

Sorrows, Stories, Statistics & Strategies A Crisis Unfolding

A presentation by Penny Rankin

65.3 million People, or one in every 122 humans on this planet, are either refugee, displaced or seeking asylums, among which a great majority are children and women.

These are the kind of overwhelming figures and data that Penny Rankin shared with her audience at the first MCW meeting of the new 2016-2017 season.

In an extremely well-documented and emotional presentation, filled with information and powerful pictures, Penny first drew up a global picture of the refugees' situation around the world.

She then went on to tell the more personal story of Antoune and Nadia which she was a part of, through her church.



Antoune was a pharmacist and Nadia a stay-at-home mum with a degree in French literature. They lived in Aleppo, Syria. Before the war, Aleppo was a major economic centre in the country. Antoune and Nadia, along with their children, enjoyed a very pleasant life in an agreeable and affluent neighbourhood of this city. Then the war broke out. Antoune and Nadia saw their children leave the city and the country for safer and more welcoming grounds. Two of them moved to France and two other, Fadi and Pierre, to Montreal.

Through her church, Penny got to know Fadi at a time when he was getting increasingly worried about his parents still living in bombed out Aleppo, without any access to food, running water or electricity.

As he was getting desperate to help his parents out of Syria, Fadi was led to seek support from the Anglican Church in Montreal.

After a long and arduous journey from Aleppo, and through Lebanon, Antoune and Nadia finally made it to Montreal. On June 2, 2016, they were reunited with their family and with grandchildren they had never seen!



This story has a happy ending but how many of them end up differently. So many lives are still at risk. How many refugees are endangering their lives every day, walking miles in the desert, crossing the seas on small boats with hundreds of people like them in the hope of safer shores?

Penny ended her presentation with a very moving poem written by Warsan Shire, a Somali poet, writer and educator who now lives in London, UK.

The poem is entitled *HOME* and here is the first verse:

*no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a
shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well*

*your neighbors running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.*

For more information on the topic or if you would like to help, please contact Penny Rankin at:

penelope.m.rankin@gmail.com.

Isabelle Godefroy