the Soviet Union put down the Czechoslovakian uprising, Canada again responded generously, taking 11,000, though criticisms that Canada was taking mainly 'the cream' continued. In 1972 Canada took 7000 Asians who were expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin. There were special arrangements also for people from Chile after the coup there in 1973, for people from Lebanon after the civil war there started in 1975, and, on a particularly large scale, for people from Southeast Asia.<sup>13</sup> In virtually all situations, Canadian officials went overseas and selected the individuals who would be admitted to Canada. Usually, they chose those likely to become successfully established in Canada.

#### *International Refugee Institutions*

Before World War I, in the western world, refugee assistance was given mainly by churches and the Red Cross. (The Red Cross was formed in 1859 because of needs in the Crimean war.) After WWI the new League of Nations set up a High Commission for Refugees. Though always underfunded, this Commission, led by Fridjof Nanson of Norway, helped millions of WWI refugees as well as several million who fled from the Russian revolution and others who sought refuge from the upheavals in Turkey. Unfortunately, this commission, which had only a temporary mandate, was disbanded in 1938.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1930s the international community set up several other bodies to help the growing number of people fleeing Germany. One commission met with German authorities to negotiate exit arrangements and with officials from receiving countries to negotiate entrance arrangements. However, its success was limited. Support from governments was weak and the commissioners, being government appointees, were cautious about criticizing their own governments.<sup>15</sup> During and after World War II, there were several other international organizations focusing variously on repatriation, resettlement, tracing refugees, and giving them assistance in camps and other settings. Not every country supported the work. The Soviet Union did not want people who had fled its territory during the war to be permanently resettled elsewhere. Also, some governments officially supported these international

organizations but did not provide the funding and cooperation to make them effective.

Once the United Nations was set up in 1945 it provided a basis for a new High Commission for Refugees; hence, the UNHCR. Initially, it was given only a three year mandate with the task of cleaning up the WW II refugee situation in Europe, but the mandate was extended again and again so that, in effect, it has become a permanent organization; indeed, it is the primary international organization for refugees. Also formulated was an international convention on the rights of refugees. Adopted in 1951, this *Geneva Convention* defined refugees as individuals outside their country who had a well-founded fear that if returned they would be persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Signing governments agreed that they would make an assessment of individuals who claimed to meet this criterion and, if found to do so, they would not send them back, at least not while the danger of persecution continued. Hence the principle of “non-refoulement”.<sup>16</sup> Though first limited to Europe, this convention was extended to the world in a *1967 Protocol*. It has been central to refugee work ever since.

There have long been concerns about the narrowness of the Convention’s definition. It focuses on individual persecution, not on people fleeing the generalized violence of war. In 1969 the Organization of African Unity adopted a wider definition, as did Central American governments in 1984.<sup>17</sup> Also, as shown below, western countries have often used a broader definition for giving protection and material assistance to millions of people in overseas refugee camps and for admitting many for resettlement into their own societies. Canada’s “designated classes”, for example, used for the ‘boat people’ from Southeast Asia and many others, have usually had a broader definition. Nevertheless, the *Geneva Convention*, confirming an international right to refuge from persecution, continues as a basic legal concept for international refugee work, just as the UNHCR is the primary service and advocacy organization.

#### *The Evolution of Canadian Refugee Law*

Before the 1970s there was no procedural mechanism for people to come to Canada, submit claims that they were refugees, and be assessed on that basis. This is not to say that no one came who might have qualified on that basis. However, fewer people came, in part because inter-continental travel was less common. And, at least in the 1960s, those who did come could usually enter as visitors and apply for landed immigrant status from within. If they were refused they could appeal their

deportation orders to the Minister on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

In the mid-1960s there was public concern that too many people were being allowed to stay, that deportation orders were not issued, or, if issued, not carried out.<sup>18</sup> The government then announced that it would clear up the situation by giving landed immigrant status to those who met certain relaxed criteria and deport those who did not. It was somewhat like an amnesty. Also in 1967, the government set up an Immigration Appeal Board (IAB) with authority to consider whether a deportation order should be quashed (cancelled) on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. This would protect the Minister from various pressures.

In 1967, the government also replaced the old immigrant selection system, based on preferred nationalities, with a point system that assessed individual applicants on the basis of their education, knowledge of one of Canada’s official languages, job skills, whether those skills were needed in the Canadian economy, and the likelihood that they would adjust well to Canadian society.<sup>19</sup> This change, with its implicit rejection of racial discrimination, reflected an acknowledgement of the new independent countries in Africa and Asia, many of whom were now equal partners in the Commonwealth.

In a further step toward universalizing its laws, Canada signed the *Geneva Refugee Convention* in 1969. In 1973 the government set up a refugee advisory committee consisting of civil servants from the Immigration and Foreign Affairs departments, with involvement also from local UNHCR staff. The task of the committee was to review written applications from people who claimed to be Convention refugees and to advise the Immigration Minister on whether to give them landed immigrant status. (Later this committee was named the Refugee Status Advisory Committee, or RSAC.) Also in 1973 the government inserted the Convention’s definition into the IAB Act so that people who were rejected by the Minister, upon the advice of the RSAC, could appeal to the IAB on those grounds.

In 1976 the government brought in a completely new *Immigration Act*. Before doing so it arranged for extensive public discussion. However, very little of this discussion dealt with refugee concerns as distinct from immigration matters. Not surprisingly, the new Act did not change the procedures for receiving refugees though it included a provision for private refugee sponsorship.<sup>20</sup> It was still thought that few people would come and claim refugee status, that Canada’s primary channel for accepting refugees would continue to be

that of selecting them abroad.<sup>21</sup>

Late in the 1970s, however, the international refugee scene changed. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese were fleeing, at great risk, to refugee camps in Southeast Asia. Canada, in 1979-80, admitted 60,000. This included both government and privately sponsored refugees, though all came via an overseas selection process.<sup>22</sup> However, the civil wars in Central America and elsewhere, as well as the greater ease in international travel, led to a dramatic increase in the number of people who came to Canada to make refugee claims here. In the early 1970s the IAB dealt with only a few dozen cases per year but in 1980, 1600 people came. In 1985 this number rose to 8400. In 1986 it was 18,000. In May 1986 there was a backlog of 23,000 claims.<sup>23</sup>

When it became evident, early in the 1980s, that the existing RSAC-IAB mechanism was inadequate the government authorized several studies to propose a better system. A report by W. G. Robinson was submitted in 1983; Ed Ratushny did a study in 1984, and Rabbi Gunther Plaut completed his in 1986. The key issues included: whether everyone who had traveled to Canada and submitted a claim for refugee status should be given an oral hearing; whether the body giving that hearing should be of a quasi-judicial nature separate from the Immigration Department; and whether claimants should have the right to appeal negative rulings. Clearly, a structure that would do this would require a vastly increased financial outlay. Was this the best use of resources? Did adherence to the *Geneva Convention* require such a structure? Did the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* require it?

In 1985, before the government had made a decision on these issues, the Supreme Court ruled that refugee claimants had a right to an oral hearing. According to one author, this threw the “the Immigration Department into a tailspin”.<sup>24</sup> At first the government took steps to strengthen the RSAC-IAB system and to dispose of the large backlog with relaxed criteria. This plan, which again was somewhat like an amnesty, avoided the trouble of deporting thousands, but it allowed for the criticism that unscrupulous people who had come and claimed refugee status were being rewarded with a fast track to landed immigrant status while honest people who applied through the regular immigration process overseas faced far more demanding criteria.

As the debate continued critics charged that officials wanted to retain control by maximizing the overseas selection process and minimizing the scope for people who make their own way to Canada and submit claims here; further, that they wanted to

admit only those who could successfully establish themselves in Canada. Officials countered by saying if people were entirely unsuited to Canada’s society and economy then bringing them to Canada was not a solution, that different solutions had to be found for such people, that the cost of processing the case of a person who came and made a refugee claim in Canada was three times that of selecting an individual overseas, that those who came to make claims were usually able-bodied, affluent, and resourceful men, while the vast majority of the refugees worldwide were impoverished women and children.<sup>25</sup> Officials also pointed out that the Canadian government gave substantial assistance to the Red Cross and the UNHCR to care for refugees in overseas settings, suggesting that this represented a better use of resources.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, in 1987, the government announced that it would bring in a new system. It would honour the principle of giving every claimant an oral hearing, albeit in a qualified way. It would set up a new Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). There would be a “pre-screening” hearing where people would be “screened out” if there was no evidence of persecution or if they had come to Canada via a “safe third country”, meaning one where they could have presented their claim. This last aspect was intensely debated since most of the claimants came to Canada through the United States, which had a much lower acceptance rate for claimants from Central America. How could Canada, the critics asked, entrust its obligations under the *Geneva Convention* to a country with a vastly inferior record.

Interestingly, Canada never implemented the “safe third country” provision. Hence, the pre-screening stage did not become what critics had feared. Virtually everyone who came received a hearing on the merits. The hearings were before a two-person panel and only if the two agreed could there be a negative decision. Claimants had the right to legal counsel but the IRB process was to be non-adversarial. Some who had criticized the mechanism at first, wrote later as that “Canada still has the most favourable conditions for asylum-seekers in the Western world”.<sup>27</sup>

Despite this approval, not all the issues were resolved. Clearing the backlog, which in 1992 had 100,000 cases, was a major problem.<sup>28</sup> Critics charged that people were using the refugee claimant system to by-pass the regular immigration procedures, that over one-half of the claimants were destroying their identity documents en route to Canada in order to increase their chances, that even though the formal appeal process was very narrow, for some cases there were fairly extensive review processes, and that Canada was devoting vastly disproportionate resources to the task of processing

those who had the means to come to Canada and that this represented an unfairness toward those in overseas settings who were not able to come.<sup>29</sup>

Accordingly, a government appointed study released late in 1997 recommended major changes. It called for a new Protection Agency with responsibility for both inland claimants and overseas selection. It would use the same criteria for both. These criteria would be somewhat broader than those of the *Geneva Convention* because: "Protection of the rights of the child and protection against torture and slavery are as important as protection against persecution based on race, religion, and other refugee grounds".<sup>30</sup> The Agency would be equipped to identify protection needs in overseas settings and to process applicants there, thus de-emphasizing the need for an elaborate determination structure in Canada. It would also work closely with NGOs and allow for private sponsorship of refugees. It would be staffed by civil servants, not outside appointees as in the case of the IRB. Though separate from the immigration system, the Agency would be "sensitive to broader national imperatives" and "amenable to ministerial directives".<sup>31</sup> The report also favoured the earlier 'safe third country' concept, advising that Canada should work in concert with other western countries and guarantee claimants only one hearing.

The idea of a Protection Agency for refugees, separate from Immigration procedures, has been well received but other recommendations have raised questions: how could the Agency possibly be equipped to identify protection needs in all the overseas settings of the world; is the effort to have the overseas and inland processes operate on the same basis really a way of restricting the inland process; if Canada enters into cooperative arrangements with other countries will there be guarantees that those countries have fair procedures for hearing claimants; and if the proposed structure will be more closely tied to Ministerial policies, how might this affect decisions which can have life and death implications for claimants.

### III. Major Refugee Producing Situations

The following survey does not include all refugee situations but it does refer to situations in all areas of the world. Most of those described are current but the survey draws on some from the recent past as well. It does not describe them in detail. Its purpose is to outline the magnitude of the refugee problem, the diversity of the refugee situations, and the many different forces and dynamics that create those situations. It is also to show how individual countries and the international community have responded to different refugee situations. Also mentioned are situations where there has been movement toward a resolution. Indeed, some have been resolved.

#### A. Africa

**Liberia and Sierra Leone:** In mid-1997 there were 670,000 Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries. Most had fled from Liberia in 1989 when an attempt by a rebel group to overthrow a corrupt President turned into an ethnic war.<sup>32</sup> In 1991, the Liberian rebels also invaded Sierra Leone, ostensibly to help a rebel group there. However, developments in that country became such that 380,000 Sierra Leonians also sought refuge in surrounding countries while 800,000 became internally displaced. Some 200,000 Liberians and 50,000 Sierra Leonians died in the fighting.<sup>34</sup> At first those fleeing to neighbouring countries were accepted with admirable hospitality but after a few years there were stresses. In 1996 a freighter brimming with Liberian refugees was turned away from one West African port after another.<sup>35</sup> The UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have worked hard to resolve the conflict. Early in 1998 it appeared that these efforts were bearing fruit and that there might be a major repatriation of refugees.

**Angola and Mozambique:** These two countries, though on opposite sides of Africa, have similar experiences. Both were colonies of Portugal; both gained independence in 1975; but both then became engulfed in long and devastating civil wars. In Angola the death toll of the twenty-year war was 600,000;<sup>36</sup> some 350,000 fled to neighbouring countries, and 2 million became internally displaced.<sup>37</sup> In Mozambique sixteen years of fighting took over one million lives while 1.7 million people fled to neighbouring countries and four million became internally displaced.<sup>38</sup>

To a degree the civil wars in both countries were tied to regional and international politics, involving the Soviet Union, Cuba, South Africa and the USA. Neighbouring countries served as conduits. Eventually, with the end of the Cold War and the fall of apartheid, UN and African peace efforts bore fruit. A Mozambiquen peace agreement was signed in 1992 and the implementation has been proceeding relatively well. For Angola, where ethnic differences played a larger role, a 1994 peace agreement has encountered difficulty. Most rebel forces were demobilized and others were integrated into the government army. But late in 1997 both sides seemed to prepare for more fighting. Many small weapons were in private hands. And over one million people remained internally displaced.<sup>39</sup>

**The Horn:** One part of the large and intractable tragedy in the Horn of Africa involves the Sudan where a war between the north and the south started in 1983 when the government in the north sought to impose Islamic law on the whole country.

The southerners objected. They are black Africans and either Christian or animist by religion while most northerners are Arabic and Muslim.<sup>40</sup> The fighting was so extensive that by 1993, 1.3 million southerners had died, out of a total southern population of six million; another half a million had fled to neighbouring countries; a majority of the rest had become internally displaced.<sup>41</sup> In 1997 some alignments changed as the government gained the support of several southern factions while the main southern rebel group was joined by some northern opposition movements. Nevertheless, the fighting continued, as did the displacement of people. International efforts to get food to the displaced have encountered major difficulties. Camps for displaced people have been attacked. All sides have used extreme measures to recruit fighters. In some instances the availability of food has been conditional on conversion to Islam.<sup>42</sup>

A second part of the Horn situation involves Ethiopia, which produced masses of refugees in the 1970's and 80's. However, after the 1991 change of government nearly one million returned. One factor that forced people to flee was the war against the Eritrean independence movement. This, plus a severe drought in the Eritrean region, prompted 900,000 Eritrean Ethiopians to seek refuge in the Sudan.<sup>43</sup> After 1991 some of these returned but because of various hardships 350,000 remained in the Sudan. Another factor contributing to Ethiopia's refugees was the war with Somalia over the issue of the Ogadan territory. This territory was within Ethiopia's borders but most of the people in it were Somali speaking. When Ethiopian forces defeated Somalia in 1978, many of these people, perhaps 700,000, fled to Somalia.<sup>44</sup>

A third part of the Horn is Somalia where, late in the 1980's, fighting broke out among different factions. Within a few years 350,000 Somalis were killed, 800,000 had fled to neighbouring countries, and 2 million were internally displaced.<sup>45</sup> In 1992 and 93 the international community undertook a 'humanitarian intervention' by sending in military forces to try to ensure that relief work could be carried out. By the mid-1990s some Somalis had returned to their home areas but a broadly accepted political settlement was not achieved. Banditry continued, hindering the greatly needed relief work. Crop production remained far below pre-war levels. And in mid 1997 nearly half a million Somali refugees were still in neighbouring countries, the majority in Ethiopia, others in Kenya.<sup>46</sup> A substantial number of Somalis came to Canada.

**Rwanda and Burundi:** One refugee-causing factor in these countries is the relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi peoples. The colonial rulers for both countries reinforced

historic patterns whereby the Tutsi ruled over the Hutu even though the Hutu were the majority. With independence the Hutus gained power in Rwanda. A major massacre of Tutsi people there followed, and half a million Tutsi fled to neighbouring countries. In Burundi about 100,000 Hutu were killed.<sup>47</sup> In the following decades there were both incidents of violence as well as efforts to make accommodations.

During the civil war in Uganda in the 1980s, many Rwandan Tutsi refugees there fought on Museveni's side. After his victory these Tutsis formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). In 1990 the RPF moved into Rwanda where the government was led by Hutus. This increased Hutu-Tutsi tensions enormously. At the same time Rwanda's economy was declining rapidly though, with outside help, the government was still able to greatly increase its weapons supply. Meanwhile, there were negotiations between the RPF and the Hutu led government. Then, in April 1994, a plane crash took the lives of the Presidents of both countries, both of whom were Hutu. The Hutus of Rwanda then set forth on an unprecedented killing spree. At least 500,000, perhaps 800,000, Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.<sup>48</sup>

The killing stopped in July 1994 when the Tutsi RPF seized power. Now the Hutus, fearing reprisals, fled en masse, mainly to Zaire but also to Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda. The outflow was so massive - nearly two million people - and very quick. Site preparations, in terms of water and sanitation, were totally inadequate. Some 100,000 died in the process. Further, the Hutu militia leaders who had instigated the genocide had not been separated from the ordinary refugees. Hence, even though the UNHCR maintained the camps, these militia leaders soon gained such control over them that they could use the camps to threaten the RPF government in Rwanda and prevent refugees who wished to return from doing so.<sup>49</sup>

At this time, in Zaire, the movement to oust President Mobutu was gaining strength. This movement was supported by Museveni of Uganda and the Tutsi led RPF of Rwanda. Accordingly, this movement was hostile toward the Hutus in these Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire. As a result, in November 1996, this movement forced most of the Rwandan refugees in Zaire to return to Rwanda. It was a sudden and massive return. Seeing this, the government of Tanzania took action to also send back the half million Rwandans on its territory. There were many problems in this repatriation movement, in part because the Hutu militia had still not been separated from the refugees.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the UN and numerous aid organizations worked hard to assist the returnees, as well as the million internally displaced people.<sup>51</sup>

In Burundi the 1994 plane crash also triggered killings but they were not nearly as numerous as those in Rwanda. However, a Tutsi coup in Burundi in July 1996 against the Hutu President led to 15,000 deaths, while 400,000 became internally displaced, and 150,000 fled as refugees to Zaire and Tanzania. In Burundi the camps for the displaced were both a source of fighters and a target of attack. Both sides saw camps for the displaced as military enclaves for the enemy rather than as safe havens exempt from warfare. The 70,000 Burundi Hutu refugees who had fled to Zaire were forced to return when the anti-Mobutu movement there gained strength but many fell into the hands of the military from which they had fled. Several hundred were massacred.

### *B. Latin America and the Caribbean*

**Colombia:** In Colombia 900,000 are internally displaced.<sup>52</sup> One reason is the violence of privately armed groups who clear peasants away either on behalf of large landowners interested primarily in commercial and export agriculture, or on behalf of drug traffickers who may also want more land. Another factor is the fighting between the government and guerrilla groups. Peasants living in areas where the guerrillas are active are suspected of supporting them; they then become objects of government oppression and violence. To avoid this they flee. The US government has greatly increased its military aid to Colombian authorities, thereby encouraging them to rely on military methods to address the problems. The internally displaced receive no assistance from the government or UN organizations, though some international church groups are helping.<sup>53</sup>

**Peru:** In Peru more than 25,000 people were killed and over one million became internally displaced from 1980 to 1993 because of the war between the Maoist “Shining Path” guerrilla movement and the government.<sup>54</sup> Guerrillas forced peasants to join them.<sup>55</sup> Evangelicals, particularly Pentecostals, were targeted by the guerrillas and more than 300 pastors were killed in those years.<sup>56</sup> By 1994 the Shining Path had lost considerable strength, in part because of “civil defence patrols formed by the villagers”. In response to the reduced violence some peasants have gone back to their home areas, with government assistance. But instances of violence continue. As a result many of the displaced stay in the urban shanty-towns to which they fled even though social and economic conditions there are extremely difficult.<sup>57</sup>

**Guatemala:** In Guatemala a 36 year civil war that ended in 1996 left over 100,000 dead and one million uprooted.<sup>58</sup> A key issue was the unequal distribution of land - 2% of landowners control 67% of the arable land. In the early 1980s the

government forcibly uprooted over a million indigenous people in order to better fight the guerrillas.<sup>59</sup> Once taken out, many were soon helped to go back under arrangements whereby they would be firmly cut off from the guerrilla movement and participate in civil defence patrols. Approximately 200,000 Guatemalans had fled to Mexico where they received some assistance from the government and international NGOs. Later in the 1980s and during the 1990’s the international community helped many of these to return to Guatemala. Others were helped to become integrated into Mexican society though both courses continue to be marked by problems. In Guatemala internal violence, corruption and poverty remain rampant.<sup>60</sup>

**El Salvador:** Fighting between the government and the FMLN guerrilla movement erupted in 1979. In that year there were 1000 killings by death squads every month.<sup>61</sup> One million people fled. A majority went to the USA but 100,000 went to Honduras. Some came to Canada. Those who were internally displaced in El Salvador fared somewhat better than the internally displaced in Guatemala since El Salvador is smaller and the government received more aid from the USA. Salvadorans who fled to Honduras were suspected by both Salvadoran government and the Honduran government of supporting the FMLN. In 1987 some of these began to go back on their own though the international community provided assistance. In 1992 there was a peace agreement between the government and the FMLN but social and economic problems continue and the rate of violent deaths is greater than it was during the war years, making those who fled wary about returning.<sup>62</sup> Canada accepted 36,000 Salvadorans between 1983 and 1993. Of these, 29,000 were Convention refugees.<sup>63</sup>

**Nicaragua:** In the fighting that led to the fall of the Somoza regime in 1979 over 100,000 people were killed and 500,000 became displaced.<sup>64</sup> When the Sandanistas came to power that year 250,000 Nicaraguans who had fled to Costa Rica returned. The UNHCR, with resources from Germany and Scandinavia, helped to resettle them, but there were new outflows too. On the Atlantic coast where there was resistance to the new Sandanista government, 12,000 were forcibly resettled farther away from the border. However, this caused some 14,000 to flee across the border into Honduras. The UNHCR set up camps there but when the USA started funding the Contras they conscripted fighters from these camps.<sup>65</sup> After the 1990 peace agreement following the electoral defeat of the Sandanista government, at least 30,000 returned from Honduras to Nicaragua though there were difficulties in becoming resettled and reintegrated into the society. Even in 1997 internal violence remained very high. Many of those who

had fled continued to stay away.<sup>66</sup>

**Haiti:** Haiti is one of the most economically impoverished countries of this hemisphere. This, plus a lack of security, has led over one million Haitians to leave.<sup>67</sup> The 1991 election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide brought hope for an improvement but a few months later he was deposed in a military coup. In 1994, after an extensive international involvement, Aristide was reinstated. Some Haitians living abroad then returned, with UNHCR help. The international community worked in many ways to try to improve things, in part to make it more attractive for Haitians to stay. The USA wanted to avoid a massive inflow. It had interdicted many boats of fleeing Haitians and sent them back. This policy, however, was controversial so it was stopped. Presently, the USA accepts a small number of Haitian refugees but they have to be interviewed in Haiti. Unfortunately, few of the hoped for social and economic improvements in Haiti have been realized.<sup>68</sup>

#### *C. Middle East*

**The Palestinians:** After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which followed the Israeli declaration of independence, over 700,000 Palestinians became refugees. At that time it was envisioned, according to UN Security Council Resolution 194, that a fair portion of them would soon be repatriated and others would be compensated. Except in a few cases, that did not happen. Many were uprooted a second time when, early in the 1970s, tensions in Jordan forced many Palestinians there to flee to Lebanon. Meanwhile, many others found work in the oil industry in Iraq and Kuwait but the 1990 Gulf crisis forced nearly 400,000 of these to return to Jordan and the West Bank. (That Gulf crisis, it can be noted, also forced over a million other Arab and Asian “guest workers” to leave Iraq and Kuwait.) Over 3 million Palestinian refugees remain in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, and the “peace process”, following the 1993 Oslo Accord, has done virtually nothing to resolve their situation.<sup>69</sup>

**Kurds:** There are about 20 million Kurds in ‘Kurdistan’, an area that encompasses a portion of northern Iraq and parts of Turkey, Iran, Syria and the former Soviet Union. The Kurds’ long struggle to have their own state has been thwarted by the controlling powers. Iraq has relocated them by force, destroyed villages and used chemical weapons against them. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) some 350,000 were expelled to Iran. Others fled to Turkey. After the 1991 Gulf War, when the Iraqi government put down another Kurdish move towards autonomy, another 1.4 million fled to Iran and 500,000 to Turkey. Turkey did not want to take any more;

hundreds of thousands were stranded; so the USA and the UK, under UN auspices, created a “safe haven” in northern Iraq, one hundred miles wide and 25 miles deep, in effect telling the Iraqi government to stay out.<sup>70</sup> The international community then provided assistance to people there. This continued until 1996 when the USA and the UK abandoned that effort with the result that thousands more fled to Iran. Meanwhile, Turkey has long carried on a brutal war against the Kurds living within its territory, causing at least half a million people, perhaps two million, to become uprooted.

#### *D. Asia*

**Afghanistan:** Afghanistan, with a population of 15 million, has produced more refugees than any other country. Early in the 1990s there were 3.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan; another 2 million were in Iran; and an additional two million were internally displaced. Many of these had fled in 1979 when the Soviets invaded and installed “a repressive anti-Islamic” government.<sup>71</sup> Soon, various resistance groups appeared, equipped and supplied by the USA, China and Saudi Arabia. The fighting that followed devastated the country. The UNHCR and some 100 international NGOs provided assistance in the refugee camps in Pakistan but these camps were controlled by resistance leaders who used them to recruit fighters. In 1989 the Soviets withdrew. Some refugees then returned, with help from the UNHCR. But the different resistance groups now fought each other, causing more people to become displaced. In 1996 the most radical Islamic group, the Taliban, captured the capital, Kabul, and instituted a very strict Islamic rule. This, and the continuing fighting in many parts of the country, has caused thousands more to flee.<sup>72</sup>

**Burma (Myanmar):** Burma’s oppressive government has caused at least half a million people, perhaps one million, to become internally displaced, and several hundred thousand to flee the country.<sup>73</sup> One affected group is the Karen minority, of whom a substantial portion are Christian. They have struggled for independence since 1949, using bases in Thailand where they also controlled a lucrative cross-border trade. In 1984 the Burmese government set out to suppress this movement, thereby causing many Karens, perhaps 90,000, to flee into Thailand where some NGOs gave them assistance.<sup>74</sup> The Burmese forces have made cross-border raids on the Karen camps, and Thai authorities, using brutal methods, have forced many to go back.<sup>75</sup>

Another affected group was the Rohingya Muslims. Many of these fled to Bangladesh. In 1978 the Bangladeshi government persuaded some 200,000 to return but, contrary to agreements, the abuse in Burma did not stop. Early in the 1990s another

250,000 fled to Bangladesh but Bangladesh, with little room, again pressed them to return. It entered into negotiations with the Burma government and used direct force, as well as methods such as withholding food, to get the refugees to go back.<sup>76</sup>

**Tajikistan:** A civil war broke out in 1992 between the Moscow backed government of Tajikistan and Islamic opposition groups. It has taken 20,000 - 30,000 lives, caused 600,000 to be internally displaced, and another 100,000 to flee to neighbouring countries. In 1994 the UN brokered a peace agreement between the different parties but intermittent fighting continued so that while some uprooted people returned to their home areas, many did not. The UNHCR supplied refugee camps with food, medicine and other necessities but the camps were controlled by opposition groups who wanted to use them as bases for their ongoing struggle against the government; accordingly, they worked to prevent any repatriation efforts.<sup>77</sup>

**Sri Lanka:** This island country with 16 million people is caught in a long civil war involving the Tamils, a mainly Hindu ethnic group who make up 18% of the population. The majority in Sri Lanka are Buddhist. In 1983 anti-Tamil riots prompted 135,000 to flee to India and many more to become internally displaced. A 1987 peace agreement led India to send in a peacekeeping force while the UNHCR worked at repatriating the refugees. When the peacekeeping force and the UNHCR left in 1990, fighting broke out again. This time 140,000 fled to India and one million became internally displaced. Now India began to pressure the people to go back, even seizing boats suspected of carrying Tamils. In 1994 a new Sri Lankan government took significant measures to accommodate Tamil grievances but in April of 1995 the Tamils withdrew from the peace talks and resumed fighting.<sup>78</sup>

**Vietnam:** The massive outflow of refugees from Vietnam that started late in the 1970s, challenged the region as well as countries in the West. By 1979 the rate of Vietnamese arriving on Thai coasts by boat reached 50,000 per month. The Thai government then started to push them back, with the result that thousands died. A hurriedly convened international meeting in Geneva assured Thailand that many countries would deem the “boat people” *prima facie* refugees and accept hundreds of thousands for resettlement. Eventually 1.5 million refugees from Southeast Asia were resettled in other parts of the world, mainly in the West. The international community also negotiated an Orderly Departure Programme (ODP) with Vietnam, meaning that people could make applications for resettlement abroad from within Vietnam and not have to set out by boat.

Despite these measures, by 1989 the outflow by boat was increasing substantially. Again Thailand started to “push back” the boats, prompting another Geneva meeting. This time western countries were less hospitable. Some call it a reversal. Now they would accept only those who qualified as refugees under the narrow *Geneva Convention*. They would expand the ODP, help Vietnam to “discourage” departures by boat and develop a ‘voluntary return’ program for those already in the camps. Eventually they would resort to forced returns. They would also help the neighbouring countries to clear out the camps.<sup>79</sup>

**Cambodia:** When the Khmer Rouge regime fell to invading Vietnamese troops in December 1978, half a million Cambodians fled to the Thai border. The ICRC and UN bodies quickly provided food and medicine but the refugee camps, with assistance from the USA, Thailand and China, soon became bases for militant groups resisting the Vietnam-imposed government in Cambodia. Many were resettled abroad under the same arrangements that covered the Vietnamese boat people. A 1991 Cambodian peace agreement led to the repatriation of 300,000, many of whom had lived in the border camps since 1979. The UN provided extensive repatriation assistance.<sup>80</sup>

**Laos:** Many highland Lao had worked for the CIA during the American involvement in Vietnam. Therefore, when they fled to Thailand, the USA accepted many of them for resettlement and assisted Thailand in integrating the rest. However, the lowland Lao who also fled to Thailand received a different welcome. The government “pushed back” some of them and adopted a “humane deterrence” policy, meaning that their camps were closed to all foreigners, received only minimal supplies, and people there were not allowed to apply for resettlement abroad. Thailand also tightened screening procedures and “encouraged” them to return to Laos.<sup>81</sup>

**Other Asian Refugee Situations:** India, in addition to hosting 100,000 Tamils from Sri Lanka, hosts 110,000 Tibetans from China, 40,000 Chin people from Burma, and 53,000 Chakma from Bangladesh.<sup>82</sup> India also has hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people as a result of the fighting between Indian security forces and 40 different insurgency groups.<sup>83</sup> Among the internally displaced in India are 250,000 Kashmiris. Bangladesh hosts 238,000 Bihari people.<sup>84</sup> These are Urdu speaking Muslims who would like to settle in Pakistan. Nepal hosts 90,000 people from Bhutan. Though citizens of Bhutan, ethnically they are Nepalese. The government of Bhutan has committed widespread human rights abuses against them and claims that because of their

ethnicity they should stay in Nepal and not return.<sup>85</sup>

#### *E. Europe*

**General:** The continent of Europe has seen an exceptional movement of people in the last decade. Late in the 1980s when Soviet President Gorbachev developed a new openness under the policies of “glasnost” and “perestroika”, masses of people - over one million per year - from Warsaw Pact countries - started leaving, mainly for Western Europe.<sup>86</sup> In response to this overwhelming inflow the countries of Western Europe began to erect entrance barriers even though they had long criticized the Soviets for their exit barriers. At the same time European countries increased their aid to former Soviet areas to try to make it attractive for people to stay there. Still, in the case of Germany, there was a longstanding right for people of German ethnic origin, of which there were several million in the former Soviet Union, to come and immediately enjoy all the benefits of German citizenship.

**The Former Yugoslavia:** This country, the most heterogeneous in Europe, was held together during the four cold war decades by Marshal Tito’s clever and heavy-handed rule. When those constraints ended, civil war broke out with an astonishing ferocity. Historic animosities, exacerbated by WWII alignments, were now unleashed and “ethnic cleansing” became a policy, resulting in the death of tens of thousands. Almost three million were uprooted. Many were internally displaced. Others fled to neighbouring countries. Germany received 330,000.<sup>87</sup>

The countries of Europe, however, extended only a temporary refuge. When the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in December 1995, European countries started to pressure the people to go back to what had now become several countries. Various UN and regional bodies tried to facilitate the repatriation. But the countries were so devastated and the trust and respect among the different groups so limited and uncertain that repatriation became very difficult. Few have been allowed to return to their original homes. Political reforms have not materialized. A recent report states: “The refugees and the internally displaced are disparate”.<sup>88</sup> Canada admitted 47,800 people from the former Yugoslavia between 1988 and 1996. Of these 20,700 were Convention refugees.<sup>89</sup>

**Other Refugee Situations in Europe:** There were other developments reflecting the renewed ethnic and religious identities that emerged with the breakup of the Soviet Union. In the Republic of Chechnya in the Russian Federation, a war broke out between Chechnya separatists and the Russian army, causing much destruction and the internal displacement of

600,000 people.<sup>90</sup> (The Russian army bombarded the city of Grozny until two-thirds of the houses were destroyed.)<sup>91</sup> Some of the displaced were ethnic Russians who went to their own homeland; others are ethnic Chechnians who want to go back to Chechnya as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the Republic of Georgia, fighting involving the separatist movements of Abkhazia and South Ossetia displaced 285,000.<sup>92</sup> In the independent republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia, fighting, including that in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, uprooted nearly a million people.<sup>93</sup> Over 200,000 Azeris from Armenia fled to Azerbaijan, and nearly that many Armenians from Azerbaijan fled to Armenia. Many in both countries remain internally displaced.

**Iran and Turkey:** Iran hosts 1.4 million refugees from Afghanistan and nearly 600,000 from Iraq.<sup>94</sup> However, several hundred thousand Iranians (estimates range from 200,000 to two million) fled to Turkey after the 1979 Islamic revolution in their country. Turkey has become forceful in sending many of them back - into the arms of the government from which they fled. Turkey also received over three hundred thousand ethnic Turks from Bulgaria. They came with stories of persecution and discrimination but when they met with the difficult economic situation in Turkey, about half of them returned to Bulgaria, rejoining the 1.5 - 2 million Turks there.<sup>95</sup>

## **IV. Causes, Trends and Responses**

**A. Observations:** Only a most hard-hearted person would find these large numbers - and the suffering that is implied - less than overwhelming. But even these numbers are not exhaustive. The survey does not cover all refugee situations. Nor does it refer to migrant workers. There are four million Filipinos working outside their country.<sup>96</sup> Five million migrants work in South Africa.<sup>97</sup> The International Labour Organization claims there are 25 million migrant workers in the world and an additional 30 million in undocumented or illegal situations, among them the undocumented Hispanics in the American southwest.<sup>98</sup> Many such people are poorly paid and vulnerable to exploitation, as are women refugees who form a large majority of the total. Obviously, it is important to try also to identify the causes, trends and systemic dimensions of the problems, though the pursuit of these broader dimensions must not ignore the individual refugee. Every person matters to God and should matter to us, regardless of whether that person stands alone or in a crowd of millions.

One noteworthy pattern is that the vast majority of refugees are hosted by countries in the South. Africa hosts more than twice as many as Europe, North America and Oceania combined.

Malawi, for a decade, hosted over a million refugees from Mozambique, one for every ten of its own people, even though it is one of the poorest countries in the world and it received little help from the international community.<sup>99</sup> The countries hosting the largest number of refugees are Iran and Pakistan.<sup>100</sup> Those hosting the largest number relative to their own population are Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Guinea, and Lebanon.<sup>101</sup> Over the years Western countries, particularly Canada, Australia and the USA, have admitted many for resettlement. Often they came from communist countries, for example, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Cuba after the 1959 revolution, and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos after the 1975 communist victories there. Some observers have suggested that the West's receptivity for such refugees may have been motivated in part by a desire to draw attention to the oppressive nature of those governments. They point out that people fleeing non-communist countries found the door more closed. This is suggested by the USA response to Haitians as well as to people from El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s. (Canada's door was more open to people from these Central American countries.) The trend is suggested also by the way European governments erected entrance barriers once the Soviet Union had collapsed.

**B. Causes:** In most cases people become refugees because of wars. Contemporary wars have a much greater "refugee producing effect" than earlier wars because now 90% of the victims are civilians. This points to the radically changed nature of war. Almost no modern wars are only between soldiers. In "counter-insurgency" wars it is very difficult to distinguish between an ordinary villager and a guerrilla; hence, many innocent people get killed. Sometimes whole villages are destroyed. Also, there has been a massive proliferation of small weapons.<sup>102</sup> And the UNHCR report for 1997 refers to "the privatization of violence", listing a number of places (Angola, Cambodia, Liberia and Sierra Leone) where "armed groups ... have supported ... themselves through the systematic extraction of natural resources such as timber, rubber, and precious stones".<sup>103</sup> Further, the widespread use of landmines has maimed and killed thousands and left vast areas of land unuseable for agricultural purposes, forcing people to go elsewhere. The Canadian government has given excellent leadership on landmines, but in 1996 one writer noted that "in the five years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the direct sale of Canadian military-related exports to the Third World has quadrupled; this includes sales to regimes with poor human rights records such as Burma, Peru, Algeria, Columbia, Kenya, and Papua New Guinea"<sup>104</sup>

Further, nearly all contemporary wars are within countries

rather than between countries. This implies that the structures of states are somehow inadequate. Those structures may be held by one ethnic group and used to suppress another, or by one economic class to suppress another. Suppression may also be the result of some of the extreme ideologies of this century. No doubt some of the problems with state structures stem from the fact that many state boundaries, particularly in Africa, were drawn by colonial rulers far away with little concern about the composition of the local population. This makes it understandable that some groups would want to break away from existing states. However, not all complaints of oppression are justified, and not all proposed solutions should be accommodated. Some "liberation movements" may be little more than tools of outside powers or a means for leaders to enrich themselves or instruments of badly misguided ideas. Unfortunately, the 'space' for debating issues and challenging leaders is often foreclosed by the ready availability of weapons which tends to make violence the only option, forcing people to flee.

Economic developments also contribute to events that force people to become refugees. This is evident in relation to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. A small landlocked country, it had the highest population density in Africa. Nearly all of its eight million people relied on subsistence agriculture. The resulting pressure on the land caused the soil to become depleted of its nutrients. In the decade of the 1980s the per capita food production of Rwanda dropped by thirty per cent. In 1987 the International Coffee Agreement collapsed and the price of Rwandan coffee - one of the country's main exports - fell to half of what it was in 1980. Also during the 1980s the country's foreign debt increased from \$189 million to \$844 million. In 1990 the World Bank insisted on a structural adjustment program that devalued the local currency by almost 80%.<sup>105</sup> Enormous hardship followed. There can be little doubt that these problems exacerbated the existing Tutsi-Hutu tensions and contributed to that terrible calamity.

Other "third world" countries had tried harder to become industrialized. They had wanted to get away from the colonial pattern where the colony produced raw materials for the colonial power and provided markets for its products. To industrialize, these countries needed capital so they borrowed on the international market. But then, early in the 1970s, the world oil price rose drastically and a decade later international interest rates went way up. Both of these factors called for vastly increased revenues. In response, these countries made additional loans. This, together with various mismanagement problems, caused the debt crisis. Before long the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began to impose

structural adjustment programs which forced many countries to use their land and other resources for export purposes rather than for domestic needs and to make drastic cuts in social spending. In 1989 Davison Budhoo, an economist with the IMF, submitted a 150-page letter of resignation critiquing this practice. He noted that the IMF never suggested cuts in defence, police or public control measures.<sup>106</sup> These might be needed to put down unrest resulting from the cuts in social spending, even though such suppression would cause people to flee and become refugees.

Environmental problems also cause people to become refugees though not as directly as wars do. Deforestation, “desertification”, soil erosion and soil degradation affect millions of hectares in many countries, forcing people to go elsewhere. Each year eleven million hectares of tropical forest are cut down either for subsistence agriculture or for corporate profit, exposing soil to erosion; further, six million hectares of once arable land become desert through the combined effects of overgrazing, inappropriate agriculture and other misuse.<sup>107</sup> Irrigation without adequate drainage leads to water logging and salinization which, in Pakistan, costs 40,000 hectares per year.<sup>108</sup> In Bangladesh salt water has advanced 150 km inland, affecting the livelihood of 25 million people.<sup>109</sup> The poverty that results from environmental degradation sometimes merely increases the environmental degradation as people make more demands on the remaining resources. In Malawi, for example, hosting a million refugees from Mozambique for a decade resulted in a massive destruction of forests. The refugees needed wood to cook and to build their houses. They had nowhere else to turn.<sup>110</sup>

**C. Diminished Responses:** There are several trends in the responses of recent years. One is that even when refugees are allowed into a country, they tend to receive less protection. Camps for Afghan refugees in Pakistan are used as bases by militant Afghan resistance groups to fight the Afghan government. Camps for Cambodian refugees on the Thai border were long used by the Khmer Rouge and other resistance groups to oppose the government in Phnom Penh. Camps for Rwandan Hutus in Zaire were used by Hutu militants to fight the Tutsi-led government of Rwanda. Camps for Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras were used as bases for the Contras. Militant Tajiki opposition groups control camps for displaced people in Tajikistan, as do rebel groups in the Sudan.

The control by militant groups has serious consequences for refugees in camps. Not infrequently, they conscript men and boys, abuse women and girls, prevent those refugees who

want to go back from doing so, obtain a generous portion of the humanitarian aid meant for the refugees, all the while receiving weapons from the outside.<sup>111</sup> The tragic reality is that refugee camps are not necessarily places of refuge and safety. The governments of host countries often have interests that outweigh their commitment to protect refugees and there is no international mechanism for ensuring protection. It appears that the world does not want to increase its involvement, that it wants to pretend that host governments will look after things adequately even though contrary evidence is increasingly apparent.<sup>112</sup>

A second trend is for countries not to allow fleeing people to enter and, even when allowed in, to send them back before the situation from which they fled is resolved. Panama has turned Colombians back. The USA has turned boats with Haitians and Cubans back. Thailand forced people from Vietnam, Laos and Burma back. Europe gave only temporary refuge to people from the former Yugoslavia, as did Zaire and Tanzania for Rwandan Hutus. West African countries refused to let a Liberian freighter brimming with refugees land.<sup>113</sup> And Bangladesh forced Rohingya Muslims back to Burma. This trend is the reason why the number of internally displaced people now exceeds that of refugees. Prevented from fleeing to neighbouring countries, such people go to different parts of their own countries even though there may be no assurance of protection there either. Some remain trapped in war zones.

Western countries have contributed to the pattern of diminished responses. As noted above, soon after the Berlin Wall came down, the countries of Western Europe set up barriers. They instituted visa restrictions, fast track procedures, and negotiated the Schengen and Dublin multilateral agreements.<sup>114</sup> The basic concepts in these agreements, which have not yet been fully implemented, are those of safe third country, safe country of origin and common databases. Safe country of origin means that if individuals originate from a country that is deemed safe then they would simply be sent back there without receiving a hearing. The safe third country concept means that if they had come via a country, hence ‘third country’, that is deemed safe, then they are sent back to that country with the understanding that they can have their claim heard there. The agreements also called on states to share information, meaning that once applicants had indicated their intention to make an application in one place then all participating countries would receive the information about them. Clearly, there is a major financial saving if individual countries do not have to maintain large structures capable of hearing every refugee claim. Nevertheless, there are problems.

One aspect that critics have focused on is whether some countries might be deemed “safe countries of origin” for political reasons without adequate attention to the situation of groups or individuals within them. A second concern is whether there are guarantees that “safe third countries” do indeed have fair procedures for hearing refugee applicants. For example, if Germany were to send claimants from Iraq back to Jordan, is there a guarantee that such people would indeed get a fair hearing in Jordan. A third concern is that even if Jordan found such people to be genuine refugees, would it be left to carry the burden of accepting such people by itself or would the international community help Jordan to carry that burden. If countries such as Jordan are left to carry the burden by themselves then, sooner or later, they will impose stricter border controls and not allow people to enter in the first place, meaning that the right to seek refuge will be denied. One highly regarded analyst says:

In 1996, ... the international community began to acquiesce in a new solidarity. Not a solidarity based on the principle of international burden sharing and equity, but rather a solidarity that takes on more the character of an alliance against a common enemy: the refugees and asylum seekers themselves. In 1996, it seems, governments could agree only on common strategies of deterrence.<sup>115</sup>

Canada has not entered into such restrictive agreements but it has taken steps to limit access to its refugee determination system and to cooperate more with Europe and the USA. In particular, Canada has imposed visa requirements on all countries known to ‘produce refugees’, meaning that people from such countries have to obtain visas from a Canadian Embassy before starting out on trips to Canada.<sup>116</sup> This is a problem because embassies may be far away and, in situations of persecution, people may not have the time needed for applications to be processed. Also, visa officers may not be trained to assess a claim of persecution. Seeing this route as inadequate, some people obtain false documents for travelling to Canada.

There are other obstacles. Those who manage to come to Canada and get approved as refugees still have to pay a \$975.00 landing fee in addition to other processing fees. People who arrive without documents, even if approved for refugee status, face additional obstacles in their efforts to get landed status and to gain the right to work, study, or sponsor a spouse or child.<sup>117</sup> Sometimes these obstacles are almost insurmountable and people are left in a limbo for many years. The USA has recently also taken steps to reduce its refugee intake, to restrict access to a formal hearing, to send people out more quickly, and to prevent employers from hiring undocumented workers.<sup>118</sup> The

UNHCR report for 1997 predicts:

States will prove increasingly reluctant to open their borders to refugees and provide them with effective protection. ... the exclusionary attitude of states is now firmly established in both richer and poorer regions of the world.<sup>119</sup>

**D. Different Approaches:** One approach to the problem is to try to bring more refugees to Canada by calling on the government to open the doors more widely and on churches to do sponsoring. In support of this approach it can be asked: if Canada could admit 60,000 Southeast Asian “boat people” in 1979-80, why can it not accept that many now; if the small impoverished country of Malawi could host a Mozambiquen refugee population equal to one-tenth of its own. Why can Canada not accept such a percentage; if Jordan had to admit a population equal to one-quarter of its own during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. Why can Canada not admit far more refugees than the current annual number of approximately 25,000. These arguments may be attractive at first sight but they will not persuade. The mood of the Canadian people and the views of the government are not open to such actions. And even if they were open, the approach of simply bringing in more refugees is too narrow by itself. It would use vast resources on helping a few but the needs of the many would not be addressed. Most refugee workers see sponsorship as important for refugees with particular protection needs, but there is limited support simply for bringing in more people.

A second approach relates to human rights. In one sense most aspects of “the refugee problem” are human rights problems. If people’s human rights were properly respected then they would have no reason to fear persecution; hence they would not be refugees in the first place. Also, if, when people flee to neighbouring countries, their human rights were respected there, then there would be no protection problems. And if their human rights were respected in other processes, be that repatriation, local integration or resettlement, most problems would be alleviated. Because of the centrality of human rights to so many aspects of refugee problems, Amnesty International, in 1997, launched a campaign for the rights of refugees and internally displaced people. Amnesty called on its one million members to promote awareness of the rights of refugees and displaced people, to pressure governments to respect those rights, and to strengthen the means for holding governments accountable.<sup>120</sup>

Sadaka Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said in April 1997: “the system for refugee protection fits into, supports and is indeed an indispensable part of the global human rights regime”.<sup>121</sup> She continued: “as long as people cannot have their

basic human rights protected in their own country, as long as their 'right to remain' cannot be guaranteed, asylum remains the most effective means for protection. ...any weakening of the institution of asylum is a weakening of the world's evolving system of human rights protection".

A third approach involves a broader agenda, one that addresses basic causes. The most recent report of the UNHCR concludes with a call for action on the following: 1) eliminating poverty, debt relief, economic growth that helps poor people, full employment, and increased agricultural productivity; 2) peacebuilding, in ways that go beyond brokering agreements between feuding parties, that help societies to learn peaceful ways of addressing issues; 3) curtailing the arms trade, noting that the widespread availability of weapons undermines many peace agreements and that 86% of all arms sold to developing countries come from four of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council; and 4) promoting democracy and human rights by offering positive incentives to governments and formulating aid projects so that they promote these ends.<sup>122</sup>

Few people would quarrel with an approach that seeks to address basic causes but it raises the question of whether refugees and internally displaced people will get missed in the process. The approach is directed at broader cross sections of societies, which, of course, is where many of the causes lie but what happens when, despite such preventative efforts, people are still forced to flee or to become internally displaced. In fairness, the UNHCR continues to emphasize asylum and protection strongly, but critics are concerned that the international community's talk about addressing causes, however important, may reflect a weakening of support for the ancient right to seek refuge from persecution.<sup>123</sup>

A fourth approach - that of humanitarian intervention - should also be mentioned though it now has few advocates. After the 1991 Gulf war when there was a massive refugee problem in northern Iraq, the USA and the UK intervened militarily and created a "safe haven". (See the section on the Kurds above.) It was a major intervention in the internal affairs of a country. This experience and other developments led some people to expect the international community to henceforth respond with such "humanitarian interventions" in all situations of massive forced people movements. After several more efforts, however, that expectation faded. It was difficult to find the domestic and international political support for such endeavours, and even when undertaken, such efforts left many problems unresolved and sometimes they created new ones. Nevertheless, the element of international responsibility suggested in the motivation for such endeavours is not altogether negative.

## V. Possible EFC Responses

### A. What Church Groups Are Doing

The question of how the EFC ought to respond must be considered in light of the work of other organizations and denominations, especially those with EFC connections. The Christian Reformed Church (CRC), the Salvation Army, World Vision Canada (WVC), Mennonite groups through MCC, Canadian Baptists, World Relief Canada (WRC), and others have done significant refugee work.<sup>124</sup> All were active, in the early 1980's, in sponsorship work with people from Southeast Asia though that "burst of energy", which involved tens of thousands of church people, did not last. There were doubts about the extent to which sponsorship, by itself, represented a wise response to refugee situations. The government's criteria as to who could be sponsored and the growing processing delays added discouragement. WVC has effectively discontinued sponsorship work. The CRC submitted 121 sponsorship applications in a recent twelve month period but had only six arrivals.<sup>125</sup> The Mennonites brought in about 100 people last year but this too is a very small fraction of earlier numbers.<sup>126</sup>

A number of church groups are active in other ways. The Salvation Army is active across Canada in a broad range of refugee assistance efforts.<sup>127</sup> The Mennonites have centres for refugees and newcomers in all but the Atlantic provinces. The Canadian Baptist Refugee Service does a lot.<sup>128</sup> Some of these church efforts serve a range of people including new immigrants, government and privately sponsored refugees, as well as claimants. They help with language training, finding housing and jobs, getting medical work done, obtaining documents such as Social Insurance Numbers and Drivers Licenses, and general counsel for life in Canada. A number of their programs are government funded. WVC operates a reception house in Toronto for government sponsored refugees. Since they are sponsored their legal status is secured before they arrive but they still need other settlement assistance and counsel. People stay in the centre for four-to-six weeks before moving on. At one time there were five such government-funded centres in Toronto; now there are only two and people involved say that it has become more difficult to obtain the funding.<sup>129</sup> Also, the government has reduced the number of refugees that it sponsors; the total now is around 7,300 per year.

Most Christian refugee workers say that claimants deserve special attention.<sup>130</sup> Unlike those who are sponsored, either privately or by the government, these do not come with secure status. They apply for refugee status when they arrive, for

example, at an airport in Canada. Then they have to prepare for an appearance before the Immigration and Refugee Board. This means working with lawyers who may or may not understand their persecution fears. It can be expensive and take months before a hearing is held and more months before the ruling is issued.<sup>131</sup> In the event of a negative ruling, they may attempt to have it reviewed. Alternatively, they may wait for a deportation order but in some cases this is delayed for years as the government anticipates that the unrest in their country of origin will be resolved. During this time they have to live with uncertainties which for them may have life and death implications. Their rights in Canada are limited. And sometimes they are viewed with suspicion of being fraudulent, of trying to jump the queue for landed immigrant status, and perhaps of being criminals or terrorists.<sup>132</sup> Some are held in detention centres. About 25,000 claimants come to Canada per year; about 14,000 of these receive IRB approval as refugees.

It can be argued that people who make it to Canada through any of the three avenues do not reflect the very worst refugee problems. In recent years most of the 2800 privately sponsored refugees have been requested by relatives who came earlier. This means that they have some connections. Also, they, like the 7300 government-sponsored refugees, must have some of the capabilities to successfully adjust to life in Canada.<sup>133</sup> This means that they probably have some education. As for claimants, of whom about 14,000 get approved, they are exceptional in that somehow they found the resources to travel to Canada. Also, a majority of the claimants are men.<sup>134</sup> This does not mean, however, that helping people who come through these avenues is unimportant. Some church refugee workers are particularly concerned about the claimant avenue and the people who come through it. They say it is unrealistic to expect people fearing persecution to apply for, and receive, visas from Canadian embassies abroad given the distance and time involved and the fact that the visa officers may not be well equipped for judging claims of persecution. The claimant process is then somewhat like a safety valve. Significantly, the 1997 proposals for changes in the Canadian system call for a stronger Canadian capability overseas to identify and respond to protection needs there. Observers say, however, that such a capacity, though well intentioned, will be very small relative to the global dimensions of the refugee situation.

Other church activities must also be noted. A Christian and Missionary Alliance spokesperson said that 30% of their churches in Canada are non-caucasian and non-English speaking.<sup>135</sup> They worship in sixteen different languages and serve newcomers in many ways, providing a welcome, an orientation, language training and general counsel and support.

This kind of involvement with newcomers, who may or may not be refugees, would be reflected in varying degrees in nearly all churches in Canada.<sup>136</sup>

All churches also support refugee relief work in overseas settings. Those with some EFC connections might do this through denominational agencies such as the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, the Sharing Way of the Baptists, and Mennonite Central Committee, and through cross-denominational organizations such as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Relief Canada, World Vision Canada, Emmanuel International, Compassion Canada, Cause Canada, SIM, and others.<sup>137</sup> Some church representatives, with significant international connections, are active trying to help resolve conflicts and thus prevent developments where people have to flee.

Also to be acknowledged is the extensive work of the Anglican, United, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Catholic churches, as well as that of the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR).<sup>138</sup> Founded in 1980, ICCR has done substantial advocacy work regarding Canadian laws and practices as well as those of the UNHCR. The World Council of Churches marked 1997 as the “Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity With Uprooted People”. To support this ‘year’, ten Canadian church leaders issued a statement calling on the government to do more to address the factors that cause people to become refugees and to ensure better protection for refugees.<sup>139</sup> The head of the Canadian Council for Refugees has said: “The churches are the Canadian institution that has most taken up the refugee cause”.<sup>140</sup>

#### *B. Actions for EFC Consideration*

Starting in the early 1980s the EFC had a direct refugee involvement in that World Relief Canada (WRC), an arm of the EFC, had a full-time staff person, Julia Schindeler, to help churches sponsor refugees under its Master Agreement with the federal Immigration department. Over a thousand refugees were brought to Canada under this program. The program was discontinued in 1994 for reasons similar to those that led other church groups to reduce their sponsorship work.<sup>141</sup>

Should the EFC start such sponsorship work again? This question should not be considered in isolation. One purpose of this paper is to show that the world refugee situation has many dimensions and causes, and that a range of possible responses need consideration. The UNHCR, it can be noted, has always held that it should first try to repatriate refugees, meaning that those who had fled should be helped to return as soon as the threat of persecution ended. If this was not possible then, as a

second objective, the prospects of integrating the refugees into the neighbouring countries to which they fled should be explored. If this was not possible either then, as a third objective, resettlement in another country should be pursued. The main countries presently open for the resettlement of refugees are the USA, Canada, and Australia.

These priorities seem to commend themselves. For Christians in Canada to support them would mean supporting international refugee relief work, be it by governmental allocations for the large multilateral organizations (UNHCR, Red Cross, WFP, etc.) or through the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of which a number are listed above. It would also mean supporting both governments and NGOs in their efforts to address the basic causes, by alleviating poverty, assisting in economic and social development, pressing for a more just international economic system, and promoting human rights, peacebuilding, weapons control, good governance institutions, etc. Biblical teaching on the calling of governments to do justice is relevant on these points.

What does this mean for the EFC? The EFC might approach the issues from the perspective of two windows. One window would have the question of what is needed by the refugees. This window would include the options of: 1) bringing refugees to Canada or helping those here to become resettled; 2) assisting with refugee relief work in overseas settings through avenues noted above; and 3) addressing the factors that cause people to become refugees, also referred to above. The other window that the EFC must look at relates to the fact that it is a coalition of different denominations and

organizations, some of which are already active in different aspects of refugee work. The EFC should look at what is already being done and then ask what initiatives it can take that will strengthen or supplement those efforts. It would appear that for the EFC to consider these two windows it should host a modest consultation of various interested parties, many of which are mentioned above.

One course of action that merits consideration is education work. Should the EFC commit itself to doing education work within the EFC community about refugee needs and possible responses, recognizing also that education work is often helped by “hands-on” connections? One reason for suggesting education work is that refugee assistance is now at the bottom of people’s charitable giving priorities.<sup>142</sup> Informed education work could help to address this lack of support.<sup>143</sup> Efforts to this end would seem to be imperative, given the overwhelming number of refugees and displaced people in the world and the strong the Biblical call.

The Biblical call on refugees is only one theme in the broader social teachings of the Bible. All those teachings need our attention. An awareness of the various dimensions of refugee situations can lead to a better understanding of the importance of those broader teachings. An understanding of refugee situations can also lead to a deeper appreciation of the people in our churches in Canada who come from such situations, of our fellow human beings, including Christians, still caught in them, and of the contexts in which our development, relief and missionary work is carried out.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Freda Enns, Chris Derksen Hiebert, and Monica Scheifele, who have worked as my colleagues at different times and who, in various ways, helped me with this paper. Also, more than a dozen individuals read an early draft of this paper and sent helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (hereinafter UNHCR) *The State of the World’s Refugees 1997-98: A Humanitarian Agenda*, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Victor Malarek, *Haven’s Gate: Canada’s Immigration Fiasco*, MacMillan of Canada, Toronto, 1987, p. 5 & 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.14.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada’s Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 1977, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> As quoted in Frank H. Epp, *Your Neighbour as Yourself: A Study in Responsibility in Immigration*, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Winnipeg, 1968, p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> Dirks, op. cit. p. 136.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 189.

<sup>13</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada, “Refugee and Humanitarian Immigration to Canada, 1947 - 1995”, a paper of 14 pages.

<sup>14</sup> Dirks, op. cit. p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 176

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth D. Bush, “Rocks and Hard Places: Bad Governance, Human Rights Abuse, and Population Displacement”, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, Vol. 4, No.1, Spring 1996, p. 51

<sup>18</sup> Malarek, op. cit. p. 18

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20

<sup>20</sup> A civil servant involved in this process once said that the provision for private refugee sponsorship was due to a significant extent to Jake Epp, then an Opposition M.P., who reportedly pressed for it because of his roots in Mennonite refugee movements.

<sup>21</sup> C. Michael Lanphier, “Asylum Policy in Canada: A Brief Overview” in *Refugee or Asylum: A Choice for Canada*, (ed.) Howard Adelman and C. Michael Lanphier, York Lanes Press Ltd. 1990, p. 83.

<sup>22</sup> “Refugee and Humanitarian Immigration to Canada, 1947-1995”, op. cit. p.7.

<sup>23</sup> Malarek, op. cit. p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p.109. The court case was initiated by the Canadian Council of Churches.

- <sup>25</sup> R. A. Gerard, "Canadian Refugee Policy: Government Perspectives" Canadian Foreign Policy, op. cit. p. 114. The 1997 study, *Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration*, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, says, on p. 81, that 75% - 90% of the people in refugee camps are women and children.
- <sup>26</sup> Canada gave over \$50 million dollars and food aid valued at \$16 million for overseas refugee assistance in 1986/87. Minister of Employment and Immigration, "New Refugee Determination Legislation" May 5, 1987. The *Not Just Numbers* study referred to in the preceding note states, p. 78, that Canada gives approximately \$18 million to the UNHCR each year.
- <sup>27</sup> United Church of Canada, *Journeys of Hope: Refugees and Global Migration*, Toronto, 1997, p. 30.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Not Just Numbers*, op. cit., p.78.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- <sup>32</sup> Elizabeth G. Ferris, *Beyond Borders: Refugees, Migrants and Human Rights in the Post Cold War Era*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1993, p. 150.
- <sup>33</sup> UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees 1997-98*, op. cit. p. 106.
- <sup>34</sup> Project Ploughshares, *Armed Conflicts Report 1997*, Waterloo, Ontario, p. 14 & 16.
- <sup>35</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 14.
- <sup>36</sup> www.unhcr.ch, The World, Africa, Angola, Last updated May 1997.
- <sup>37</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1995*, op. cit., p.50.
- <sup>38</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1996*, op. cit., p. 12 and www.unhcr.ch, The World, Africa, Mozambique, Last updated May 1997.
- <sup>39</sup> Mennonite Central Committee, (hereinafter MCC) *Workbook 1997*, Akron, Pennsylvania, 1998, p. 10.
- <sup>40</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 136.
- <sup>41</sup> UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees 1993: The Challenge to Protection*, p. 95.
- <sup>42</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 139.
- <sup>43</sup> www.unhcr.ch The World, Africa, Eritrea, Last updated, June 1997.
- <sup>44</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 141.
- <sup>45</sup> Project Ploughshares, op. cit. p16, and USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 92.
- <sup>46</sup> www.unhcr.ch, The World, Africa, Somalia, Last updated May 1997.
- <sup>47</sup> *Journeys of Hope*, op. cit. p. 21.
- <sup>48</sup> Elizabeth G. Ferris, *Uprooted! Refugees and Forced Migrants*, Friendship Press, 1998, p. 33ff.
- <sup>49</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey (s) 1997, and 1996 and 1995*, op.cit.
- <sup>50</sup> www.unhcr.ch, The World, Africa, Rwanda and Burundi, Last updated, March 1997 and May 1997 respectively.
- <sup>51</sup> UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees 1997-98*, op. cit., p.20.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- <sup>53</sup> Inter-Church Committee for Human Rights in Latin America, Toronto, *Alerta*, No. 1 & 2, 1997 p. 5
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18
- <sup>55</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 192
- <sup>56</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 221
- <sup>57</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit., p. 193
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 234 and *Alerta*, p. 16
- <sup>59</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 206
- <sup>60</sup> UNHCR, *Information Bulletin*, November 1997, "Guatemalan Refugees and Returnees".
- <sup>61</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 210
- <sup>62</sup> MCC, *Workbook 1997*, op. cit. p. 94.
- <sup>63</sup> United Church of Canada, Toronto, *Mandate*, April, 1997, op. cit. p. 16.
- <sup>64</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1983*, p. 70.
- <sup>65</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 216.
- <sup>66</sup> MCC, *Workbook 1997*, op. cit. p. 109.
- <sup>67</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 223.
- <sup>68</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 235.
- <sup>69</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 230. Palestinian refugees receive assistance, not from the UNHCR but from UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), a separate UN body set up for this purpose in 1948.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 234.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 174.
- <sup>72</sup> www.unhcr.ch, The World, Middle East, Afghanistan, Last updated May 1997.
- <sup>73</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. pp. 111 and 127.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119.
- <sup>75</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 81.
- <sup>76</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 127.
- <sup>77</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 140 and www.unhcr.ch The World, Asia, Tajikistan, Last updated April, 1997
- <sup>78</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 192 and *World Refugee Survey 1997* op. cit. p. 137 and www.unhcr.ch The World, Asia, Sri Lanka, Last updated May 1997
- <sup>79</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 179ff
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>82</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 128.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p. 128.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.
- <sup>86</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 254.
- <sup>87</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey(s) 1995, 96, 97*.
- <sup>88</sup> MCC, *Workbook 1997*, p. 77.
- <sup>89</sup> *Mandate* op. cit. p. 16.
- <sup>90</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997* op. cit. p.207.
- <sup>91</sup> Amnesty International, *Refugees: Human Rights Have No Borders*, Amnesty International Publications, New York, 1997, p.18.
- <sup>92</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 204ff.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* p. 166ff.
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.
- <sup>95</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 259.
- <sup>96</sup> *Journeys of Hope*, op. cit. p. 22.
- <sup>97</sup> *Uprooted!* op. cit. p. 21.
- <sup>98</sup> *Journeys of Hope*, op. cit. p.26.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>100</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 235.
- <sup>101</sup> Mary Jo Leddy, *At the Border Called Hope: Where Refugees Are Neighbours*, Harpor Collins, Toronto, 1997, p. 285.
- <sup>102</sup> *Uprooted People in Asia*, A Report on a Conference on Migrant Workers, Refugees and Internally Displaced Communities in Asia, published by the Christian Conference of Asia, Hong Kong, 1995, p.41.
- <sup>103</sup> UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees 1997-98*, p. 26.
- <sup>104</sup> Ken Bush op. cit. p.74.
- <sup>105</sup> *Uprooted!* op. cit. p. 36
- <sup>106</sup> *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 83
- <sup>107</sup> *Journeys of Hope*, op. cit. p. 23
- <sup>108</sup> *Uprooted People In Asia*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>110</sup> *Uprooted!* op. cit. p.23.
- <sup>111</sup> UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees 1997-98*, op. cit. p. 22.
- <sup>112</sup> Tim Wichert, "When Words Speak Louder Than Actions", November 1997, MCCC files.
- <sup>113</sup> USCR, *World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 14.
- <sup>114</sup> Judith Kumin "Asylum in Europe: Sharing or Shifting the Burden", in *World Refugee Survey 1995*, op. cit. p. 28.
- <sup>115</sup> Bill Frelick, "The Year In Review", in *The World Refugee Survey 1997*, op. cit. p. 14. See also *Beyond Borders*, op. cit. p. 250; and Evan Potter "The Challenge of Responding to International

Migration” in *Canadian Foreign Policy*, op. cit. p. 16, and *World Refugee Survey 1995*, op. cit. p. 28ff.

<sup>116</sup>Alex Neve and Joel Sandaluk, “Interdiction: Canada’s Efforts to Block The Route to Safety”, *Refugee Update*, Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, Toronto, Issue No. 28, Spring 1996.

<sup>117</sup>Sharry Aiken “Liberal Immigration Policies” *Refugee Update*, Issue No. 31, Spring 1997.

<sup>118</sup>Roberta Farkhas, “The Situation in the United States”, *Refugee Update*, Issue No. 30, Winter 1997, and Elizabeth Ferris, “The Backlash: Against Immigrants in the USA and the Canadian-US Memorandum of Agreement” *Refugee Update*, Issue No. 28, Spring 1996.

<sup>119</sup>UNHCR, *State of the World’s Refugees 1997-98*, op. cit. p. 284.

<sup>120</sup>Amnesty International, *Refugees: Human Rights Have No Borders*, op. cit. p. 2.

<sup>121</sup>Quoted by Tim Wichert in “Human Rights, Refugees and Displaced Persons” 22 May 1997, MCCC files.

<sup>122</sup>UNHCR, *State of the World’s Refugees 1997-98*, op. cit., p. 263ff.

<sup>123</sup>The right to seek refuge can be traced to Old Testament times. In the two millennia since the time of Christ, churches have played a significant part in keeping this right alive. See UNHCR, *The State of the World’s Refugees 1993*, op. cit. p. 33

<sup>124</sup>The author did not do a comprehensive search of all church activities in refugee assistance. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada also did some refugee sponsorship work under a Master Agreement with the Immigration department. On the question of the groups mentioned here ‘with EFC connections’ it should be mentioned that Mennonite Central Committee and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec are not members of the EFC but they have connections.

<sup>125</sup>Letter from Theres DeRoos of the Christian Reformed Church, to William Janzen, March 24, 1998

<sup>126</sup>Mennonite people have done a lot. According to a recent report, “In 1979 MCC Canada became the first national organization to sign a Master Agreement with the Canadian government to facilitate the private sponsorship of refugees. Since that time Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches have sponsored some 10,000 refugees to come to Canada. In addition to all of the volunteer time and energy this entailed, we estimate these churches have committed over \$50 million of their own resources to these efforts”. See, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, “Response to the Report of the Immigration Review, ‘Not Just Numbers’”, March 1998, MCCC files.

<sup>127</sup>Interview with Major Mavis Reid of the Salvation Army, March 3, 1998.

<sup>128</sup>Interview with Anne Woolger of the Canadian Baptist Refugee Service, February 26, 1998.

<sup>129</sup>Interview with Don Posterski of World Vision Canada, January 20, 1998 and with David Adcock February 4, 1998.

<sup>130</sup>This was indicated in interviews with Julia Schindeler, February 25, 1998, with Anne Woolger, February 26, 1998 and with Gloria Nafziger, February 27, 1998.

<sup>131</sup>It takes, on the average, 14 months before a decision is issued. *Ottawa Citizen*, March 8, 1998, p. A6.

<sup>132</sup>That there are suspicions is indicated in the government’s 1997 study *Not Just Numbers*, op. cit., which refers, on page 81, to a lucrative “people-smuggling business”. The suspicions are evident also in an August 24, 1997 article which states: “...on the streets of Toronto, an estimated several thousand members of the Tamil Tiger rebel group have taken temporary refuge using Canada as a base to re-fund and regroup. ...In British Columbia, militant Sikhs press their cause for a separate state in India through local clashes with more moderate members of the religion.... Canadian security officials believe the radical Shiite Muslim group Hezbollah has an “infra-structure” in Canada to harbor terrorists from abroad and

possibly plan future attacks”. This article, however, does not say that the people involved in such activities came into Canada via refugee channels. Some church representatives who work with refugees directly, believe that the suspicions about them are largely unfounded.

<sup>133</sup>Technically, to categorize all refugees as either privately sponsored or government sponsored is not quite accurate. Some come on the basis of various joint sponsorship arrangements.

<sup>134</sup>For 1998 Canada’s official refugee intake was projected to be 24,100 - 32,300. Its total immigrant intake, including refugees, was set at 200,000 - 225,000. Two-thirds of the total are to be skilled workers and business people. Most others are family members. Citizenship & Immigration, Release, Oct. 23, 1997.

<sup>135</sup>Interview with Stuart Lightbody, Assistant to the Superintendent, Christian & Missionary Alliance headquarters, Toronto, February 26, 1998.

<sup>136</sup>Often there is a need for pastoral work. John Doherty, a Mennonite refugee worker in Montreal, has written: “Churches can be central supports to refugees (claimants or otherwise) who have been uprooted, perhaps tortured, often passing through a grieving process regarding their own losses, news of deaths/disappearances back home, etc. The security and normalcy that comes from re-establishing a personal support network can’t be over estimated, and churches are (or ought to be) ideal environments for sharing [such] preoccupations and anxieties....” Letter to William Janzen, March 17, 1998.

<sup>137</sup>In many instances the refugee relief work of these agencies is not separate from their general relief and development work. Regarding denominations, the Christian & Missionary Alliance of Canada, the General Baptists, and the Free Methodists do much of their relief work through World Relief Canada. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada have a small relief agency of their own called, Emergency Relief and Development Overseas (ERDO).

<sup>138</sup>The ICCR membership includes Catholic, Anglican, United, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Quakers, Christian Reformed, Salvation Army, and Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

<sup>139</sup>ICCR “1997 Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People, Church Leaders’ Statement” January 1997. The letter was signed by leaders of the groups listed in the previous note.

<sup>140</sup>As quoted in the *Ottawa Citizen*, December 7, 1996. In 1995, to supplement the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII, the churches led in formulating an inter-faith statement, “A Call to Conscience” in which they reaffirmed the basic importance of assisting refugees. Referring to Canada, they said: “while we are opening our borders for business, we are closing them to desperate people”. See “A Call to Conscience: A Statement on Refugees from Faith Communities of Canada” June 27, 1995. Inter-Church Committee for Refugees files, Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>141</sup>Interview with Julia Schindeler, formerly of World Relief Canada, February 25, 1998

<sup>142</sup>An Angus Reid Poll, done in February 1996, asked, “if you had \$2000 to give away, to which of the following organizations would you most likely give the most to? An organization helping: 1) street youth in Canada, 2) single parent families in Canada, 3) poor countries in the developing world, 4) native Indians in Canada, 5) bring refugees to Canada, and 6) don’t know” Only 2% of the respondents chose the refugee answer. Street youth received 53%. Don’t know got 4%. The refugee question refers to bringing them to Canada. That is only one way of responding to refugees but the low rating given to that avenue probably applies also to other ways as well. See, Don Posterski’s files at World Vision Canada.

<sup>143</sup>Some education work is being done. This is evident in the pages of such cross-denominational publications as *Faith Today* and *ChristianWeek*, as well as in some denominational periodicals.