

point is linked to a major component, not sufficiently tackled during the workshop, the socio-political context of a refugee situation. Planning refugee programs without having an in-depth knowledge of the host society, the host government's refugee policy or the country of origin at the time of repatriation is prone to failure.

However, this framework will be a very useful tool which will facilitate program and project planning, implementation and evaluation. It points out some critical components too often overshadowed. "It reminds us that women, as well as men, are active producers in the economy and society and that one critical variable in program planning is change in the gender division of roles, responsibilities and resources". ■

Notes

1. Anderson, M. B., Howarth, A. M. and Overholt, C.: "A Framework for People-Oriented Planning in Refugee Situations, Taking Account of Women, Men and Children. A Practical Planning Tool for Refugee Workers," UNHCR, Geneva, December, 1992.

The New... *continued from page 21*

Research Facility to the refugee bar precedents and materials supporting refugee claims and appeals, particularly in test cases. This latter recommendation is aimed at improving the quality of the representation generally available to refugee claimants through the private bar and as also saving legal aid costs that would otherwise be incurred by the production of those arguments and materials in individual lawyers' offices.

The refugee pilot project staff office will operate for the next three years at the provincial office of legal aid on University Avenue in Toronto. It is estimated that about 1,150 cases annually, including hearings and expedited cases before the IRB and applications for judicial review in the Federal Court, could be handled by this office. It is projected that some cost savings on a per-client basis to the Ontario Legal Aid Plan should be realized over the three years. ■

"God Has Left Me."

Lloyd Jones

The day blossomed as Canada celebrated its 126th birthday. The early morning Thunder Bay sunshine gave us a sigh of relief after days of rain, cloud and below normal temperatures. Biniam was our Ethiopian guest. Sponsored a few months back, Biniam came to us through Greece as a refugee. Escaping the horrors of civil war, Biniam was only fourteen when he was sent to Athens by his mother and brother. Now in Canada, we had noticed Biniam retreating inside himself. His replies to questions were barely a few words or short sentences. For long periods, he stared into space as he sat on a bench outside our home. The grass was velvet green, thicker than usual because of the rain. The petunias, marigolds and lilacs glistened with the early morning dew. The birds sang their cheery songs. Such was the beginning of Canada Day, 1993.

Our house already had the buzz of activity. As our home is also an international hostel, travellers were up and about, toileting, packing, preparing breakfast and planning their day's activities.

Our home is very close to the 11-17 highway, the two-lane, 80 kilometre stretch of roadway where all trans-Canada traffic is funnelled leading to and from Thunder Bay. Traffic was heavier than usual going west. Many were tourists crossing Canada. Others were locals going to Old Fort William where Canada Day is celebrated in grand style. Still others were Thunder Bayites heading to their cottages along Lake Superior or to Dorion Bible Camp or to Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. Some local people stayed home to tend their gardens, receive family friends and relax at home.

"We're having pancakes, Biniam," I shouted. "Would you like some?" No response; but then, that was like Biniam

sometimes. The night before, for some strange reason, Biniam had been pouring over our National Geographic atlas. He had also shown me two New Testaments in the Ahmaric language. I commented to him that one was a Gideon Testament, to which he acknowledged with a slight smile, something rare in Biniam's behaviour. During one of his many moments of sitting and staring on the white bench by the front lawn, I tried to find out more about his solitary, meditative behaviour. He replied several times, "God has left me."

Biniam had wandered away before but had returned after walking long distances. But somehow on that day, we became concerned after a few hours and called the Ontario Provincial Police to be on the lookout for him. He had not taken his belongings, and had left his running shoes where they had been the night before. He had carefully made his bed. That he had wanted to go back to Ethiopia was apparent. He had even sent his passport to the Ethiopian embassy for renewal. Our thoughts had wandered back to a church outing the weekend before in nearby Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. Biniam joined us, and we were impressed with his skill, agility and strength as he played volleyball on the beach of Lake Marie-Louise. We had spent a happy time touring the new visitor centre, with Biniam taking interest in the exhibits.

He had been interviewed for a "Futures" program with Youth Employment, and his prospect of being accepted was strong. He had never shown academic promise in his tests to enter high school in Thunder Bay, and we felt this would buoy him. His morose and depressed condition continued to gnaw at us, and this good news cheered us up considerably, hoping that Biniam too, would rejoice.

It was 10:30 p.m., the sun having just set in the northern sky. I remember the relief when the squad car rolled into the

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driveway. "They've found Biniam," I thought.

A Pass Lake resident had responded to Biniam's request for water. An ambulance driver had spotted him sitting by the side of the road then departing into the bush near Pearl. Later in the evening, an off-duty R.C.M.P. officer found Biniam's body hanging from a hydro pylon. Biniam had climbed the twelve feet and hanged himself by a rope he had fashioned from joining three strands he had found along the highway. He had bound his hands with his belt in such a fashion that would not interfere with his proposed plan of action.

A memorial service was held the following Sunday—our moments with Biniam were recounted, along with expressions of our own guilt, "What if we...?" Questions we could not answer. Biniam was gone. We talked about his honesty, his friendship and our concerns about lost dreams and hopes.

The obituary in the Chronicle Journal concluded: the work of the Lord never ends,

to find the lost
to heal the broken
to feed the hungry
to release the prisoner
to rebuild the nations
to bring peace among people
to make music in the heart.

We will miss him. ■

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Book Review

Storm and Sanctuary: The Journey of Ethiopian and Eritrean Women Refugees

By Helene Moussa

Dundas, ON: Artemis Enterprises, 1993.

ISBN 1-895247-08-x. \$18.95. 288p.

Reviewed by Yohannes Gebresellasie

There are more than seventeen million refugees worldwide today. The majority of these refugees are women and children and many of them are from the Third World countries, particularly, Africa.

A few scholars have contributed extensively to the study of African refugees (Rogge, 1989), (Gaim, 1990), (Rogge and Akol, 1989). However, their studies have not been based exclusively on a gender perspective. Thus, research on women in general and on African women in particular has been neglected despite the particular difficulties these refugee women face.

By presenting the personal experiences of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who fled their country of origin during the years 1974-1991 (the time when Ethiopia was under the military regime lead by former Ethiopian dictator Mengestu Haile Mariam), Helene Moussa explains the unique situation that refugee women encounter not only as refugees, but most importantly as refugee women. Also, to explore the refugee issue from a gender perspective, Moussa reaches out directly to these refugee women from Ethiopia and Eritrea who now reside in Canada. She encourages them to share their experiences and, in her book, skilfully presents their personal interpretations in a very direct and frank way. This book, which consists of ten chapters (284 pages), focuses mainly on gender and refugee law, and refugee and other labels or identities. It also deals with the politics involved in doing research exclusively on refugee women as opposed to refugees in general. In the book, one can clearly understand that "refugee" is not a "homogeneous entity" because each refugee experience varies even among refugee women themselves.

The book thus brings out all the differences that are not assumed in settlement policies. It also provides an overview of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, the complexities of the nationality question within the context of Ethiopia and the conflicts and wars that followed. Here, the reconstruction of the experiences of the refugee women in question, in particular, their decisions to leave and the processes they recall, become the focal point of Helene's analysis.

The book covers a much broader argument than the current immigration policy which has historically defined the term "refugee" as gender neutral; thus, the term has been confused. Moussa's work is therefore a valuable contribution in highlighting the needs of refugee women with regard to refugee assistance or with regard to resettlement or repatriation. This study contributes highly to a gender analysis of women's experiences which are widely misunderstood or perhaps intentionally neglected in a traditionally patriarchal society. The book also provides statistical data, figures and an extensive bibliography covering a number of areas on women refugees useful for academics as well as for policy makers. The methodology is very different because a constant interchange was maintained between the author and the people in question.

The reader will find the book very passionate and clear. Its content is essential for anyone who would like to understand the problems women refugees experience before, during and after they are traditionally labelled as "refugees" as well as the courageous struggle they have to endure to maintain their identity as women wherever they are. ■

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