

For those who've come across the seas, we've boundless love to share: Refugees, Immigrants, and the Anglican Church in the Wollongong region from the 1970s to 1990s

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian national anthem makes much of the nation's land endowments: its golden soil, being girt by sea and abounding in nature's gifts. The other reference is in the less-sung second verse from which we've derived our title: "For those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share".

The city of greater Wollongong could hardly be described as having "boundless plains" compared with the more rural areas even within its own diocesan region. Yet this city, situated between the escarpment on the west and beaches on the east, has indeed shared its land with immigrants for decades following World War II. The city has long been proudly multicultural but it has been very religious for even longer still.

The question being asked in the early 1990s by the Anglican Church in the Wollongong region was effectively this: Could the largest protestant church of an already proudly multicultural city be fulfilling its evangelical cause if it remained mono-cultural in membership and/or failed to serve its multicultural community including newly arriving immigrants?¹ Those asking it

¹ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', 8 April 2014, Transcript, 1-2.

were certainly aware of how the Anglican Church *had* served the multicultural community in the preceding decade.

Two prominent ways it had served stand out. The first was a seemingly unlikely work among Spanish-speaking grandmothers starting in 1979. This work was funded by the government, provided by the Anglican Home Mission Society, and conducted at St Michael's Anglican Cathedral Wollongong. The second was the work amongst newly arriving Spanish-speaking refugees from Latin & Central America. This was in partnership with the government and coordinated from the diocesan office (adjacent to the Cathedral but now demolished).

The latter of these ministries was built on the former but both laid important groundwork for what was to follow. From the early 1990s onwards, in answer to the question asked above, work began amongst the new wave of refugees arriving from war-torn Europe (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, etc.) as well as the growing international student population of the University of Wollongong.

The driving force behind all of this work amongst immigrants and refugees was a number of key individuals employed by the Anglican church who had conviction in the Christian gospel, were employed for the sole purpose of cross-cultural ministry, and who acted as mobilisers of other Christian volunteers in this work. The employment of three key individuals from 1979 to 2000 meant that, for those who'd come across the seas, the Wollongong region of the Anglican Church had boundless love to share.

PROUDLY MULTICULTURAL, QUIETLY RELIGIOUS (1970S-1990S CONTEXT)

Any mention of Wollongong is likely to conjure one of three associations: geographical, industrial and multicultural. The three are inextricably linked, as Hagan and Wells show in their comprehensive history of the city.² The beauty of Wollongong's geographical location was alluded to in the introduction. But underlying the region's beauty is its natural resource of coal. Industries devoted to coal and then steel production dominated Wollongong's economic and consequently social landscape during their respective eras.

As a 'Steel City', Wollongong quickly became a region where skilled and unskilled migrant workers readily found employment. Immigrants didn't just find work after arriving. Often they arrived because they'd already secured employment in the steelworks from their native country.

A good example can be seen in the migration of the Macedonians to the region. Many Macedonian men left the post-World War 2 communist regime to work in Wollongong's steelworks.³ The chain-migration that followed to the 1970s saw Wollongong become a major centre for Macedonian settlement.⁴ Moreover, the burgeoning demand for steel meant that immigration levels overall couldn't keep up with the demand for more workers. Thus Wollongong's proud multiculturalism is historically intertwined with its geography and industry.

² J. Hagan and A. Wells, eds. *A History of Wollongong* (Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 1997), 1-5.

³ Medno Trajcevski, 'Macedonian Migration to the Illawarra', n.p. [cited 8 May 2014]. Online: <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/tieswithtradition/essays/macedonian-migration-to-illawarra.shtml>

⁴ James Jupp, *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 572, 669.

However, there are flaws to Hagan and Wells' utilitarian history of Wollongong. Its focus is the exploitation of resources – natural, technical and human. Their principal question is: “How were the resources of the Illawarra exploited over time to meet changing human needs?”⁵ Whilst this utilitarian approach covers much ground, it fails to provide any adequate account of the contribution made by the region's churches, other than in the area of education in early colonisation.⁶

This is confounding given the significant contribution of church life to the region, not only in colonial times but also modern times. The region's multiculturalism is arguably represented more by its diversity in Christian churches than any other affiliation.⁷ Anglican Bishop Harry Goodhew notes this was “the first thing that struck me” when he first arrived at Wollongong in 1976 to serve as Rector of St Michael's Anglican Cathedral.⁸ This oversight by Hagan and Wells is also made in other secular histories of Wollongong.⁹ It is hoped this paper will contribute to the current body of work, including that of Stuart Piggin amongst others, that acknowledges the contribution made by the churches, particularly the Anglican Church.¹⁰

Wollongong's churches could, however, be aptly described as being ‘quietly religious’ during the 1970s-1990s. This can be understood in two ways. The first is the notion that religion

⁵ Hagan, *Wollongong*, 1997, 1-5.

⁶ John McQuilton, ‘Settlement’, in *A History of Wollongong* ed. Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells (Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 1997) 32; Josie Castle, ‘Education and Health’, in *A History of Wollongong* ed. Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells (Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 1997) 190.

⁷ This diversity was found not just in the Protestant churches (Lutheran, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed and Anglican), but also Roman Catholic churches, which Piggin notes welcomed visiting chaplains of various nationalities (German, Polish, Hungarian, Croatian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian, etc.) as well as Orthodox Churches (Greek, Syrian, Coptic, Macedonian, Serbian and Russian); Stuart Piggin, *Faith of Steel: A history of Christian Churches in Illawarra, Australia*, (Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 1984), 227.

⁸ Harry Goodhew, ‘Personal Interview’, 11 March 2014, Transcript, 5.

⁹ Terry Kass, *A Thematic History of the City of Wollongong* (Wollongong City Council, December 2010); Richard Cardew & Patricia Fanning, *Population-economy-environment relationships in the Wollongong region* (Canberra, Australian Government Publication Service, 1996); Jack Devitt, *True North: Tales & Reminiscences, Celebrating the 2001 Centenary of Federation* (Corrimal NSW: Corrimal Chamber of Commerce, 2001).

¹⁰ Piggin, *Steel*, 1-2.

occupied only a small part of life in the Wollongong region. Those secular histories noted above reflect a more secularised Australian society generally, as well as declining church attendance until around 1976.¹¹ The Nan-Tien Buddhist Temple south of Wollongong, opened in 1995, perhaps symbolises this ‘quiet religion’ in the eyes of many locals: inoffensive, private, yet aesthetically pleasing architecture!

The second way is quite the opposite. The inordinate number of church buildings scattered across the region were being well utilised for Christian gatherings throughout the 1970s-90s.¹² Bishop Harry Goodhew (Bishop of Wollongong from 1982-93) recalled that members of Anglican churches throughout the region carried on with the quiet, faithful work of Christian gospel ministry.¹³

ESL classes (English as a Second Language) were also popular in Anglican churches across the region, more so than in any other region in the Sydney Diocese.¹⁴ Bishop Goodhew and his predecessor Bishop Ken Short (Bishop from 1975-82) both recall the local Anglican churches’ priority in evangelism.¹⁵ Despite a 10-day evangelistic crusade held in Wollongong Town Hall in 1979 at which Leighton Ford (Billy Graham’s brother-in-law) spoke, organised by Bishop Short in consultation with the region’s Anglican rectors and at which “a number of people did respond in repentance and faith”, this crusade didn’t affect Wollongong to anywhere near the scale that the earlier 1959 Billy Graham crusade had.¹⁶ Thus the faithful work within

¹¹ Tom Frame, *Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 2009), 66-77; Piggin, *Steel*, 261-2.

¹² Piggin, *Steel*, 261-86.

¹³ Harry Goodhew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 4.

¹⁴ Rachel Morse, *Anglicans Celebrate 150 Years: the Sydney Diocese: Fulfilling the Mission of the Church* (Sydney: Anglican Home Mission Society, 1997), Appendix.

¹⁵ Harry Goodhew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 8-9; Ken Short, ‘Personal Interview’, 12 March 2014, Transcript, 3-5.

¹⁶ Ken Short, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 3. Harry Goodhew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 4.

local Anglican parishes is aptly described as ‘quietly religious’. However, this unassuming work would not go unnoticed by the government’s Immigration Department (see below).

There remains one last aspect to how Wollongong’s proud multiculturalism is intertwined with industry: the rise of the University of Wollongong. Following the worldwide downturn in steel consumption in the 1970s, and an economic downturn in Australia beginning in 1981, employment at the steelworks plummeted from 19,960 in 1981 to 12,957 in 1984.¹⁷ Needless to say it had a devastating impact on the region. Bishop Goodhew recalls how BHP contacted clergymen across the region before the lay-offs, “aware of the fallout in people’s lives”.¹⁸

The University of Wollongong later eclipsed the steelworks as the largest employer in the region.¹⁹ Moreover, the university added to the proud multiculturalism of the region as it sought to attract more and more students from overseas.²⁰ These included not just undergraduate students but also postgraduates, visiting lecturers, and PhD students who would sometimes bring their spouses and children. Thus, any efforts by the Anglican Church to reach multicultural Wollongong would have to include the growing university population in some way.

A SEEMINGLY UNLIKELY WORK (1979-1988)

¹⁷ Rob Castle, ‘Steel City: the Economy, 1945-1995’, in *A History of Wollongong* ed. Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells (Wollongong: Wollongong University Press, 1997), 73.

¹⁸ Harry Goodhew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 1.

¹⁹ The Illawarra Area Health Service later eclipsed the University as the largest employer. Illawarra Mercury Editorial, ‘Our region’s changing face’, 27 November 2010, page 36 [cited 2 Feb 2015]. Online: http://newsstore.fairfax.com.au/apps/viewDocument.ac?jsessionid=6D1A78FE6C15C08822FFCF859986B76E?sy=afr&pb=all_ffx&dt=selectRange&dr=1month&so=relevance&sf=text&sf=headline&rc=10&rm=200&sp=brs&cls=17297&clsPage=1&docID=ILL1011271J1L560T3CH

²⁰ Stephen Castles, ‘The Emergence of Multicultural Wollongong’, in *A History of Wollongong* ed. Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells (Wollongong: Wollongong University Press, 1997), 210; Reg Piper, ‘Informal Conversation’, 19 February 2014, Transcript, 1.

The ministry to Spanish-speaking grandmothers was perhaps the most successful work of the Anglican Church to migrants in the Wollongong region in the 1980s. A proper understanding of it requires consideration of the following: (i) the broad and specific involvement of the government; (ii) the arrival in Wollongong of Dorys Hernandez from Chile, and (iii) how the ministry developed to include a bi-lingual church service.

(i) Broad and specific government involvement

The repealing of the so-called ‘White Australia’ policy culminated in the new federal Labor government removing its final vestiges in 1973.²¹ These vestiges, which placed restrictions on immigration, had been in place since Australia’s Federation, when the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* was the first act passed by the new federal government. Thus a major part of the nation’s psyche on immigration was to change from 1973.

Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War also meant Australia was obliged to accept Vietnam-born refugees under a refugee resettlement plan from 1975-85.²² Australia’s immigration policy was the leading point in Sydney Anglican Archbishop Marcus Loane’s Presidential address to the 1974 Synod of Sydney.²³ In his Presidential address six years earlier, Archbishop Loane had already declared, “tomorrow belongs to Asia”.²⁴ Given this

²¹ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, ‘Fact Sheet 8 – Abolition of the ‘White Australia’ Policy’ n.p. [cited 8 May 2014]. Online: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm#c>

²² Colin Bale, ‘Informal Conversation’, 17 February 2014.

²³ Church of England, *Diocese of Sydney, Year book of the Diocese of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1975* (Sydney: Sydney Diocesan Registry, 1975), 213-228.

²⁴ Church of England, *Diocese of Sydney, Year book of the Diocese of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1969* (Sydney: Sydney Diocesan Registry, 1969), 217.

climate nationally and Synodically, it would be fair to expect that most of the Anglican Church's work amongst immigrants and refugees would be to Asian arrivals.²⁵

Bishop Goodhew, however, recalls that not a great number of arrivals came from Asia to Wollongong.²⁶ Certainly they did come, but arguably not in the numbers expected.²⁷ So the Anglican Church's ministry wasn't particularly directed toward Asian migrants. Instead, it was a very specific ministry to Spanish-speaking grandmothers, whom the Immigration Department had also identified as particularly needy, that became the most prominent work of its kind by the Anglican Church in Wollongong during the late 1970s-80s.²⁸ So began this seemingly unlikely work.

(ii) The arrival of Dorys Hernandez in Wollongong

The story of how Dorys Hernandez became the first key individual through whom the Anglican Church served migrants in Wollongong attests to what has already been described. She arrived in Sydney from Chile in 1972 with her husband and 7 year-old son. The political situation in Chile meant they had to leave Chile "due to different political ideology to the existent Socialist regime [*sic*]" .²⁹

²⁵ See also the HMS Annual Report of 1991 which reports that, "The Indo-Chinese refugee influx of the 70's and 80's has centered our work on people from these backgrounds". Home Mission Society (NSW), *Annual Report 1991* (Sydney: The Society, 1991).

²⁶ Harry Goodhew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 5.

²⁷ Castles, 'Multicultural Wollongong', 210.

²⁸ For the fact that it was a government-recognised problem, see Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', 12 March 2014, Transcript, 1, 19. Although Scarratt notes he has no official information on this matter, but only what he picked up from speaking with Dorys Hernandez and Bill Graham.

²⁹ Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', 4 April 2014, Transcript, 1, 7.

Hernandez describes the first two years in Australia as very difficult, especially because of language difficulties. Her basic high-school English made conversation in Australia hard. When asked about the support they received, she recounts the care from one individual whom they met at their hostel – their son’s English teacher.

This teacher provided not only ESL lessons but also emotional support when Dorys’ father died in Chile within her first six months in Australia. That teacher was a Christian lady named Dorothy Mitchell from an Anglican church.³⁰ This support appears to have deeply touched Hernandez, seen in part by the way she would later provide similar support to others in need.

After leaving the hostel, Hernandez and her family lived in Hillsdale near Matraville for one year, before moving to Wollongong in 1974 when Dorys’ husband found work at the steelworks.³¹ She continued to attend ESL classes in Wollongong before studying welfare work at Wollongong Technical College. Upon finishing that course she began work in 1979 for ‘CareForce’, the welfare arm of the Anglican Home Mission Society (HMS).

(iii) The work to Spanish-speaking grandmothers

The Sydney Anglican Church was clearly committed to its work among migrants throughout the 1970s-80s. Archbishop Loane’s commitment made this evident, as did the resolutions of Standing Committee in 1973 and 1974.³² In these it was deemed necessary that the Anglican

³⁰ Dorys Hernandez, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 2.

³¹ Dorys Hernandez, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 2.

³² Resolution 11/73 in 1973 Standing Committee, Church of England, *Diocese of Sydney, Year book of the Diocese of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1974* (Sydney: Sydney Diocesan Registry, 1974), 249-50; Resolutions 11/73 and 47/73 in 1974 Standing Committee, Church of England, *Diocese of Sydney, Year book of the Diocese of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1975* (Sydney: Sydney Diocesan Registry, 1975), 241-2, 283-84.

Immigration Department continue its work and that this work was best administered through the counselling of the HMS.

This decision was almost immediately vindicated by many stories of immigrants benefitting from these services. Some are recounted in the HMS Annual Reports from 1974 onwards.³³ So from its 'hierarchy' down to its 'frontline workers', the Anglican Church was efficient in identifying and meeting immigrants' needs.

Following this success, Hernandez's was one of ten *new* pilot programs tested across the diocese.³⁴ She began by investigating who the most needy were among Wollongong's Spanish-speaking community. She soon identified that "one of the main problems was the loneliness of women", including the elderly.³⁵

Grahame Scarratt described the situation. The Anglican Church employed Scarratt as a Cross-Cultural worker from 1988-93. He recounts how young families were arriving from South America as immigrants and refugees and establishing their lives in Wollongong.³⁶ When a husband died, the widow would often bring her mother over from South America to help raise the children. Sadly, as the kids grew older and required their own bedrooms, these grandmothers were forced by their daughters to move out and fend for themselves. With limited English, few contacts and little support these grandmothers faced major difficulties. The government and the Anglican Church sought to meet these needs through Hernandez.

³³ Home Mission Society (NSW), *Annual Reports 1974, 75, 76, 77, 79* (Sydney: The Society, 1974, 75, 76, 77, 79).

³⁴ Home Mission Society, *Annual Report 1979*.

³⁵ Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 2.

³⁶ Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', 12 March 2014, Transcript, 1.

Hernandez's program was funded by a 'grant-in-aid' paid by the Immigration Department to CareForce. The broad guidelines allowed her to provide for the women's various needs including material needs, finding accommodation, social security, ESL, doctors' appointments, and visits at home or at work. It also included spiritual needs as Hernandez identified them.³⁷ The fact that Hernandez was never prevented from providing spiritual care during the fifteen years that the government funded the program – during which Australian society became increasingly secularised – testifies to the quality of her work.

The women's loneliness was addressed through women's support groups. After initially meeting in the CareForce offices, they soon outgrew them and relocated to the St Michael's church hall across the road. In consultation with Bill Graham, the Rector of St Michael's, who himself had some Spanish speaking ability (having previously served as a missionary in Peru), a Spanish Christian service started in June 1985 on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.³⁸ This service involved lunch and socialising, support and prayer, and a bible study. It continued even after a bi-lingual Sunday service started at the Cathedral in July 1986. Both groups continued to meet throughout the 1990s.

Despite the most of the women being Roman Catholics, all were willing to attend an Anglican service. Many reasons could explain this. The primary reason, however, appears to be the genuine love and support shown by Hernandez and Bill Graham, as well as Christian women from St Michael's and Oak Flats Anglican Church.³⁹

³⁷ Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 3.

³⁸ Hernandez makes particular mention of Reverend Bill Graham's effort to comfort the women in times of grief. They considered him "their pastor". Hernandez says without his dedication the ministry would not have been possible. 'Personal Interview Transcript', 3, 7; Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 18.

³⁹ Hernandez also notes that "during Reverend Graham period, 10 people were accepted into the Anglican Church as members [*sic*]". Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 3, 7.

Many women were also simply touched to receive their first invitation, and be escorted, to a church in Australia.⁴⁰ This is consistent with Piggin's explanation for the poor attendance of many migrants at Catholic churches because of the inhospitality and complete lack of assistance provided.⁴¹

The main strength of her work was, according to Hernandez, the spiritual growth of the women who attended services. Bishops Short, Goodhew and Piper (Bishop from 1993-2006) attest to this by speaking highly of the ministry.⁴² Many women were given personal and spiritual care for well over a decade. In this way, the ministry was the flagship of Anglican cross-cultural ministry in Wollongong in the 1980s (over the quiet work of ESL classes across the region). Despite its prominence, two weaknesses should be noted.

The first was that the group had no focus on growth. Visitors rarely joined. Instead new immigrants who occasionally joined the group became the ones 'feeding it'. The group therefore wasn't self-generating. John Thew, Director of Cross-Cultural Ministries from 1993, recalls that refugee and immigration numbers slowed considerably from South America when he began.⁴³ So it followed that the Spanish-speaking church services also declined. Another reason was the failure to focus on discipling the children of first generation attendees – that is, the discipling of the second generation of migrants.

The second major weakness is the comparative longevity of social action work over the spiritual. The Spanish church services decreased from 2000 and eventually ceased in 2010.

⁴⁰ Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 2.

⁴¹ Piggin, *Steel*, 226-7.

⁴² Bishop Goodhew speaks specifically of Dorys' work whereas Bishops Short and Piper speak of the Spanish work generally. Harry Goodhew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 7; Reg Piper, 'Informal Conversation', Transcript, 1; Ken Short, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 6.

⁴³ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 2, 7.

However, another initiative also started by Hernandez still continues today. CAPAH Association Incorporated is a community group for elderly persons, which operates two separate day-care centres with plans to open two more.⁴⁴ It could be argued that the longevity of CAPAH over the Spanish church services shows that this social work was the priority. But perhaps a more tempered assessment is to acknowledge the many strengths of the ministry (recognised by the government and the Anglican Church), whilst also acknowledging the benefit that some strategic advice may have provided in identifying the need for self-generating growth or other long-term plans. How closely CareForce were involved in this aspect remains unclear.

THE GROWTH AND PLATEAU (1988-1993)

The next phase of Anglican cross-cultural ministry had both continuity and discontinuity with the Spanish work. The key individual was Grahame Scarratt. Scarratt began this work in 1988 after returning home to the Wollongong region from Chile. He had served in Chile as a CMS missionary with wife Patty and their children. Not wanting to send their children to Australia by themselves for university, the family moved back to the South Coast where Scarratt had previously owned and operated a surveying business in Kiama.⁴⁵

Scarratt had promised the Bishop in Chile that he and Patty would return to Chile to recommence their work after their children's study. That meant they had only a handful of years in the Wollongong region. After contacting Bishop Goodhew it was mutually agreed

⁴⁴ Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 4; See also the CAPAH website n.p. [cited 8 May 2014]. Online <http://www.capahmulticultural.org>.

⁴⁵ Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 1.

that Scarratt was a most suitable person for the new role of Cross-Cultural Worker to start a new work with refugees.

(i) Continuity

The Scarratts' Spanish speaking skills and Grahame's employment on the same block of land on which the Spanish church services were conducted, made it logical that he would be involved with the Spanish services in some way (perhaps similar to the logic of Bill Graham's involvement). His contribution improved how the Spanish services were conducted, without altering the approach.

One of his first tasks was translating the bi-lingual church service that had started at St Michael's 20 months earlier. He recounts how Hernandez had previously translated the service, including the sermon, from English into Spanish. The Spanish women, as well as some men and families in attendance, would listen through headphones as the translation was made live.⁴⁶

Scarratt's translation was a significant improvement on Hernandez's. For Scarratt to translate from his native English into Spanish was much easier than for Hernandez to translate from her foreign language into native Spanish. Scarratt could translate whilst still listening, whereas Hernandez would miss more of the service. So while Scarratt's Spanish wasn't as good as Hernandez's, his translation meant the women heard the full service as opposed to perhaps 60%

⁴⁶ Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 5.

of it.⁴⁷ Apart from the church service translating, Scarratt also attended the twice-monthly Friday gatherings, and ran a bible study group on Thursday nights. Despite this contribution to the Spanish ministry, his involvement doesn't appear to have altered the approach or direction of the ministry overall. His major work lay elsewhere.

(ii) Discontinuity

The Immigration Department became aware of Scarratt's employment with the Anglican Church and sought help with a resettlement scheme for Spanish-speaking refugees. The government enlisted help from various volunteer organisations including the Rotary Club and other churches. Interestingly, the minimal guidelines provided by the government on resettlement procedures meant Scarratt and his team of volunteers from the Anglican Church could provide a greater level of care consistent with their Christian faith.

While some immigrants continued to arrive from Chile, the majority of Spanish-speakers came from El Salvador. The guidelines simply required a volunteer to meet the new arrivals at their hostel and, over the course of a few weeks, help them settle into Australian life by showing them where to go for furniture and social security. However, Scarratt's team went much further.

Seeing the value of being a first contact in Australia, Scarratt would meet the refugee family at the airport. He would then bring them back to spend their first night in Australia in his own family home, as opposed to the hostel. He would then take them to their new home in Australia

⁴⁷ Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 2. Hernandez also notes that, "Reverend Graham made sure the sermon was ready on Friday, so I could translate it without pressure, and be ready for Sunday". Dorys Hernandez, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 7.

– a rental property, for which Scarratt would personally organise the lease agreement prior to the refugees’ arrival. Scarratt would then escort them to their various social security and other appointments. The government’s endorsement of this level of support is evident in how the government turned to Scarratt again and again with more refugee families for resettlement (including even after Scarratt’s departure, per below).

Scarratt’s relaxed demeanour belies his shrewd vision for more opportunities. Noticing the opportunities for connections through ESL classes, he and Patty became qualified ESL teachers. Scarratt notes that when the Chilean community in Wollongong showed little interest in ESL or bible study groups, they continued their focus on the El Salvadorians.⁴⁸ The initiative of the Archdeacon of Wollongong, Vic Roberts, saw a graduate from Moore College named Sue Keevers also employed for the specific role of ESL teaching.⁴⁹ Always synonymous with ESL was the study of the bible.

This dual purpose of ESL classes was always foremost in both Grahame and Patty’s minds. Patty recounts how ESL classes served two purposes: (i) “It helped them integrate into the community properly, and (ii) it gives them the opportunity to hear the gospel”.⁵⁰ Peppered throughout their many stories of refugee families they have helped resettle, are numerous accounts of individuals, couples and even parents of refugees who became Christian. Not everyone took up the offer of ESL or bible study and these were never imposed.

⁴⁸ Grahame Scarratt, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 3.

⁴⁹ Grahame Scarratt, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 16, 19. Keevers also extended the ESL network to include Keiraville Anglican Church.

⁵⁰ Grahame Scarratt, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 17.

Another opportunity was enlisting the help of other Anglican churches throughout the region as support groups for these refugee families. These included the Anglican Churches of St Michael's in Wollongong, St Mark's in West Wollongong, Keiraville, Oak Flats, Kiama and St Luke's in Dapto.⁵¹ These churches would provide support through provisions and personal care. Scarratt recalls how a man from Dapto Anglican Church "became virtually like the honorary grandfather" to a couple from El Salvador.⁵²

Apart from the government's continued endorsement of their work, the success is also shown in Patty's explanation that "most of the ones we worked with – not all, but most – settled into the Australian community".⁵³ This of course was the Immigration Department's aim. It is remarkable, given the traumatic experiences these refugees fled, and the minimal guidelines provided by the government to volunteers of this scheme, how these refugee families could be so well resettled into their homes and the community. Equally commendable is the scope provided by the Anglican Church to allow Scarratt to conduct this work so freely. His shrewdness, initiative, gospel priority and mobilisation of other churches saw the cross-cultural ministry of the Anglican Church in Wollongong established in just 5 years.

THE CREST OF A NEW REFUGEE WAVE (1993-2000)

(i) A blank canvas

⁵¹ Thew explains that Keiraville Anglican Church was a leading ESL provider, but perhaps not a contact established by Scarratt. John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 28.

⁵² Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 4, 19.

⁵³ Grahame Scarratt, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 15.

The Scarratts kept their promise and returned as missionaries to Chile. At the same time, the influx of Spanish refugees had slowed considerably. So for all the success of the Scarratts' work, it quickly dried up without a Spanish-speaking worker or the same volume of refugees. The Anglican Church was left asking the question we raised at the start: Can the largest protestant church of an already proudly multicultural city be fulfilling its evangelical cause if it remains mono-cultural in membership and/or fails to serve its multicultural community including newly arriving immigrants?⁵⁴ The Archdeacon of Wollongong, Vic Roberts, contacted John Thew. In September 1993 Thew started in the role of Cross-Cultural Director of the Wollongong Region.

Like Scarratt (and even Bill Graham) before him, Thew had also served as a missionary overseas, in Pakistan (1976-89). Given that he couldn't speak Spanish he wasn't heavily involved with the Spanish-speaking services. This meant that, with fewer arrivals of Spanish-speaking refugees, Thew started his role with a blank canvas.

Within the first month of starting Thew was incapacitated with a back injury. He had back surgery and was bedridden for six months. He describes how he used this time to do lots of investigation into the area, the people, the churches, and cross-cultural ministry generally.⁵⁵ This included meeting with people and doing lots of listening, thinking and praying.⁵⁶ Although the injury and recovery was a physically painful experience, he recounts in hindsight how it was very beneficial in forcing him to plan more comprehensively than he otherwise would have if he had been in full health.⁵⁷ It seems that another benefit of this forced period of planning came later when, in the midst of the busy work, and when small windows of

⁵⁴ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 1-2.

⁵⁵ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 3-4.

⁵⁶ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 3.

⁵⁷ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 3.

opportunity arose, decisions could be made that didn't depart from the Anglican Church's evangelical convictions.

(ii) Building on Scarratt's foundations

Providing quality ESL classes was a high priority. Thew's wife Cathryn was a specialist English teacher having completed the Cambridge TESOL course. The Thews began writing their own ESL material. Lessons would include locally appropriate content such as getting around Wollongong.⁵⁸ Cathryn Thew later went on to write volumes of ESL material on behalf of Anglicare for use across the diocese.

Thew was very deliberate from the outset that all assistance provided by the church, including ESL, should be distinctly gospel-driven and not social work alone. He wanted theirs "to be a service that will help people in this life and for eternity".⁵⁹ With regard to ESL, "it was determined without too much trouble that bible reading would be a part of each lesson and for each student. It was the reading component".⁶⁰

The reading component was always from a gospel narrative. The students were given the option to absent themselves during that part of the lesson. Thew says emphatically that, "no one *ever* did".⁶¹ Instead the students were often very interested by what the bible contained and openly asked questions.

⁵⁸ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 19.

⁵⁹ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 9.

⁶⁰ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 10.

⁶¹ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 10 (emphasis original).

Thew also enlisted the help of a dozen different Anglican churches across the region.⁶² He and Cathryn provided the teaching materials and training to those who volunteered. Thus the ‘quiet’ ESL work happening across the region for the past two decades was sharpened through locally tailored training and material.⁶³

The “greatest success” of this new work was once again among refugees.⁶⁴ Coincidentally, at the same time that Thew first made early contact with the Immigration Department to follow in the Scarratts’ steps, he received a letter from the department asking if he’d be continuing with the refugee resettlement scheme. Without the immediate resources at hand, but having already planned comprehensively, Thew quickly replied “yes”.

So began a refugee resettlement work that resembled that of the Scarratts but on a larger scale. Refugees arrived from the former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia). The Thews began by doing the resettlement work themselves as the Scarratts had also done: going to the airport, settling them in their homes, taking them to appointments and enrolling children in schools.

Thew’s opinion was that the Immigration Department expected a fairly minimal level of care by volunteers in the scheme.⁶⁵ This seems to echo Scarratt’s view. Certain requirements had to be met in the first six weeks and then other requirements in the next six weeks. After twelve weeks the department considered the refugees settled.

⁶² John Thew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 9-10.

⁶³ As the ESL work grew, Thew explains that they employed several part-time ESL specialists. ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript 28.

⁶⁴ John Thew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 5.

⁶⁵ John Thew, ‘Personal Interview’, Transcript, 6.

Compelled by the same gospel conviction as Scarratt, and no doubt aware from his research of Scarratt's success in taking the longer-term approach, Thew also provided care for longer than 12 weeks. He and Cathryn sought to provide support for the first 3 years of a refugee family's arrival.⁶⁶ He asked the same of his Christian volunteers.

Apart from employing 2 full-time employees to help with this work, Thew also enlisted the help of around 50 local families from churches across the Wollongong region.⁶⁷ These included 6 Anglican churches as well as Presbyterian, Reformed, Baptist, and Congregational churches. If local families expressed interest but couldn't commit to 3 years of support, Thew wouldn't accept their help. Thew recounts that the ministry grew to having around 250 refugee families actively engaged at any one time. By the end of the decade they had helped settle around 600 families in total.

Once the work had grown, one of Thew's main roles was to provide support and training to the local volunteer families. This training was practical, gospel-centred and certainly more accessible than other cross-cultural training manuals – valuable resources in their own right – that were available in the Sydney Diocese at the time.⁶⁸ Thus through Thew's longer-term vision, as well as his mobilising and equipping of others, the Anglican Church was the conduit for arguably the most effective cross-cultural work of any kind happening in Wollongong in the 1990s.

⁶⁶ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 6-7.

⁶⁷ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 14.

⁶⁸ Mike Wilson, *The MAC Pack: A Manual for Ministry Across Cultures, Volumes 1-3* (Sydney: Cross-Cultural Ministry, Anglican Home Mission Society); Mike Wilson, *Crossing Boundaries: Various Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Ministry, Parts 1 & 2*, (Sydney: Cross-Cultural Ministry, Anglican Home Mission Society, 1995).

This endorsement was supported by independent research into the effectiveness of the Anglican Church's involvement in the Resettlement & Support Scheme (RSS) conducted by the University of Wollongong.⁶⁹ This evaluation consisted of interviewing 45 refugee participants in the scheme.⁷⁰ All were from the former Yugoslavia.⁷¹ Twenty volunteer Anglican support persons were also interviewed.

The research found that overall levels of satisfaction with the RSS were “extremely high”.⁷² Moreover, “98% of the [refugee] participants were of the opinion that the frequency of contact with the RSS was not too much (most stating that even more contact would be welcomed)”.⁷³

Further endorsement came tacitly from the peak professional body STARTTS of Parramatta (the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors). STARTTS agreed to provide a seminar on refugee settlement in Wollongong, hosted by the Anglican Church (which was chosen by STARTTS as the preferred host over other interested parties, including government agencies).⁷⁴

The university report also made a number of critiques. Volunteer families would have benefitted from more support at the start of their involvement.⁷⁵ They also would have

⁶⁹Marina Rademeyer and Frand P. Deane, *Evaluation of the Wollongong Cross-Cultural Ministries' Refugee Support Scheme (Report to Cross-Cultural Ministries, Anglican Church, Wollongong Region)* (Wollongong: University of Wollongong, Illawarra Institute for Mental Health, 2001).

⁷⁰*Ibid*, 1.

⁷¹ Most had as their first language Serbo-Croatian (43.2%), Serbian (38.6%), Croatian (11.4%) and then Bosnian (6.8%).

⁷² Rademeyer & Deane, *Evaluation*, 4.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷⁴ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 9.

⁷⁵ Rademeyer & Deane, *Evaluation*, 6-7.

benefitted from training later on in more advanced topics.⁷⁶ But these were certainly minor suggestions compared with the very high levels of satisfaction by *both* refugees and volunteers.

(iii) A new development

At the peak of its work, the Anglican Church had around 500 active contacts split equally between the RSS and ESL classes. This success, along with the increasing number of students arriving from overseas to study at the University of Wollongong who weren't catered for by the RSS or necessarily ESL, meant the time was ripe for a new ministry to begin.

Thew went about starting an easy-English church service. He ended up starting two. The first was held at St Michael's Cathedral. The second was smaller, held at Warrawong and catered more for people who'd been settled in the region for 10-20 years.⁷⁷

These services weren't started simply for the sake of it or for something fresh. They were intended to build on already developing relationships in a fun context that introduced people to what Christians believe.⁷⁸ The RSS and ESL thus became feeder groups to these services. They were held once a month and billed as special occasions. Everyone attending would bring a plate of dinner to share for the first 45-50 minutes. The church service would follow in the second 45-50 minutes.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 7.

⁷⁷ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 10.

⁷⁸ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 15.

⁷⁹ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 11.

Thew was meticulous in making every component of the service accessible for those with no Christian understanding and little English. The CEV Bible was used for its 850-word vocabulary.⁸⁰ Liturgy was clear and simple but not simplistic.⁸¹ Sermons were evangelistic and capped in length at 9 ½ minutes for clarity.⁸² Finally songs were didactic rather than testimonial.⁸³ A bonus was when the children of refugees or university students accompanied singing by playing instruments.

Thew's meticulousness extended to training his team of 15 volunteers.⁸⁴ Most of these were members of St Michael's. Apart from training them for 3 months before the services had begun, he provided ongoing training in welcoming, prayer, and especially in preaching (for his team of 3 preachers).⁸⁵ This commitment to training was clearly a distinctive of Thew's leadership. It ensured that the many Christian volunteers weren't just mobilised by Thew's vision – namely, that the Anglican Church would be serving people's needs in this life *and* of eternity – but were constantly supported as they sought to achieve it.

(iv) A sad end

When Thew finished as Cross-Cultural director in 2000 much of the RSS work also finished. Thew attributes this largely to changes in government policy concerning refugee resettlement.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 10.

⁸¹ See Appendix 1; John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 12.

⁸² John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 20.

⁸³ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 19-20.

⁸⁴ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 11.

⁸⁵ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 20.

⁸⁶ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 7.

In 1993 the government policy allowed the volunteer group to do all of the necessary resettlement work. But 4-5 policy changes favoured 'choice' by the refugees. The policy of choice meant instead of the onus being on the volunteer group to provide support, the responsibility was given to refugees to choose the type of support they wanted. Thew argues that the refugees in their traumatised condition weren't in any condition to make such choices.⁸⁷ His argument is quite valid.

A further policy shift limited the level of support that volunteer groups could provide. Instead of having one support person (or family) help refugees with 15 service providers, the onus was put on the refugee to go to these 15 providers themselves. Thew also describes how the government informally reprimanded him for how his Anglican volunteers carried the personal relationship too far.⁸⁸

It appears that the independent report from the university published in 2001 came too late to commend the Anglican Church's work to the government. This can only be described as a sad end to what was a thriving partnership between the government and the church. It could be said that this policy of choice reflected Australian secular society, which arguably bound the Anglican Church's seemingly boundless love for refugees.

The extent to which the Anglican Church continued cross-cultural work after Thew left in 2000 is beyond the scope of this research.⁸⁹ It would be interesting to investigate how many

⁸⁷ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 8.

⁸⁸ John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 8.

⁸⁹ Although ESL work did continue despite the RSS work ending. John Thew, 'Personal Interview', Transcript, 28.

volunteers, who were trained by Thew and served alongside him, continued the work that was so effective during the 1990s.

CONCLUSION

The story of how the Anglican Church in the Wollongong region served immigrants and refugees in the 1970s-1990s is one of state and church partnership made effective by key individuals on the ground. The government repealed the 'White Australia' policy, accepted various waves of refugees, and sought their settlement through volunteer partnership schemes. The Anglican Church's commitment to this was clear at all levels: the Sydney Diocesan level; the HMS/CareForce level; the level of bishops, and importantly at local parish churches. The key individuals were Dorys Hernandez, Grahame Scarratt, and John Thew. They not only served refugees and immigrants themselves but also mobilised and supported others to do the same. Their motivation was the love shown in the Christian gospel, which meant their level of support exceeded the government expectations by far. In this way the Anglican Church in Wollongong fulfilled this part of its evangelical cause, and yet ironically, also led to its criticism by the government – arguably for caring too much.

APPENDIX 1: LITURGY OF AN EASY-ENGLISH SERVICE (FRONT & BACK COVERS)

14. We pray for our families, our world and the church.

We pray for our families:

Heavenly Father, we have family and friends, both here and far away. Please show them your love. Help them in trouble and hardship. Give them a firm trust in you.

We pray for our World:

Lord of the Nations, help the leaders of our countries to govern with justice and truth, so that we may share the things of this world, and live together in trust and peace.

We pray for the Church:

Our God, help us and all your people, to be true to Jesus, to show his love to all people, and to do his work of making peace between himself and others.

15. The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

16. We finish with 'The Grace'

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore. Amen.** - from 2 Corinthians 13:13

PRAISE THE LORD

An Easy English Service of Praise, Prayer and Hearing God's Word.
from Anglican Cross Cultural Ministries, Wollongong, revised 1998.

A TIME TO PRAISE AND THANK GOD

1. Sing to the Lord, and praise him! Hear the good news -
he has saved us. Tell of his glory to the nations,
his mighty deeds to all people. - from Psalm 96:2,3

Lord God All-Powerful, you have done great and marvellous things.
You rule all nations, and you do what is right and fair.

You alone are holy, and all nations will come and worship you,
because you have shown that you judge with fairness.
- from Revelation 15:3,4

2. A prayer of thanksgiving.

**Thank you God, for health and safety,
for work and rest,
and for all that is good in life.**

**Most of all we thank you
for our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and for his death and resurrection.**

**Thank you that you give us your Spirit,
and the promise of heaven.**

**Fill our hearts with joy and peace
as we follow Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

3. A time of singing, testimony and sharing

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