



**CANADIAN LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**
**60TH ANNIVERSARY
1946-2006**



ACT Photo: Paul Jeffrey

CANADIAN LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF 60 YEARS OF ANSWERING THE CRY

In 1946, Canadian Lutheran World Relief began its work as a relief and refugee support organization. It started as a response to World War II which left millions of people destitute in Europe. The first refugees that CLWR brought to Canada were homeless relatives of Canadian Lutherans. By the end of 1949, 30,000 refugees of German ethnic origin had joined their relatives in Canada. Assistance to refugees was later

extended to those without family in Canada. From 1948 to 1956 more than 20,000 refugees from Romania, Russia, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were brought to Canada.

In 1976, CLWR signed a formal agreement with the Government of Canada and became a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). Sponsorship Agreement Holders are established organizations that assume responsibility and liability

for the management of refugee sponsorships. Since 1976, CLWR has sponsored over 25,000 refugees to come to Canada.

Currently, the largest numbers of refugees come to Canada through CLWR from: Sudan, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Burundi, Rwanda, Nepal, India, Burma, Colombia, Iran, the former USSR, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

1946-49

30,000 refugees from Germany

1948-56

20,000 refugees from Romania, Russia, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia

1970-present

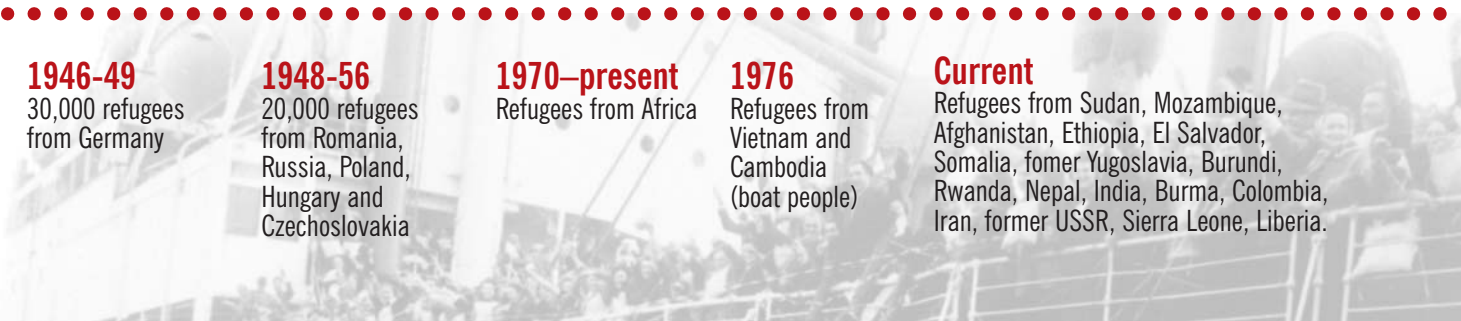
Refugees from Africa

1976

Refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia (boat people)

Current

Refugees from Sudan, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Burundi, Rwanda, Nepal, India, Burma, Colombia, Iran, former USSR, Sierra Leone, Liberia.



WHO IS A REFUGEE?

According to the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who:

“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of her/his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail herself/himself of that country.”

Unlike an immigrant who chooses to leave their country, a refugee is a person who has fled their country out of fear for their life and is seeking protection in a foreign country.



Photo: Callie Long

WHAT HAPPENS TO REFUGEES?

Three permanent solutions for refugees



CLWR Photo: Rick Fast

LOCAL INTEGRATION

If voluntary repatriation is not possible, another solution for refugees is local integration within neighbouring countries. This solution also has obstacles because the neighbouring country may be experiencing social and economic hardship and may not be able to cope with a sudden increase in population.

RESETTLEMENT

A final option for refugees is resettlement in another country—for example, Canada. Canada and other countries receive thousands of refugees every year, but this solution helps only a very small percentage of the total world refugee population.

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Voluntary repatriation occurs when refugees choose to return to their country of origin. While it is the best solution to the problem of refugees, refugees are not always able or willing to return home. The primary obstacle to repatriation is continuing insecurity and violence, but even if the war has ended the destructive effects of war may make it too dangerous for refugees to return. In some areas, landmines, abandoned weapons and ammunition are so common that a safe return is inconceivable.



Photo: Jonathan Precht

WHERE DO REFUGEES COME FROM?

At the end of 2004 there were a total of 9.2 million refugees worldwide, the majority of which came from the following countries:

- Afghanistan (2,084,900 refugees)
- Sudan (730,600)
- Burundi (485,800)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (462,200)
- Somalia (389,300)
- Palestine (350,600)
- Viet Nam (349,800)
- Liberia (335,500)
- Iraq (311,800)
- Azerbaijan (250,500)

The majority of the refugees received asylum in neighbouring countries, but a number were also resettled in other countries.



ACT Photo: Paul Jeffrey

In 2004, the main countries of resettlement for refugees were:

- United States (52,868)
- Australia (15,967)
- Canada (10,521)

- Sweden (1,801)
- Norway (842)

Source: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/protect?id=3b8366bc4>



CLWR Photo

A REFUGEE STORY AND ITS HAPPY ENDING

Amanuel Amleson arrived in Canada on December 3, 2002, as a CLWR-sponsored refugee. His journey started in 1980, when his family left their home in Eritrea for the Sudan. They didn't return to Eritrea until 1994, when the war with Ethiopia ended. Amanuel was 22 years old and the Eritrean government requested that he join the national service. He refused and was taken away one night to an army training camp. He refused to take part in the training and was locked in a container for three days; he did not receive any water or food and was repeatedly tortured. Once released, he was told to leave Eritrea within 72 hours. Amanuel fled to Ethiopia, where he was given a residence permit.

After a short time, the Ethiopians expelled all Eritreans due to a border dispute. Amanuel was dumped at the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. He could not return to Eritrea nor could he stay in Ethiopia, and on August 5, 1998, he was arrested by the Ethiopians as a suspected spy. He was

tortured and beaten repeatedly during two months of imprisonment and was then dumped at the Kenyan border. He travelled through Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Swaziland, and arrived in South Africa in November 1998.

In March 2000, Amanuel's sponsorship process through CLWR began from South Africa. After being expelled from his home country and from the neighbouring country, resettlement in another country was the only solution. After another two years, Canada accepted Amanuel as a refugee.

At that time, Amanuel's fiancée was in Italy and wanted to come to Canada as a refugee to be reunited with Amanuel. She was interviewed by the Canadian visa office in Italy and was granted a visa as his dependent. They were reunited at Heathrow airport in London, and arrived together in Vancouver on December 3, 2002. After over three years in Canada, they are both working and are successfully established in Alberta.



ACT Photo: Paul Jeffrey

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Sponsorship is a commitment to support refugees in integrating into life in Canada. Sponsorship groups commit to providing emotional and financial support to refugees for 12 months after their arrival in Canada. This support includes providing housing, food and clothing, meeting the newcomers when they arrive in Canada, and assisting them in building their new lives in Canada.

The process starts by forming a group. Often members of a church will decide to sponsor a refugee in response to a crisis in the world and will form a committee responsible for the sponsorship. Refugees are screened by the Canadian government and selected for

sponsorship while they are overseas. While this process is occurring, the sponsoring group prepares for the arrival of the refugee.

In preparation for welcoming the refugees, sponsors should familiarize themselves with and respect the values, traditions and religion of the refugees. The refugees are fleeing from war and persecution; they cannot return to their own country; they live in fear, away from familiar surroundings, from the support of family and friends. It is normal for all newcomers to go through a period of cultural adjustment and culture shock when moving to a new environment. Refugees may also be suffering from post-traumatic stress

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT SPONSORING A REFUGEE?

Staff in CLWR's refugee offices are available to answer your questions and assist congregations and groups interested in sponsorship.
Vancouver: 1.888.588.6686;
Toronto: 1.888.255.0150.

from past experiences. Sponsors play an important role in helping refugees adapt to life in Canada and understand Canadian culture. In return, sponsors have the opportunity to learn about the refugees' culture and make new friends.