

CAN 150

FIRST SERVICE—APRIL 7TH 1860
"Learning from our past, preparing for our future"

NEWSLETTER No 3 April 2008



The Innovative Church: The Birth of the Church Of All Nations.

In our Second Newsletter in 2007 we were inspired by the work of George Dyson, Minister at our Carlton Church in the 1920s who led a major Mission Program and turned around the fortunes of the Church.



The nineteen sixties also stand out as a milestone decade in the Church's one hundred and fifty year history. In our third Newsletter our focus is on the birth of the Church Of All Nations in that decade.

From 1963, with the appointment of **Rev. Norman Lowe** as new Minister, the church embraced newly arrived migrants in **Worship and Mission Programs**.

Rev Norm Lowe opened the church to new arrivals from Spain and provided multilingual Services in Spanish, Portuguese, Macedonian and Arabic. Audrey Lowe pioneered Mission Services to migrants at the church, in their homes and in the community.

As Australian society was still gripped by assimilationist ideas based on the White Australia policy, the Church in Carlton demonstrated an innovation in worship and migrant services that was at the forefront of such services throughout Australia.

In 1967, two years after the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in Carlton began to worship together at the Palmerston St Church, the Joint Parish adopted the new name, **The Church Of All Nations**.

At our third **Founders Day Service** on April 13th, Brian Howe will set the context for these momentous changes, and participants from the period will share their reflections.

We extend an invitation to attend Founders Day Service to all our friends and past members of the CAN community.

Paul Madden, Editor.

Milestones



RIGHT
Rev. Norman Lowe

1963

Rev. Norman and Audrey Lowe arrive at Carlton Methodist Church.

June

First Church contact with Spanish new arrivals.

December 15th

Simultaneous translation of Sunday worship services commences.

Sunday morning *Coffee Hour* in the Dyson Auditorium for migrants to speak English.

1964

English teaching program: Twice weekly at the Church and provided in homes of migrant families by up to 50 volunteers.

1965

Joint Parish established by Methodist, Presbyterians and Congregational communities at Palmerston St church.

1967

Church adopts the name "**Church Of All Nations**".

1968

Language Laboratory for teaching English as a foreign language introduced.

Appointment Migrant social Worker. (One of only three in Victoria)

After-School Program for migrant children run by Audrey Lowe at *Faraday Street Primary School* four times weekly.

1971

Coordinator of Education (**Mac Nicoll**) commences with responsibility for Christian education and Migrant education.

"Today in the mission, experiment is the key word. In this changing multi-racial community the church is compelled to rethink her mission"

Rev. Alf Foote at the Carlton Wesleyan Methodist Centenary Celebration in 1960.



Third Founders Day Service, Sunday April 13 2008, 10am

Church of All Nations | 80 Palmerston Street, Carlton 3053

Beginnings: CAN's Programs for Migrants

Large numbers of migrants arriving in the sixties experiencing problems in re-settlement in Australia which drew a response from the Church in Carlton. Programs typically provided in the 'sixties included:

- Meeting new arrivals
- Helping with housing and jobs,
- Translated worship services on Sundays,

- English classes and the Volunteer Teachers Scheme.,
- Mini-Language Laboratory,
- Integration assistance
- After-Schools Program

The Church also provided research and resource material for newly arrived migrants such as publications on different migrant cultures. Social action goals on behalf of migrants were also pursued, and programs such

as the Volunteer Teachers Scheme were later to be developed by government as national programs

Rita Hamblin from **ABC Radio** visited **CAN** in 1972. She said:

"The Reverend Norman Lowe has organized English Language Laboratories. Teachers use visual aids and migrants queue up for lessons. It's the first time I've seen anything like this in Australia."

CAN's Migrant English Program Close-Up

Mac Nicoll recalls the church's migrant program in the early 70s.

It is early January, 1972, when most of Melbourne is on holidays.

Here at Palmerston Street, though, there is throbbing, teeming life. What a hive of activity...something happening in every available space!

Each morning and afternoon, two teachers supplied by **Adult Migrant Education Services** (AMES) are spending two hours in intensive language teaching. Their students come from Spain, South America, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon and Macedonia.

In the **Language Laboratory**, (the room behind the Organ) Lorraine Haas is teaching a small group of students, using the skills she has acquired since she began working here and building on her teaching background. The funding comes from a grant from the *Myer and Buckland Foundations* which Audrey Lowe had succeeded in obtaining with a splendid application based on the pioneering work she had been doing in the Lab set up by Don Lowe. Don, an unusually gifted teenager had already set up the simultaneous translation system in the Church, enabling people of Spanish, Macedonian and Egyptian culture to experience the worship service in their own language.

In the catacombs (now the Drop In Centre's kitchen), small groups of children and youth are busily at work with tutors, engaging in language activities of considerable diversity. Their teach-



CAN's Language Laboratory in 1970

ers are volunteers, many of them young students on vacation who have willingly given up a week of their break to work with these young people.

Some of the adult helpers are also involved in the **Volunteer Home Tutor Scheme** which Audrey Lowe has established some years earlier as a response to the awareness of the cultural isolation being experienced by many of the migrant mothers and grandmothers whom she was meeting in the midst of her life as a busy pastor's wife.

By 1972, with extra staff now employed, Audrey is able to share her experience more widely, to act as a resource for new staff and continue to build bridges among a variety of people who are beginning to take more seriously the needs of migrant children. For example she is invited to participate in an important conference on *The Migrant and The School*, organized by *Australian Frontier* in August, 1971.

By 1972, there are enough resources to hold special training sessions for volunteers, discussing both teaching methods and also promoting understanding of the various cultures from

which our students have come.

In the early 70s, migrants are not yet very visible in the national psyche and there is a steady stream of invitations to speak at groups

which are attempting some consciousness-raising. Mac attends a range of meetings where he shares some insights on the migrant experience, often beginning with the reading of a two page case study, the diary of a migrant, which invariably evokes a spirited and sympathetic response.

Many of the volunteers make a significant contribution to the lives of those people they have visited. Some move on after a few years to other areas of service and some take positions of leadership in the programme. Among those who begin as tentative volunteers and go on to make a major contribution are Isabel Tipping, Arlie Hargraves, Winsome Hunt, Dorothy Cannon, Dorothy Sutherland and Nairne Taylor.

Thirty years later, Church of All Nations continues support recently arrived migrants, in particular the communities from the Horn of Africa: and young people and language through its joint sponsorship of the Homework Programme, run by the local YMCA at the Carlton Library and the Carlton Primary School.