CHAPTER 12

‘We wanted the first one to be a winner’: Trinity Hills 2001–2004

On Sunday morning 29 February 2004, the Christian congregation calling itself ‘Holy Trinity Adelaide: Hills’, or more briefly, ‘HTA: Hills’ gathered to celebrate the third anniversary of its inauguration. The venue was the Aldgate Community Hall, a modest country town facility at the time geared to the screening of films. About 250 people, including probably sixty children, attended, sitting for the most part on the comfortable, if battered, cinema seats, or perched on the extra plastic chairs deployed for this occasion. The service, detailed on the pew sheet, was a brisk ensemble of hymns, prayers, announcements, features and a sermon. The Revd Chris Edwards, founding Anglican clergyman of the congregation, gave a pointed and vigorous address that left his audience in no doubt of his expectations of them. A few days later, at a briefing meeting of the members of the parish of Holy Trinity, North Terrace, Adelaide, it was pointed out that this new congregation, which the parish fostered, funded, developed and supervised, had lifted its pledged contribution to the budget for the support of this new venture from the 2003 figure of $109,000 to $160,000 for 2004. In addition, the newly-appointed full-time pastoral worker for the Hills congregation, Clayton Fopp, was introduced to the meeting.[1]

In a highly urbanised diocese that has been experiencing contraction for many years[2] here was a remarkable counter-punch. This was a new congregation with a secure attendance roughly double that of the diocesan average, and an income likewise well above typical figures for the rest of the diocese. What was the context out of which this project had grown? How did it come about? What were its leading characteristics in the founding years? How has it been fitted into its founding parish, and into the Diocese of Adelaide? These are some of the specific questions this chapter will address.[3]

Preparing for the church plant

Paul Harrington often remarked in his annual reports on his ambition

Welcomers with Chris Edwards outside Aldgate Hall, the site of the Trinity Hills congregation, 4 Mar 2004. *Photo Brian Dickey*

to plant another congregation elsewhere in Adelaide. He began to talk of the need for many, such new congregations. These reports were routinely sent to Church Office. In March 1999, Harrington met with Archbishop Ian George, ostensibly to relate to him the fruits of his recent study tour. In his follow-up letter he also remarked that:

> I also appreciated the opportunity to talk to you briefly towards the end of our time about church planting. I am aware the diocese hasn't really grappled with the issue of church planting at any length. At your suggestion, I am very willing to hold back from church planting for 1999, so that you can take steps to get a policy and plan in place, which would enable church planting to occur within this diocese. I will look forward to seeing how this exciting area of vision for our diocese develops.[4]

Harrington was putting on record both his intentions about church planting and his willingness to negotiate the procedures. As it turned out, this letter was the beginning of a vigorous and at times heated exchange between the leaders of Holy Trinity and those of the diocese over church planting.

Exacerbating the exchange was the rapidly worsening pastoral relationship between Archbishop George and Harrington, which soon reached lows not experienced by their predecessors. Some of the exacerbating issues were mentioned in the last chapter. Then, later in 1999, when Archbishop George was overseas, Bishop Philip Aspinall (the assistant bishop and Administrator of the diocese) indicated his intention to make a pastoral visit to the parish. Harrington replied that he exercised control over his pulpit, and that he needed assurances about such matters as the atonement and the resurrection of Christ from Bishop Aspinall just as he

did from Archbishop George. The bishop never responded to this request and did not ever visit Holy Trinity. When he learned of it, this situation angered Archbishop George. He took the view that his office alone entitled him or his assistant bishop to visit any parish in the diocese, to preside at Holy Communion and to occupy the pulpit.[5]

Against this background Harrington hoped to avoid making matters worse in the context of his church planting intentions. While not intending to desist altogether from these plans, he probably hoped to push the diocesan leadership to formulate policies which would provide enough room for him to operate without too much interference. Thus at the May 1999 diocesan synod Harrington took the lead in proposing a task force to explore the issue of church planting across the diocese. He gained wide support from members of synod, and a group was named which was asked to report to the 2000 synod. Some at least were aware of Trinity's close interest in the concept, however it might be defined.[6]

In the meantime, Harrington had firmly committed Chris Edwards to the task of starting a new congregation.[7] They agreed that Harrington would handle these negotiations with the diocese while Edwards would identify the likely area and then start detailed planning, convening a team of helpers from the North Terrace gatherings willing to transplant their energies and in due course, their attendance to the new church.

Chris Edwards takes counsel

During his annual break in January 1999, Edwards talked with senior Sydney clergy attending the CMS Summer School at Katoomba. They gave varying advice about starting a new congregation. Bishop Dudley Foord, said Edwards, took the view that 'we should just pin our ears back and just do it, [with] no regard for structures'. Brian Telfer, who had been rector of Christ Church, Gladesville, when the Central Coast Evangelical Church had been fostered at Erina, between Gosford and Terrigal in the Diocese of Newcastle, also urged a direct approach, even at the cost of withdrawal from the Anglican Church of Australia, as had happened in that particular case. Another bishop at the Summer School urged caution about possible offence. Reg Piper, Bishop of Wollongong, urged Edwards to desist altogether, arguing that it would probably be better to develop the North Terrace site. He feared that Harrington would just go ahead anyway, and that bridges with the diocese would be burnt.

Edwards also went to the Central Coast Evangelical Church, to speak with Andrew and Cathy Heard. 'There for the first time as a couple we [Chris and Belinda] faced the issue of the personal cost. Andrew said, "How thick is your skin? … You have to work out how much rubbish you can take."'

Chris Edwards as leader of Trinity Hills.

These conversations made Edwards

realise that some thought needed to be given to the structural model under which he would operate. It was by no means clear which of those sketched in the previous chapter would be best, but he had resolved by the time of his return to Adelaide to avoid the independent model adopted at Erina. So while Harrington talked to his trustees and considered the options available, including having regard to the trust deed, Edwards consulted the 1996 Social Atlas of Adelaide.[8] He was searching for the most appropriate region in which to attempt to start a new congregation. He shared Harrington's commitment to going out from North Terrace, despite the warnings of Reg Piper.[9] What worried him was that:

> I also knew it would have to work. I knew we couldn't afford to have two whacks at it. It would have to work first time. Not only because of the trustees, but also because of the amount of energy it takes. If you spend all that energy and it falls over, people will be too exhausted and they will want to try something different.

So he went to the Social Atlas, looking at the postcode grid over various maps, such as those of families with children, or those with university qualifications.[10] He combined this with the Trinity data base of addresses, which listed regular attenders, infrequent attenders, and contacts. He looked at areas of recent housing growth. He found 68 units attached to Trinity from the north-eastern region of Adelaide, designated 'Golden Grove', 61 from the south-east, 'The Hills', and 31 from the south, 'Reynella/Woodcroft'. Golden Grove and Reynella/Woodcroft were both predominantly new housing areas, while the Hills contained an established pattern of village communities now filling out with new housing attracted by improved freeway access to the city. This region began with Crafers, 16 km from the city centre, and ran on to include Stirling, Aldgate (20 km), Bridgewater, Piccadilly, and on to Hahndorf, Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne (about 40 km). All were only minutes from the Southeastern Freeway. What was interesting to Edwards was that while the northern and southern groups linked to Trinity seemed to be regular attenders, there was a less secure connection with Trinity for the residents in the hills. In addition, Edwards suspected that some of the north-eastern people were in transit from the large Assemblies of God congregation at the Paradise Community Church: they would come to Trinity and then move on. In Edwards' judgment these were serial church attenders, not people who would commit to something which would last. The family and educational data suggested that the south-eastern cluster were more like the Trinity norm than the other two.

> So the answer was quite simple. If we wanted to plant a church that would be typical of Holy Trinity Adelaide, one that would have contacts in sufficient number to give us momentum, we go to the hills.

This was an important assumption, and one worth emphasising. Edwards was quite clear that he was intent on creating a gathering like the home church: 'taking as much of the DNA with us [as possible].' He was not attempting to enter 'foreign' country in terms of the socio-economic background of either the potential workers or the potential audience to whom he would be appealing. He consciously rejected what he called the 'lone

ranger' or 'covered wagons' method. 'It was one of the options, true, but … we wanted the first one to be a winner, to achieve a healthy new congregation and promote the health of the existing congregation.' It was pragmatic, and certainly not based on notions of a missionary engagement with those who had long rejected the Christian gospel and adopted a settled practical atheism.

As Edwards put it about that he was planning a new congregation connected to Trinity, members of the congregation began to discuss it with him. He and his wife hosted many evenings where the idea was canvassed, and where Edwards could assess the likelihood that some of these people could be workers in the foundation phase. He sought to recruit from all the Trinity gatherings, aiming to avoid the danger that one of them would be crippled at the point of migration, or the dominance of one group in the new gathering. In practice it did not turn out that way, and there were some difficult outcomes for the Trinity city morning congregations.[11] Meanwhile, Edwards had the set of four categories which Paul Harrington had developed by which to characterise the relationships and activities within the church: 'evangelism', 'community', 'equipping', and 'ministry'.[12] He was looking for the range of skills that Craig Broman had identified in the 5 and 7 pm exercise, and he was fortunate that significantly skilled people were willing to volunteer.

Working with the diocese

Meanwhile Harrington was managing relations with the diocese. His efforts to put Archbishop George in the picture during March–April 2000 eventually resulted in a difficult telephone conversation after failing to arrange a face-to-face contact. Harrington sought to update the Archbishop on the rapidly evolving plans for the new congregation in the Hills before these were announced publicly. The Archbishop insisted that Trinity could not act unilaterally, but only with the permission of the Archbishop after due consultation with the Diocesan Council. Archbishop George asserted that Trinity was in breach of diocesan ordinances, and should not be acting in such an independent manner. Not unaware of the possibility of the archbishop using these procedures as blocking moves to discourage Trinity's plans, Harrington referred to legal advice indicating there was no bar to Trinity establishing a new congregation. The Archbishop rejected this assessment. He expected that the forthcoming task force report on church planting should be reason enough for Harrington to hold back. Harrington in reply insisted that his plans were too far advanced for that, and that they were not going to be delayed any longer. It is hard to imagine that either man enjoyed this telephone exchange. [13]

In April Harrington and Edwards met with the Revd John Stephenson and the Revd Caroline Pearce of the parish of Stirling, whose main centre was the Church of the Epiphany at Crafers, with much smaller congregations at Aldgate and Bridgewater. Alerted by a phone call from the Archbishop on 13 April, Stephenson was anxious to hear first-hand about the Trinity plans for a Hills congregation. The discussions were 'cordial and courteous', even though Stephenson was well aware of 'the differences between their approach to Christian faith and that of the majority of Stirling parishioners'.[14] Stephenson raised the possibility of sharing

facilities, though the tiny size of his Aldgate church hall ruled that out. Edwards assured the Crafers team that they proposed to use the advertising tag of 'Holy Trinity Adelaide: Hills' rather than any confusing reference to an Anglican church at Aldgate. He quite frankly explained that there was good product recognition for 'Holy Trinity Adelaide', and they intended to exploit it.[15] This might have assuaged some of Stephenson and Pearce's concerns. Stephenson, therefore, proposed to wait on events.[16]

In the outcome, links of any sort with the Stirling parish were minimal. More importantly, when looking back about a year later, Stephenson conceded that no one from his parish had shifted their allegiance to the new congregation.[17] But, in contrast to the leaders of the diocese, at no time did he express anger with or opposition to the Trinity project.

In early May 2000 Harrington and Edwards launched the Hills project at a public meeting in the North Terrace parish hall.[18] About a hundred people came, and literature explaining the plan was distributed. There was a great deal of enthusiasm as the power point presentation came into view. Here was a bold new opportunity to do something significant. Many resolved to offer their support to the new venture.

At the May 2000 synod, the church planting task force brought down an interim report. It was apparent that there were tensions within the group and that the recent public announcement of the Trinity Hills project would complicate their labours. They were asked to do more work and report to the next synod. Perhaps some thought this might stay Trinity's hand.[19]

That was the view expressed in the letter of Archbishop George to Harrington on 2 June 2000. He expressed grave anxieties about the idea of Holy Trinity planting a church within the parish of Stirling. This key geographic statement reflected the Archbishop's understanding of the structure of the diocese. He believed that the Parochial Registration Ordinance of 1985 still authorised the notion of geographic boundaries to define a 'parish', the basic building block of the diocese.[20] Everything of an Anglican character that went on within those boundaries was the responsibility of the parish priest under the supervision of the bishop. As the Archbishop understood it, Trinity was interfering with the rights and responsibilities of the parish of Stirling. As we shall see, it was a flawed reading of the Ordinance, but the Archbishop held to it.

It also annoyed the Archbishop that Trinity had gone ahead despite the recent proceedings of synod in the area of church planting. He asserted that there should be further delay until the next report was available. To learn of the public launch of the Hills project seemed expressly to undermine his episcopal authority. As a result the Archbishop advised Harrington as rector of Holy Trinity Church that he was in breach of obligations prescribed by the constitution of the diocese. He interpreted the Hills project as a move to create a new parish, for which the constitution required the agreement of the existing parish and the Archbishop, neither of which had been granted.

Harrington acknowledged this letter on 8 June, promising a fuller reply later. It appears that the Archbishop was overseas for the next several weeks, so that it was Bishop Philip Aspinall, as Administrator of the Diocese, who invited Harrington to discuss his plans with the diocese's

Ministry Development Council, which he chaired. At its July meeting Diocesan Council also asked for some further clarification.

In his considered reply to the Archbishop, Harrington recognised that 'church planting' could cover a variety of different meanings.[21] The Church Planting Task Force, for example, was in his view considering the creation of new parishes as provided for under the relevant ordinances. But Trinity had a different problem, a 'good problem'. Even with the creation of the 5pm gathering, there was attendance at North Terrace was larger than he and the other clergy preferred. The Hills move, Harrington explained, would meet the needs of Trinity-linked people who were but occasional attenders, and that the new group:

> … will still be a part of the Trinity parochial unit management and pastoralwise. It is under my care and direction the same way as [are] the other 5 gatherings at North Terrace.

Harrington also insisted that at no point was it 'our intention to undermine the Stirling Parish or pre-empt the ongoing work of the diocesan church planting task force'. He remarked on the cordial relations he had maintained with John Stephenson and looked to continue them. He asked the Archbishop to agree that:

> Our starting a new gathering at Aldgate is a natural outworking of the ministry and fellowship for already established members of Trinity. In this sense it is more an elaboration of our already existing small group network. It is also consistent with the constitutional requirements of the diocese.

Finally, Harrington asked for the names of those to whom the Archbishop's letter had evidently been sent without his knowledge, in order that they too might receive a copy of the case for the Hills move.

The scheme propounded

More formally, in a paper distributed to the Trinity leadership in August 2000, Harrington clarified his view on the nature of the process in which Trinity was engaged in the Hills project.[22] He outlined his list of potential models of church planting, and plainly opted for one above the others. There was the 'independent church' model (exemplified by the Central Coast Evangelical Church), the 'collegial' model that might be used by a central denominational structure, and the 'gathering' model, the one Edwards would call the 'mother-daughter' model when he set down his concepts and applied some planning detail to them.[23] The advantages of adopting the 'gathering' or 'mother-daughter' model included its familiarity to the Trinity community and the capacity of Trinity to proceed legally on this basis. This would minimise uncertainty about Edwards' status in the diocese. It would avoid debating the unique theological, leadership and financial structures of a new congregation. In addition, it would establish the tightest and most supportive relationship between Trinity North Terrace and Trinity Hills, including sharing resources with all the gatherings rather than the establishment of a completely new equipment base. It would minimise the budgetary uncertainties associated with establishing the new congregation, while there could be some staff

sharing benefits. Harrington also noted that, consistent with his overall strategy, it would strengthen the networking potential for evangelicals in Adelaide. On the negative side, Harrington wondered if this model would stifle entrepreneurial evangelistic zeal, create frustration in the new congregation about decision-making at 'head office' or limit financial support. However, he believed none of these concerns was critical.

In this paper Harrington then spelt out the organisational arrangements which would give it reality. It meant that the active church planter would remain accountable to the rector of the parish of Holy Trinity, technically as a curate or assistant minister. The rector must therefore visit, pastor and preach in the new gathering. It also meant that the existing control of the wardens would include the affairs of the new gathering, overseeing its financial and administrative affairs, deploying the skills of the sub-committees such as the Resource Management Team, and using computer links to aid the production of local leaflets and so on. There is no suggestion in the paper of a time when this relationship might be transformed into one of complete self-reliance.

Practical steps

In the meantime, Edwards had been busy in the Hills. In July 2000 he identified the Aldgate Community Hall as virtually the only possible venue with 220 seats and adequate parking space. The land is owned by the local Council while the hall was built in the 1950s with donations from the community. It is held as a community trust, with a deed that provides for a committee to run it. Erected sturdily in concrete, it is set up as a country cinema, with comfortable, movable seat-sets. The stage, too high for liturgical use, was initially unavailable in order to protect the cinema screen. When the cinema ceased operating in 2004, the large screen was removed and the stage area released. Edwards came to an arrangement with the Hall committee that Holy Trinity would hire it for at least six months at $15 per hour, or $17 in the winter months. Next door there was a kindergarten. When approached, the owners were pleased to allow its use on Sundays without charge as the venue for a Sunday school. After all, the building had once been a church. Edwards also visited the Protestant clergy in the Hills region, sometimes accompanied by Harrington. All he met encouraged him in his plans. The leader of a Mount Barker Pentecostal group said publicly to Edwards' team, 'we need more Bible teaching churches. Please come.' This view was echoed by the minister of the Sunset Rock Uniting Church. The pastor of Aldgate Baptist Church said he was glad to see the community hall committed to a Christian cause on Sunday mornings.

Thus encouraged, Edwards began meeting fortnightly for Bible study with his core group. The Winskills, who lived in Aldgate, offered their home as a venue. 'We studied, we dreamed dreams about what this meant.' The evenings always included Bible studies and sustained prayer. Edwards encouraged the group to undertake tasks in partnered teams for support and backup. They prepared their own little question-and-answer handout. In September they spent a weekend away working through a variety of planning issues. Val Smyth took the task of organising the sequence of events on Sunday morning as it affected the attending worshipper,

reflecting her professional skills in planning the patient journey through admission via hospital emergency to a ward bed. Their interest in church planting originated from conversations with their English vicar years before they migrated to Adelaide.[24] Others turned their eye to the detail of music and sound reproduction. In November Edwards ventured a trial run in the hall one Sunday to test their procedures. Few bugbears were identified, except the substantial time taken in recovering and storing the portable sound system – speakers, amplifiers, sound board, cables – which remained a heavy burden for the next two and half years. To Edwards' surprise 'the mood of the group was such that they said, "why can't we do this every week?" I actually think we could have started up then.' But he held to the planned start-up date of late February 2001.

Chris and Belinda Edwards were encouraged when the trustees advised them that donated and interest-free loan funds were available for a house to be bought or built for them. The search for existing properties took much time to no gain, so in October they selected a rental property to allow them to move into the district without further delay. Eventually a block of land was purchased and a house built for them. The couple spent many hours in the planning stages of this essential project, which yielded a well-built clergy residence with the necessary parish and family spaces. They moved in during November 2001.

More full-blooded exchanges with the diocese

Back at North Terrace, Harrington continued to exchange views with Archbishop George. In September Archbishop George expressed reservations about Harrington's interpretation of the relationship between Trinity and the new congregation.[25] A month later the Archbishop summarised to Harrington the views expressed to him at an open meeting in the Stirling parish: as he admitted, they embraced a wide range of attitudes and signified not a great deal of support for the new congregation.[26] Harrington meanwhile kept both John Stephenson and Philip Aspinall in the picture about the developing plans for the Hills venture.[27] Consequently, the letter he received from the Archbishop in December surprised and frustrated him.[28] The Archbishop expressed surprise that Trinity was proceeding with its plans, and denied any knowledge of them. He restated the points made in his June letter, insisting that the processes outlined there must be adhered to. To the Archbishop it was still an extension of the Trinity parish into a new area in the geographic terms that he continued to use. He demanded full and formal consultation with the Ministry Development Council.

Since once more the Archbishop's letter had been sent to a variety of people, not only in the Trinity leadership but also to members of Diocesan Council and interested parties in the parish of Stirling, Harrington invited his wardens and the trustees of Holy Trinity Church to join him in a measured reply.[29] They began by reasserting their commitment as a parish 'to glorifying God in our state, city and within our denomination'. This involved the parish in evangelism, nurture of disciples and delivering pastoral care, all activities they understood to be in line with the scriptures and the diocesan strategic plan. They therefore expressed surprise at the Archbishop's strong opposition to a plan that they believed was

clearly designed to meet these goals. To rebut any suggestion that the diocese had not been kept informed, the letter contained a long list of dated and documented items in which Trinity's plan for church planting was outlined.

On the legal issues, they restated their view that supporting the members of the Holy Trinity congregation meeting in Aldgate was no different from supporting them meeting in the parish hall or, say, Adelaide High School. They reminded the Archbishop that the Registration of Parishes ordinance did not proceed by an exclusively geographical conception of parish; indeed, the chancellor, Justice David Bleby, had made it plain that under this ordinance membership of a parish was voluntary and in no way constrained by geographical boundaries.[30] They quoted the Archbishop's own views from the *Adelaide Church Guardian*:

> Ever since I returned to the diocese nearly a decade ago, I have been encouraging clergy and parish councils to look broader than their parish boundaries. There is nothing particularly new in this. Over the past fifty years there has been more and more discussion about the dangerous limitations that the parish system and its geographical base places on our capacity to be effective in evangelism and ministry today.[31]

Once more, they asked to whom they might send this letter to keep them informed.[32]

The Holy Trinity letter was the response of a group provoked by a quite different perception of the rules and by what they perceived as reluctance to come to terms with their church's hopes and ambitions by the diocese. It is clear that Archbishop George retained a view of the relationship between parish and diocese that even his own Chancellor did not believe to be correct. One later comment might be referred to here to give some sense of the concern which the project at Aldgate raised. When the Church Planting Task Force presented its final report to the May 2001 Synod, it offered a series of protocols for congregations undertaking church planting, set out as a time-line of required consultations and approvals. The committee (of which Harrington was a member) prefaced this list with the observation that:

> The 'law' doesn't necessarily provide for good relationships or the most God-honouring use of ministry resources. Church planting initiatives create the potential for parishes to feel threatened. 'Seeding parishes' may fail to take into account the 'macro' view of kingdom and diocesan ministry initiatives. While planting parishes might have the best of intentions they may also require helpful expertise, or enthusiasm without experience may lead to unnecessary failure.

Harrington was responsible for much of the wording of this section. It was mainly designed to provide an understanding of how to go about planting without the need for legislation. However, once this report found its way to synod it was not received as a report but adopted effectively as legislation, hence negating some of its more pastorally-oriented remarks.[33]

Eventually there was an opportunity for both Holy Trinity and the

parish of Stirling to present their visions and plans to a meeting of Diocesan Council in June 2002. After all the power point presentations[34] were over someone asked, 'and how many people from the Stirling parish have joined this new gathering?' When told, 'none', the questioner remarked, 'well, what is all the fuss over?' It was a reasonable comment on these drawn-out exchanges. On the other hand, when one Holy Trinity Hills member encountered a colleague who, it transpired, worshipped at nearby Crafers, she was met by the remark, 'Oh, you are the opposition'. Apparently there were others in the diocese who found it hard to respond sympathetically to the hopes and ambitions of Holy Trinity in the Hills.

These then were the background issues that occasionally got attention as the plans for the new congregation moved from talk to action. For some of those involved they were serious matters of church order, perhaps even of church party politics, for others they were about the urgency of preaching the gospel.

Action stations

Whatever the case, Edwards and his team were ready to go. In January–February 2001, publicity through the local newspaper and letterbox drops went out inviting people to attend the beginning of the new congregation on 25 February.[35] Approximately 220 came, exceeding the wildest dreams of the planners, who were ecstatic. It was the real beginning.

All the participants to whom I have talked emphasise that Chris Edwards was crucial to the ongoing success of the gathering over the next three years. He held the one key to the hall available to the group, arriving first to open up after checking the surrounds for used syringes and other distasteful detritus. He was last to leave, maybe three-and-a-half hours later.[36] They all emphasise that his preaching was biblical and marked by

The congregation gathers in the theatre at Aldgate before a service. *Photo Brian Dickey*

a willingness to lay out explicitly what this implied for daily life.[37] These were not sermons strong on theological debate.

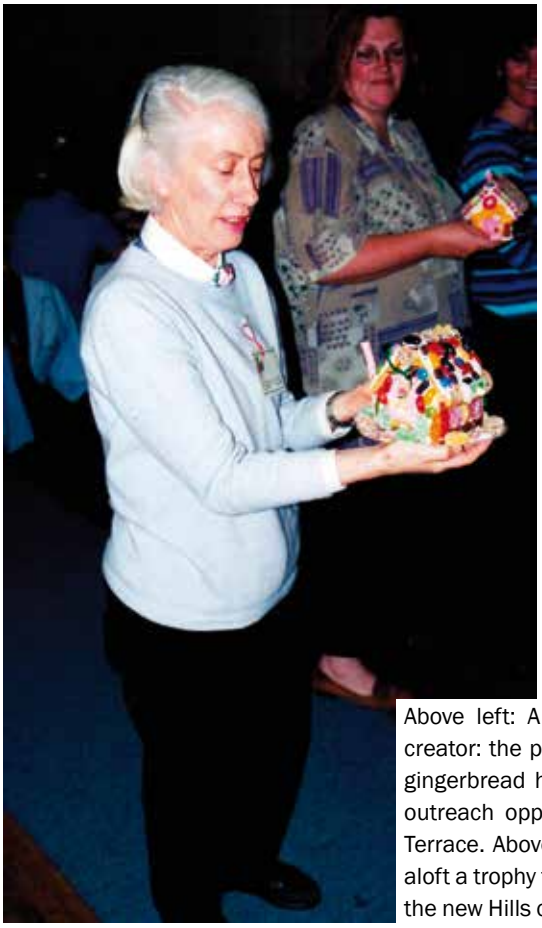
They were all supported by PowerPoint presentations of text and image. Combined with this was a well-practised liturgy developed at North Terrace over several years: a set of pared down services from *An Australian Prayer Book* permitting a large degree of participation by members of the congregation. Communion was celebrated monthly, and baptisms were fully integrated into the services as moments of great community rejoicing. The music, coordinated by Steph Eaton, was skilled, varied and well-received, rostering a variety of singers and instrumentalists. While the pew leaflets contained the key elements of the services, for most people looking up to the screen was the preferred way of accessing the words of the Bible readings, songs and prayers.

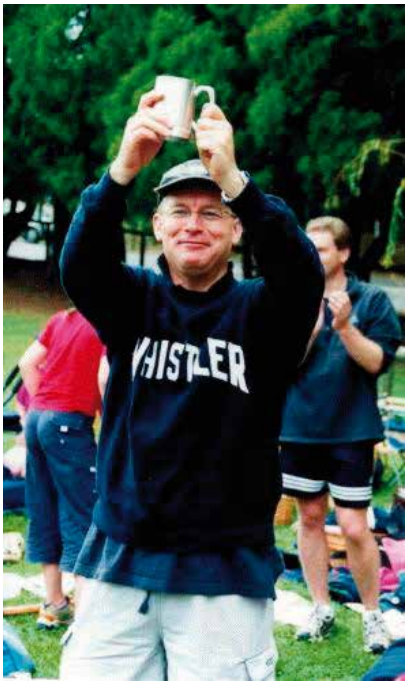
Edwards also set up a management committee to see to the local affairs of the congregation. Gradually he gained administrative support. Peter Johnson, when he retired from full-time employment, gave two to three days a week. Jocelyn Rudd took over the word-processing tasks that lay behind the weekly pew leaflets.[38] Home groups were also quickly brought into being to ensure that Sunday worshippers had access to small group contact, conversation, Bible study and prayer. The Rudds convened theirs to follow Sunday worship, with a meal and fellowship for the whole families of those who attended.

Several public events were organised: some worked, some did not.[39] These included a men's walk, annual golf days, women's coffee meetings, cricket matches against North Terrace, and annual celebrations of the anniversary of their foundation; the first a family day in the nearby Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens. Schools work was begun, using the Scripture Union Options Program and the like. A set of the well-practised 'Why' series of evangelistic meal and talk meetings was conducted.[40] The available program of activities in place at North Terrace was publicised and, for example, a number of Hills men attended the 2001 Katoomba Men's Convention. Monday morning meetings of a few key leaders canvassed the non-attendances of the previous day and allotted follow-up action. When the Edwards moved into their house they celebrated by hosting a series of after-church Sunday barbecues, to which 40–50 people came.

Specific women's ministries were developed, again following models established at North Terrace: a morning Bible study led by Belinda Edwards, and towards Christmas the famous gingerbread houses appeared. Jocelyn Rudd found this exercise exhilarating. Making the sheets of gingerbread and the bundles of decorations was the preparatory bit. The fun and games of women in groups making gingerbread houses and then sitting to listen to a talk from, say Sue Harrington, was a wonderful experience. It attracted outsiders, some of whom have become regular worshippers. There were special visitors: evangelists, the rector for a series of expository sermons, missionaries and, movingly, Mercy Senahe, a Ghanaian woman whose story of enslavement, release and faith raised $3000 in a day to provide a house for her and her children.[41]

Val Smyth, watching over the process of welcoming people, discovered that care needed to be taken with the water tanks outside the hall: one tap yielded something akin to mud. But she and people such as Trish





Above left: A gingerbread house and its awestruck creator: the pre-Christmas women's meeting to make gingerbread houses was for a few years used as an outreach opportunity, both at Aldgate and at North Terrace. Above: Victory is sweet: Chris Edwards holds aloft a trophy to the winner of a cricket match between the new Hills congregation and the North Terrace mob.

Margonis[42] worked hard to ensure newcomers were greeted, seated, provided coffee and generally made welcome in a mutually sharing style. Vag Margonis struggled with the sound equipment David Snoswell had generously lent and stored under the stage. When late in 2003 the Hall committee agreed that some permanent fixtures could be installed to carry speakers, wired to the amplifiers under the stage he was greatly relieved. The hall gained a free set of speakers as a result.

Trish Margonis solved the problems of running the junior Sunday school. It included working out how to guide ten, then twenty young children down the hill to the kindergarten. She used a knotted rope, 'Trish's train'. The babies in their prams had to be parked in the lobby or the back of the hall, not the best solution, but a friendly one in an ambience everyone seemed to enjoy.

The numbers of those attending through 2001 rose and fell around 150, then climbed somewhat in 2002, and in 2003, to sit regularly above 200, then above 300 by early 2004 (see Figure 1 below). Edwards and Harrington now began thinking of where the next gathering could be established: further out along the South Eastern Freeway in the next belt of new housing, or perhaps at Mount Barker?[43] Among the Aldgate gathering was a growing number of teenagers. To minister to them Edwards

was allowed to take on Clayton Fopp as a trainee. He had previously been working in student ministry with Warwick de Jersey. Clayton Fopp's wife Kathy (née Mossman), who had grown up worshipping at North Terrace, had begun a BTh and became an AFES student worker with Warwick de Jersey. Clayton began a youth program in the basement of the hall, which they soon outgrew. By Easter 2004 Fopp, having completed his BTh and now working full-time with Edwards, was to begin a new evening gathering to support this group.

Reflections

These were marks of a healthy church whose members were confidently bringing friends to experience what the regulars valued, willing to attempt outside activities, eager to ensure everyone was made welcome when they gathered, sensitive to the needs of young and old. Compared with most congregations in the Anglican Church of Australia, and especially in the diocese of Adelaide, it was a group uncharacteristically weighted towards families with children: one family contained seven. There was a sub-group who were home-schoolers, who valued the close personal relationships on offer and the care given to their children by such schooling.

The elements in the success of this venture were plain to see. Positive preaching confidently relying on the Bible came first. It was linked to a participatory model of leadership and ministry that involved almost everyone. There was a constant reiteration of the need for training in tasks undertaken, and hence for the sharing of the load. There was a commitment to mutual care and support that went well beyond the time of Sunday worship. There was a high value placed on 'community', a concept widely promoted in the Adelaide Hills generally. Opportunities for prayer were frequent and much emphasised. If some people drifted away again, one explanation given was that the gathering was not charismatic enough. Those entrenched in their oppositional mind set did not come.

These characteristics fit the findings of the more general investigations carried out by the National Church Life Survey.[44] There can be little doubt that the work of Paul Harrington, Chris Edwards and their supporters to create and sustain 'HTA Hills' fits well within the judgments of that report. Moreover, their successful venture was a major opportunity to study how such schemes might be replicated elsewhere in Adelaide. Whether Harrington's ambition could be carried out successfully remained to be seen. For the congregation of Holy Trinity it was a great adventure, and one which gave them the confidence to attempt yet more projects.

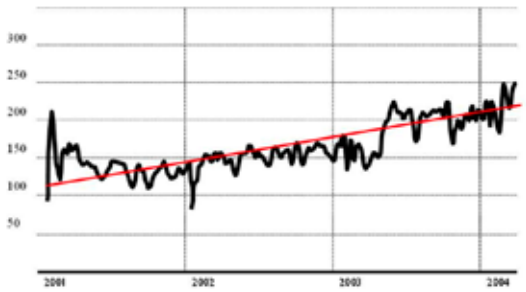


Figure 1. Attendance at the Hills gatherings 2001–2004 (data supplied by Chris Edwards

1 The data came in answer to a question I asked at the meeting.
2 The broad findings of the National Church Life Survey for 2001 are reported in J. Bellamy & K. Castle, 2001 Church Attendance Estimates (Occasional Paper 3; NCLS, Feb 2004). Accessed from the NCLS website.
3 The origins of this text as a chapter in a book of scholarly essays were explained in the previous chapter.
4 Revd Paul Harrington to Archbishop Ian George, 18 Mar 1999. All these unpub items are in the Trinity collection.
5 George to Harrington, 30 Mar 1999; Harrington to George, 8 Apr 1999; Harrington's record of phone conversation, 13 Apr 2000; interview with Harrington, 25 Aug 2004.
6 Personal observation as a synod representative.
7 Chris Edwards, interview 9 Sep 2003. All interviews used in this chapter were conducted by Brian Dickey.
8 The 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Adelaide … A Social Atlas, Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue Number 2030.4.
9 Edwards interview.
10 'Our Beliefs', 10 pages policy paper prepared by Chris Edwards early 2000.
11 Paul Harrington made these interesting observations about this intention: 'As it turned out, most of the people who went to the Hills came from the 9.30am gathering and then quite a few from the 11am gathering. This did in fact 'gut' the 9.30 gathering of young families and exposed an existing weakness in this family ministry. It resulted in the ongoing discussions about our a.m. gatherings resulting in the changes brought in in 2003. The 9.30am gathering really struggled in the aftermath of the plant. The plant exacerbated an aging trend in that congregation. At 11am we had begun to develop an all age gathering. This was just being established when a few of these young families went off to the Hills. Eventually it meant the 11am gathering stopped trying to be family friendly. Harrington to Dickey, 19 Nov 2012.
12 This quadrilateral was expounded by Harrington at successive Annual Meetings, and in staff conferences. He regarded it as a dynamic set of interactive categories, the one feeding the next. It took him some years to develop, but once enunciated it proved to be a useful conceptual tool for all the staff when engaged in planning new activities.
13 Record of conversation, 13 Apr 2000.
14 Circular from the Revd John Stephenson to the members of the parish of Stirling, 24 May 2000.
15 Edwards interview.
16 Harrington wrote to Stephenson on 11 Aug 2000 thanking him for the friendly contacts and offers of resources, and offering to maintain good relations.
17 Diocesan Council meeting, Jun 2002.
18 Unfortunately, Harrington did not attend, for he had been called to be with his father, who suffered a fatal heart attack that very afternoon. Harrington to Dickey 19 Nov 2012.
19 Third Session of the 37th Triennial Synod of the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide, Resolutions passed in 2000, Min. 69, Year Book of the Province of South Australia 2000–2001, 171.

20 'The Diocese of Adelaide shall be divided into Parishes; each parish to consist of the members of such Church resident within certain limits, to be defined and readjusted', cl. 1 of the Fundamental Provisions … for the Government of the Synod of the Church of England in the Diocese of Adelaide Inc., 1855. There is no equivalent statement in the 1979 Constitution of the Diocese of Adelaide.
21 Harrington to George, 7 Aug 2000.
22 Paul Harrington, 'A Proposed Model for Church Planting', paper for Wardens' meeting, 14 Aug 2000.
23 Edwards, 'Our Beliefs'. Harrington had met the term in his Fuller Seminary course.
24 John & Val Smyth interview, 10 Feb 2004.
25 George to Harrington, 5 Sep 2000.
26 George to Harrington, 6 Oct 2000.
27 George to Harrington, 11 Oct 2000; Harrington to George, 11 Oct 2000; Harrington to Stephenson, 11 Oct 2000; Harrington to Aspinall, 19 Oct 2000; Stephenson to Harrington, 15 Nov 2000; Harrington to Aspinall, 21 Nov 2000; Harrington to Stephenson, 15 Nov 2000.
28 George to Harrington, 7 Dec 2000, Harrington to Dickey, 19 Nov 2012.
29 Archbishop George mentioned some, but not all, the recipients in his letter of 7 Dec 2000; Harrington & others to George, 21 Dec 2000.
30 The critical definitions in the 1979 Constitution (Cl. 31) read: ' "parish" means an ecclesiastical unit comprising members of the church the pastoral care of whom has been committed to one or more members of the clergy licensed thereto by the Bishop and which has been registered as a parish in such manner as the Synod shall by ordinance determine'; ' "Member of the Church" means a baptised person who attends the public worship of The Anglican Church of Australia and who declares that he or she is a member of The Anglican Church of Australia and not a member of any other religious denomination.'
31 Apr 2000.
32 The effect was that these two letters were received by 30–40 people, including the whole Diocesan Council and the leadership of both the parish of Stirling and of Holy Trinity.
33 Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide, First Session of the 38th Triennial Synod, 2001, Appendix 2, Church Planting Task force Report 2001, Yearbook of the Province of South Australia 2001–2002, 205. A subsequent Ordinance proposed at the 2003 synod intended to capture these protocols was withdrawn when it became apparent that the measure was far too restrictive about what represented activity outside the church in the light of the non-geographic definition of parish membership already mentioned. Harrington to Dickey, 19 Nov 2012.
34 The Holy Trinity power point presentation is available in the Trinity files. It contains a number of bright and cheery people pictures to illustrate the activities of the new congregation, together with an attendance graph and a pie chart which suggested that by mid-2002 the sources of the new congregation were: 49% former Trinity members, including 13% not currently attending; 17% transfers from other churches; 34% no church, including 6% new Christians.
35 For example, *Hills Courier*, 15 Feb 2001.
36 Peter Johnson interview, 1 Feb 2004.
37 Sermons sets in 2001 included those on 2 Peter, Acts, 2 Timothy, some Psalms, and thematic issues. Edwards presented most of them, but Harrington and other clergy from North Terrace also took turns. The pattern closely resembled that already in place at North Terrace.
38 Jonathan & Jocelyn Rudd interview, 14 Feb 2004.
39 Data drawn from weekly pew bulletins and PowerPoint sets of services.
40 'Why' is a series of four Bible studies and Gospel presentations (accompanied by a meal) and based loosely on Scripture Union's 'Christianity Explained' course.
41 Pew leaflet, 15 Feb 2003. Mercy Senahe claimed that, at the age of six, she had been the chosen family member to bear the 'sins' of the family by being enslaved under the direction of a fetish priest. Her release (like those of about 3,000 others) followed the preaching of the Gospel and appeals to fetishists to 'let God's people go'.
42 Vag & Trish Magonis interview, 24 Feb 2004.
43 'Proposed Plan for Church Planting', draft 2003 (by Edwards and others).
44 Bellamy & Castle, *The Effectiveness of Church Planting*, 4.