

Church Planting 2000–2012

Reflecting on what the Hills adventure meant gave Harrington and his leadership team much to rejoice in and much to ponder for future action in the field of church planting:

Generally things had gone extremely well. The congregation launched with a lot of enthusiasm. It was well owned by those who went and well supported by the congregation in the city. Chris Edwards was excellent for the first plant. He had very good connections with the family gathering at 9-30 in the city. This provided him with a core group he already was well enmeshed with. Chris was a very relational pastor who has warm connection with almost every one he met. He had a good strategic approach. He was also a keen evangelist. We had a good lead time – two years in the planning and pre-launch phase.

Harrington now reckoned that a seeding group of between fifty and eighty would provide the best size for survival and growth. He recognised that the personalities of future leaders would vary, and that he should avoid seeking Edwards clones. The leadership group also realised that it would not be cheap to keep this process going: roughly one and half times a staff salary for perhaps two years would be needed from central funds along with the contributions the new congregations themselves might make: in round terms roughly \$500,000 seemed to be in view. This suggested some sort of new initiative fund outside the budget of the existing church. Likewise governance needed attention: management from the city would be too complex; some sort of overarching board might work better. On the community and diocesan fronts, Harrington determined to work even harder to consult the local pastors, while he increasingly realised that Trinity needed to be able to work with the minimum impact from the diocese if possible while seeking to retain good relations with the archbishop and his advisors.¹

Trinity Bay

During 2003 Paul Harrington convinced his leadership team that the funds and the will were available to make another pastoral appointment that would ultimately lead to a further church plant.² He turned to John Warner, who had been serving his deacon's years in the diocese of Sydney after completing his theological degree at Moore College at the end of 2001. We have already noticed his desire to serve the gospel that caught



The Trinity Network, 2013. Map Philip Knight

him up once he was converted during his medical training in 1992 and how he served in various capacities around Trinity over the following few years. At last John Warner's desire to serve the gospel in Adelaide could come together with Paul Harrington's big picture vision. Warner joined the Trinity staff at the beginning of 2004 along with his wife Geetha and their four children. His task was first to bring encouragement and a commitment to evangelism at North Terrace after the departure of the Hills starters. During 2005 he gathered a small prayer planning team and then invited people to join the starter group for a new church plant.³

Harrington encouraged Warner to decide where to go, but suggested he look at locations more than twenty minutes' drive from North Terrace, on the grounds that this was probably the limiting time people were willing to spend to reach church. Since John and Geetha Warner had always lived and worked on the south side of the city, he explored a series of possibilities north from McLaren Vale. He canvassed demographic data, and he observed existing churches, whether active or merely struggling. It was clear there was a generational changeover in the region, as the World War Two self-help self-build generation retired or died out and new families moved in. There was a strong local identification around the hub of the Marion Shopping Centre. Guided by his prayer and planning team's preference for ministry north of O'Halloran Hill, he spent many weeks looking for a possible site for a Sunday gathering somewhere between Mitcham and the coast between Glenelg and Darlington.

Warner found that many existing school halls were small and heavily used even at weekends, with school sport on Saturday morning and primary-age club sport on Sunday morning. He was also well aware of the beach culture that shaped weekend habits. Eventually Trinity struck a deal with the Holdfast Bay Community Centre, located in half of the former Mawson High School at Hove (Marymount College bought the other half). Trinity could use the main hall and associated rooms of the Community Centre on Sunday afternoons, meeting at 5pm. Warner set out to attract an all-age congregation by providing a children's program and crèche care, together with a shared meal after the service. It was a strikingly different alternative to the Sunday worship model then current.

After a weekend camp in November and some trial gatherings to explore what was possible and what was not, the official launch of this second Trinity church plant was held on 5 March 2006. They began with perhaps forty adults and children from Trinity City and another twenty who heard by word of mouth and joined in. Soon those numbers doubled. They were aided for some months by volunteers from Trinity City who served as cooks, children's workers and general helpers.

Warner wanted his church to place evangelism at the centre of its focus. This would necessarily mean a strong culture of education and support, in fact 'making disciples' as Jesus instructed. He gained a succession of part-time workers, for example Dave Brown while he was in training for ministry at BCSA, and Mike Leonard who gave time for the primary age work. The gathering quickly saw special events such as an international student service, and an outdoor Christmas carol service. The network events such as CV were strongly supported. A lot of effort went into supporting voluntary lunch-time groups under the Scripture Union banner in primary schools as well as giving encouragement to the AFES work on the Flinders University campus.

A variety of other paid and volunteer workers joined the enterprise in the following years. Jamie Seyfang did a two-year music internship before taking over coordination of the Bay's music as a volunteer.⁴ Kate Royans (University of South Australia) and then Hayley Rumble (Flinders University) undertook AFES apprenticeships from Trinity Bay. John Warner reckoned that there were some wonderful gifts from God: people who simply arrived to join with an established attitude of support and experience for a church-planting church. They quickly appeared in leadership roles.

In the district Warner at first detected fear among many other church leaders worried about their own numbers. He did find a couple of churches who shared his vision for promoting the gospel in the district, and Trinity Bay has subsequently developed good working relations with these churches. For the rest, there is evidence that some of the other churches have in fact been stimulated to new endeavours through the presence of Trinity Bay and the example of what is possible.

Over the next three years the struggle to survive and grow went through some predictable phases, and led to some important decisions. The pace of 2006-07 could not be sustained: 'it was like pulling a draft-horse'. During 2008 Warner accepted a term-based program that guaranteed his workers some time off, with 'minimal church' arrangements in

January and July. He and his leaders also realised that while they were attracting the much-desired young marrieds with babies and toddlers, 5pm was proving for upwards of fifty per cent of them just impossible. So plans were hatched to reinvent themselves at the beginning of 2010 at 10am, once again as an all-age gathering, but with the clear promise that an evening gathering would again be established a little later. The generous mission-minded spirit of a good number of people for whom this was not their 'first choice' time slot was humbling for the leadership team. Then, in February 2011, Trinity Bay @ 6pm was launched with a core of 20 people. Throughout 2011 numbers at 10am and 6pm continued to grow, supported by evangelistic initiatives such as Mainly Music, Christmas and Easter in Schools, Carols at the Bay, and the University and other community connections. With these growing numbers, in 2012 Trinity Bay was able to relocate next-door to Marymount Catholic School in their fine new gym and refurbished hall (funded mainly by Federal government BER money) with accommodation for 300 people, with an associated evening gathering at 6pm. On a typical Sunday 160 adults and children might come in the morning, and another forty or fifty in the evening: the 'PM people', are mainly students and other young adults from all over southern Adelaide.

The range of activities and groups fostered by Trinity Bay was diverse and vibrant: 'Mainly Music' (a weekday preschool activity program with a Christian base), crèche and minis, primary aged children, youth, 'Gospel Groups' (essentially home groups), young adults, a weekday women's group called 'T.R.E.A.T.', and music ministry, along with work in schools and in support of AFES. With the aid of the Network Fund, and with their own income running at about \$240,000 pa, they welcomed Luke Woodhouse from Sydney as a full-time pastoral worker at the beginning of 2012. Luke took up leadership of the 6pm gathering as well as support for home groups while his wife Vicky helped lead Mainly Music. Warner sees the next year as one of consolidation and encouragement before funding the appointment of another full-time worker to permit the Woodhouses to gather a team to work on another church plant in 2015.



Trinity Bay Turns 6 in March 2012: a new venue, new growth, new staff to lead out another plant. Sarah Crook and Alex Robson holding cake. *Trinity Bay collection.*

Like the Hills, here was a faithful, healthy and growing new church planted in the midst of an apparently settled range of churches. Once more it has shown how many people are willing to take Christianity seriously, consider its claims and commit to substantial participation and financial support. As always, the vigour and wisdom of the church leader has been crucial under the mercy and goodness of God. But so has the willingness of a growing number of others who have joined in this new venture.

Trinity North East

Paul Harrington was intent on maintaining the momentum of church planting once Trinity Bay had begun so well in 2006.⁵ In 2007 he recruited James Harricks, Tim Harris's assistant at St Matthias, Kensington. He invited Harricks and his family to join the Trinity team in 2008. Harrington intended that Harricks would repeat John Warner's role: a year of evangelising and encouraging at North Terrace, followed by a year working up a team for a new church plant and getting a feel for the Trinity family as a whole, since he was still very much an incomer. As before, Harrington encouraged his new staff member and his wife to work out the next location for a church plant. So James, Karen and their children came to Trinity in 2008.

Once again demographic investigations, personal impressions, and a review of existing Trinity families were combined. James and Karen quickly reduced the possible suburban locations to two: either around Henley Beach (the coastal zone again), or up the Torrens Valley to the North East, somewhere around the Tea Tree Plaza shopping centre, which like that at Marion, provided a major community focus for that area. Encouraged by the advice of the mayor of Tea Tree Gully that by 2030 that area was likely to contain twenty-five percent of its population under the age of nineteen, Harricks fairly quickly focussed on the North East. Once again the next problem was finding a site where two hundred people (including children) could meet on Sunday and gather in smaller groups as well. Parking was also important. He considered up to forty sites, looking closely with Harrington at some of them. Eventually he settled on the Modbury Hospital Education Centre, not far from Tea Tree Plaza. This site was the residue of the former nurses teaching centre associated with the next-door Modbury Hospital. The nurses' accommodation was now used as a hostel for three hundred international students. The education centre ran to a major lecture hall, but children's facilities proved to be a stretch. There were some seminar-sized rooms, but they proved to be not very child-friendly: indeed some groups had even to meet in the corridor. Parking, on the other hand, was easy, with ample parking available in the hospital grounds. The annual rental of about \$8500 was quite manageable.

Moving into this area also involved consulting with other church leaders in the area. Despite completing an MA focussed on church planting, Harricks was surprised by how time-consuming and even frustrating this process proved to be. The non-Anglican ministers and pastors were on the whole quite encouraging, mainly because most of them knew what was involved and perhaps hankered after a church-planting moment of their own. But Harricks and Harrington had to work much harder with

the Anglican churches, though in the end it proved much more positive than he initially feared. ‘We got on the front foot, sought out the Anglican ministers as a group explained what we were wanting to do, and how it was different from what they were doing currently and why we were not a threat to them’. He speculated that perhaps they were a bit out of sorts with the diocese because the diocese had not told them what was going on with Trinity’s plans in the area.

By 2009 Harricks was looking for his core team: he wanted twelve.⁶ He set out to convince them of the evangelistic task which lay ahead, and to realise that this new church would not be for their regional convenience (and there were more than enough Trinity people living in the North East) but for evangelism in the local area. Once again the family-dominant 10am congregation yielded people willing to join, together with some from 5pm and 7pm. He gave each of the group a field of work and asked them to think how it could be used evangelistically. In a series of monthly meetings they discussed what it was they were doing in starting a church, and then in the second half of 2009 they worked on what they had to do.

Naturally, Harricks consulted the two existing church plant leaders, Chris Edwards (before he and his family set out for his new appointment leading an international church in the suburbs of Brussels), and John Warner, as well as spending time each month with Paul Harrington. He then had to gather his planting congregation, which again was drawn from the Trinity gatherings, largely by personal conversations in which Harricks put the evangelistic challenge firmly at the front of the agenda.

In some ways the key that convinced many people to commit to the new project was the decision by James and Karen to buy a house in the region in December 2008. It proved to be the catalyst ‘for many people coming to us. We were sending a message that we were keen to do things properly and stick around.’ People began to make the sacrificial commitment to join this new project, moving from their familiar places of worship on North Terrace to face a new opportunity of service.

So, with a start date settled for late January 2010, Harricks and his people used two Sundays in January for a ‘soft launch’, when they tried out all the arrangements. On the third week they returned to their North Terrace home gatherings to be sent out with much prayer and encouragement. Then on 10 February 2010 came the public launch to which about 150 adults and children came.

Once again logistics were critical: everything needed for the Sunday service was loaded on and off a trailer, which for a while spent the week days on the Harricks’ front lawn before they could rent a secure garage. The gathering began with more people than Harricks had expected: for example international students from the nearby hostel connected with Trinity North East quite early. There were also ‘empty nesters’ in the fifty to sixty year age-range from the local area who soon joined. Harricks found that some of them had experienced a bad time at one of the other churches in the region, and then found a Bible-teaching church significantly different and more appropriate for them. On the other hand, he was disappointed that the gathering did not attract large numbers of new young marrieds with children: perhaps a total of about thirty-five. Almost certainly, the somewhat limited facilities for children was a negative.



James Harricks addressing potential members of the future Trinity North East congregation in 2009 in the Modbury Hospital Education Centre lecture theatre.

On balance, and sooner than Harricks had expected, they were pressing on the capacity of the Education Centre theatre. So by October 2010 Harricks realised he had to look fairly quickly for a new location. It turned out to be a site used by Ian Lockwood for a Kids Club in the September 2010 break: the Modbury Primary School gym/hall, another BER building which, as at Marymount College, had to be made available for community use. True, there was some anxiety about Trinity North East using the hall. But this outlook changed considerably, especially as the congregation invested heavily in the relationship with the school. They ran a barbecue for a school working bee, and, said James to me the day I interviewed him, ‘today I took flowers to the front office lady on her sixtieth birthday’.

So from January 2011 the congregation met in this bigger, multi-purpose hall with a good, if probably raucous, acoustic; sight lines were much improved, especially when a landscape seating layout was adopted; unlike the lecture theatre it was flat, with easy entry access, especially for prams and gophers. Then the Tee Tea Gully mayor suggested that the former primary section of the school which the University of the Third Age had bought fourteen years earlier and used for their programs ought to be available on Sunday morning. It was, and it proved to be perfect as classroom space where they only had to bring in the teaching resources each week. It made the whole project much more attractive to families with children. They then bought 150 chairs (at \$50 each, no mean investment), which the school allowed them to store in a shed they offered to build on site, which permitted the school to use the ‘proper’ storage for sporting gear and so on. Another good spend of \$18,000 that meant the end of the Sunday trailer exercise.

Harricks aimed to make the format of worship and style of teaching attractive. It was once again an all-age gathering, with a variety of music, led by a band, with singers leading who were not reproduced heavily through the sound system: their role was to lead not entertain. Harricks' personal style has always been relaxed and so the service too was relaxed. But, as he emphasised, he was 'serious about God'. They followed the Trinity model and held a monthly communion service. On the other hand 'when kids are in it is a bit more of a circus. Some people find that a problem', but on balance everyone managed.

There were support activities too. They established a holiday club for vacation activities. They ran 'Kids ministry' (Harricks' term), that is a Sunday school which attracted thirty children and was run by about ten adults. They incorporated a high school group within that arrangement which was looked after by Matt Lehmann as a ministry apprentice while finishing his BTh at the Bible College of South Australia. There were about ten to fifteen teenagers. The goal, which seemed to work, was to get them to come to the main worship service. At Modbury Primary School this group shifted to a post-church meeting followed by lunch. With the arrival of Michael Sams (made possible by a contribution from the Network Fund)⁷ in 2012 as a second full time worker, the youth group for years 7–12 moved to Sunday afternoon.

There were home groups too, one at least for young adults, of about thirteen. Some became slightly bigger 'community groups', but by whatever name they provided more intimate contact and for some they were the way to full membership. Harricks provided leadership sessions for those in charge of these groups, working through the sermon-linked study materials as an aid to their group discussions.

Harricks regretted the somewhat invisible location of the school in a hollow below the road sight line, but he could live with it. It also meant there was no weekday presence for his church and hence there were no walk-in contacts. So he and his congregation had to work hard on the relational contacting of friends, neighbours, work contacts and others: the local community focus at Tea Tree Plaza helped. On the other hand his congregation proved to be widely distributed: they came from Gilberton, Hectorville, Northgate, Oakden, Elizabeth, Salisbury Heights, and even three families from the Barossa Valley. Inevitably there were some departures, but broadly Harricks rated the health of his congregation as good. The financial evidence of that health showed first in the willingness of the group to fund most of Harricks' salary, and then when the challenge of paying for a second worker was put before then in 2011, the congregation quickly committed to a substantial portion: in effect there was a 65% increase in giving from 2010 to 2012.

Beyond Modbury, Harricks reckons that there are any number of future possibilities further North East, or over in the Elizabeth area. Nothing has been settled, but the potential for further growth is plain to see.

Trinity Mount Barker

At the launch of Trinity Hills in 2001 the congregation had prayed that they would in due course be able to plant a church themselves. We have already seen in Chapter 12 that Chris Edwards had been writing about

the possibility of another church plant further out into the hills in 2003. Edwards knew that there were members of his congregation from around Mount Barker who sought genuine Bible teaching and a family-centred Sunday worship opportunity: already they were saying to him, ‘come over and help us’, even if this might mean crossing the diocesan border into the predominantly Anglo-Catholic diocese of The Murray.

In the immediate future Edwards pressed on, as we have seen, with the establishment of the evening service. Harrington, however, was keen for the Hills to plant as soon as they filled up their morning gathering: ‘But there was some caution at the Hills end’.⁸

Nonetheless, early in 2007, Edwards told his pastoral assistant Clayton Fopp (who had begun the evening service at Aldgate in 2005) to ‘do some thinking’.⁹ No doubt he already had been doing so, and soon a paper emerged that focussed attention on Mount Barker. It had to: that was where the core group of support would come from. There were already thirty to forty adults he could identify in the Hills congregation. Clayton and his wife Kathy had been living in Littlehampton since soon after starting at Trinity Hills in 2002.

When Cameron Munro took over in succession to Chris Edwards Harrington made it clear he wanted the Mount Barker project by the end of Munro’s first full year. By May 2008 Fopp had placed an outline plan before Trinity’s church planting task force, which Harrington had established to frame and oversee these new developments. He completed his detailed scheme two months later, in which,

We thought there was a significant need for strong Bible teaching in the area. We identified three biggish churches in the area ... none were majoring on Bible teaching. Plus there were other traditional churches that were very small and offered nothing for children and small families. All this was in an area which was the second fastest-growing in the state: the need for a family-oriented ministry was obvious.

The response from the task force, not surprisingly, was to go right ahead. The project would obviously draw on the Aldgate congregations, but the oversight would be by Paul Harrington and the task force.

Once again, the project leader set about finding a core team: this time Fopp found seventeen mature Christians with a range of age and skills, including one young adult.¹⁰ Like James Harricks, Fopp set out to convince them (if they ever needed it) that ‘Church planting is one of the best ways in Australia of introducing people to Jesus’. They were also acknowledging that their preferences for style or arrangements might not be met. So with planning meetings roughly fortnightly, they worked towards a launch on 28 February 2010. Harrington had to help Fopp get his pace right: don’t rush. Tasks were allotted, there were sixteen Bible studies on aspects of church planting which Fopp prepared and published in printed form.¹¹ He convened a weekend conference in September 2009 that extended the range of his participants, with Paul Harrington there to enthuse and lead them through a range of ideas.

The search for a venue saw twenty or more sites investigated, both at Mount Barker and its satellite town across the freeway, Littlehampton,

using the by-now agreed formula of 200 seats, space for the children's ministry, with parking, storage on site, and tea and coffee-making facilities. This took nine months until arrangements were made with Littlehampton Primary School. Once again some teachers were edgy about another group, especially a religious one, being in their space. In the long run, care and good will generally prevailed.

So the launch process went ahead in January 2010, after they had met for four weeks unadvertised with just their starter group, who heard Fopp preach on evangelism each week. Then they went back to the Hills congregation for a formal send off on the occasion of the Hills' ninth anniversary. Their big event start-up saw 190 people attend.

There have been minor issues with the site since then. The congregation must be meticulous in putting things back the right way in the school space each Sunday. There was no on-site storage, and parking was not really adequate. Once again they stored via a trailer, kept in Adelaide Hills Self Storage close by. Weekday music rehearsals had to go on without that kit.

But there were significant achievements:

We have started a church that is committed to people who don't know Jesus hearing about Jesus and we seem to have done an OK job in creating a safe welcoming environment for people to come into.

A team took on the children's work and also developed groups beyond the Sunday gathering: in particular a high school group rather than falling back to the Hills group. Fopp himself led a combined youth and young adults group in his home. By 2011 there were enough to split them: the youth group met on Friday nights led by Andy Buchan (a minister-in-training at BCSA working for Trinity Mount Barker three days a week), while the adults came on Sunday nights with Clayton Fopp. Soon, too, there were seven home Bible study groups, together with a men's discipleship group for talk and work on the benches in the workshop at Cornerstone College. In 2012 Buchan began a Kids Club on Friday afternoons from 4pm to 6pm, first at the Uniting Church Hall, then at a sports club in Littlehampton, which attracted from five to over twenty children in the first few weeks.

A pastoral care team met regularly with Fopp, but much caring and encouragement by the Bible study groups, based on the maxim that they were supporting one another with a high sense of community. They were willing to drive some distance for fellowship gatherings: people readily travelled from Nairne, ten minutes away, to Mount Barker for a meal and an event. But it was harder to get people to go to 'town' (ie Adelaide, forty-five minutes or more away). Some of these meetings were greatly facilitated when, in December 2010, they found and funded the lease of office space at Mount Barker: a portable home building in a small commercial centre that yielded several rooms for reception, offices, meeting, storage and the like.

Trinity Mount Barker started with 50 adults, a tally which rose to 100+ by early 2011 and by mid-2012 stood at 140 adults together with some children of various ages, often young: by early 2012 the totals were running above 170. Sensibly enough, Fopp applied the eighty per cent



Littlehampton Public School hall, venue for Trinity Mount Barker worship gatherings.

rule to start a second service at 11am at the end of April 2012, with the earlier service moved to 9am. This meant everyone was moving to something new and provided a fresh beginning to invite newcomers along.

Among the two congregations were many with a church history, ‘the fifteen year de-churched’ as Fopp called them, who heard from friends about a church that had strong Bible teaching that offered relevant guidance for living. There were, too, unchurched people, plus of course some who transferred, especially those who moved because of difficulties at another local church. So there was a cluster of young families plus a group in their fifties and sixties, which surprised them. These more mature people were very welcome for the life experience they brought.

As can be seen, the congregation was generous in supporting this expansion. The Foundation for the Future Fund had underwritten them in 2010 with \$50,000 and \$20,000 in 2011. In 2012, the congregation committed to raising \$190,000, an increase of 46% up on the 2011 budget. Once again the generosity of the supporters of this Trinity Network church was clearly visible, even if Clayton Fopp found all these numbers worrying, even threatening. But then, what new church leader doesn’t have that worry?

There were frustrations for him too: chasing people on rosters; worrying about the venue, especially when the only other site with accommodation above 200 was controlled by Cornerstone College, a Lutheran secondary school who were wary of leasing their facilities to Trinity Mount Barker, which could be seen as a competitor. To be fair, they have been helpful in other ways, for example the annual carol event eg Trinity Mount Barker’s carols event is held there, and they have offered to loan some transportables. There have also been the problems with one or two other churches in Mount Barker, as a result of which people seem to be shifting

to the Trinity church. On the other hand there was no difficulty with the small Anglo-Catholic styled Anglican Church congregation, since Bishop Davies, the then bishop, said that as long as they didn't call themselves Anglican they were more than welcome in Mount Barker. That is what the congregation has done: they are badged as 'Trinity Mount Barker, a Trinity Network Church'.

Still, somehow the group needs to start an evening congregation, though it cannot be at Littlehampton School. Beyond that, Fopp believes they should plan for another church plant, perhaps in another two or three years, though the target area is not yet obvious. This will mean funding and recruiting a full time associate pastor before starting that evening service. With the support of the growth fund, perhaps that could be achieved by later 2013 or early 2014. Quite plainly, Paul Harrington's strong vision for and continuing commitment to growth through starting new congregations has been fully accepted at Mount Barker.

Trinity Inner South

Concurrent with the rearrangement of Sunday morning services at North Terrace, and virtually essential to its success because of the likely numbers attending the new 10.30 gathering, was the decision made by Harrington and the Board to commission Matt Lehmann, then leading the (soon to be former) 10.30am gathering to plan and carry out a church plant in the near south of Adelaide. This church plant had been intended in any case but the changes required to the morning services brought forward to the time frame for the plant to February 2013. The leadership was aware of the 'eighty per cent rule' which suggested that if the building was eighty per cent occupied, it would appear full and so discourage further visitors. After some busy searching in the suburbs either side of Cross Road down the Unley Road and Goodwood Road axes, Trinity struck an arrangement with the Colonel Light Gardens RSL for Sunday use of the clubrooms. These had recently been refurbished and the RSL was keen to get reliable tenants. Their existing community life could readily receive some contact from Trinity people, for example by attending their Friday night dinners or joining the club as community members.

Once again the process of creating a leadership team began and potential members were sought. This plant would have a representative group from North Terrace in their starter group, drawn from all the city gatherings: this may be a sign of healthier evangelistic enterprise across all the gatherings. It would be known as Trinity Inner South. Consultations occurred with the Trinity Network churches at the Bay and the Hills. Perhaps the well-established nature of the existing churches in the area might prove an obstacle, but it was the leadership's conviction that a Trinity Network church could be sufficiently different to attract people without threatening those existing churches. So far this view has been accepted in the consultations Lehmann and Harrington have carried out with the leaders of these local congregations. Lehmann conducted his first church plant fellowship weekend for 2–4 November 2012, inviting those who wanted to join the new project to gather with him at the Colonel Light Gardens RSL for teaching, planning and fellowship. So, in early 2013, yet another Trinity growth project lay on the cusp of action: the

official launch was timed for Sunday 28 February.¹² But lest everyone lapse into self-congratulation, Harrington reminded the congregation in January 2013 that not only were Mike Sams and Luke Woodhouse working towards new church plants in the north and the south, but that Duncan Andrews, with his wife Miriam, would join the Trinity Hills team in February 2013 to prepare for another church plant from that base.¹³

The big picture: the Trinity Network Board

After the establishment of the Hills and Bay congregations, it became apparent to Harrington, the trustees and other leaders that the parish needed a structure that would facilitate continued church planting while also providing a means for encouraging the Trinity Network churches to remain connected in more than name only. They highly valued the material and spiritual support and connection between Trinity City and the Hills and Bay churches and they judged that this pattern would be of great benefit to new plants, to North Terrace and to the growing Network as a whole. They perceived that there should be a structure that would enable oversight and management of the Network while at the same time, devolve management of the individual Network churches onto the congregation members themselves.

Harrington had established a church planting task force in 2008 to set goals and time-line targets and to oversee the development of new church plants. However, the legal arrangements suitable to achieve the aims of promoting Network growth, allowing for oversight and enabling



The Colonel Light Gardens RSL Hall, where Trinity Inner South began. The building was first a Rechabite hall, where total abstinence from alcohol was enthusiastically promoted.

Photo Brian Dickey

congregational responsibility required more thought. The rector and trustees were keen to ensure that ultimate control of the overall Trinity ministry remained in their hands. They particularly wanted the rector to retain the right to appoint senior pastors to the Network churches. They were conscious, too, of the continuing attempts of some diocesan leaders to seek to bring Trinity's affairs under closer control and supervision of the bishop and the diocese, attempts that the trustees were loath to accept. They wanted a network structure that would not be made subject to diocesan control without Trinity's consent and that would allow for Trinity's continued expansion within the Holy Trinity parish which as has been said, was not limited by geographical boundaries.

As a result of the considerations developed by Brett Cowell, chairman of trustees and an Adelaide corporate lawyer, and Paul Harrington, also trained as a lawyer, no doubt with input from other wise heads, a new scheme was developed. The Trinity trustees would establish a company under the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001 which would in turn authorise the establishment of incorporated associations for each of the new churches, while retaining the existing and long-standing arrangements directly under the trust deed for Trinity City. Voting control at each level would remain in the hands of or under the final authority of the rector and the trustees, but both the company's board and the committees of management of the associations would have ample power to carry on the objectives generally agreed on. For clarity, the company's constitution carried a schedule laying out the principles upon which it would operate and restating the fundamental truths of Christianity by which it would be guided. In like manner, the associations provided for membership based on individual acceptance of the same Christian fundamentals and laid out similar goals for their corporate endeavours. These arrangements were completed in 2012 with the holding of the first association meetings in the network churches to appoint their local governing bodies under the association rules.

In addition and in close association with these legal arrangements, the Network Board added the Trinity Network Growth Fund in the first half of 2011 to the existing Foundation for the Future. 'The idea was to create a fund that enabled us to bring planters on board (ie subsidise their employment by the churches in the Network) as well as offset some of the staff costs for the Network eg Andrew, myself, a financial Controller etc.', said Harrington to me.¹⁴ Large donations were sought confidentially, along with substantial inputs from the Trustees' resources. The aim of the fund is 'to strengthen churches in the Network and help them plant churches'. A formula for aid on a sliding scale over three years was developed based on minimum contributions from the receiving congregations, starting at \$60,000 in the first year.¹⁵ The fund allowed Harrington to set a target of three more full-time staff in 2013.

As far as Cowell and Harrington could achieve it, these arrangements established a clear structure for the operation of the existing Network churches and provided a legal and financial framework that would facilitate further church plants on Trinity's terms rather than on terms that others may seek to dictate.

The Trinity Church established under the trust deed of 1836 had come

a very long way indeed. Not at all surprisingly, the terms of the old deed contained many gaps when viewed from a modern perspective. However, the trustees had been careful to observe the spirit and intentions of the deed, adapted to the demands of the twenty-first century.¹⁶

Reflections

Are there common elements that are worth noticing in this series of bold initiatives? We can see, firstly, how important it has become to have an adequate support structure with legal arrangements in place to permit action that can sustain the longer term development of these new congregations. The Trinity leadership has found that this has been best done separately from what structures might be on offer from the diocese. They are unwilling to risk future disappointment from changes in policy or attitude in the diocese, and as a result are willing to develop a parallel system, although they have carefully kept the diocese informed in advance about future plans. But all the church plants in the diocese have, to date, in effect been congregations of the Parish of Holy Trinity, and so remain integral to it. This may or may not continue with Trinity Inner South and other plants in the future. It might offend some that it is not subordinated to the diocese directly, but it has yielded great flexibility and it has so far been used wisely. Even more important for them has been the desire to streamline the process of planting the new congregations by having such structures already in place. Decision-making does not have to start from the beginning every time.

Connected with this has been the use of public spaces, schools mostly, rather than existing Anglican churches. This flows from the search for independence just mentioned. In the jargon, these have been church ‘plants’, not church ‘replantings’. The latter can and have been attempted elsewhere, both in Australia and more frequently in English dioceses, but they have always involved complex negotiations with the existing congregations as well as the diocese. They are new expressions of church fellowship which are not to be denigrated. It is just that the Trinity leadership has judged that they will be more effective in concentrating on starting new congregations that do not carry existing local baggage with them.

Nor will it have escaped notice that the school halls Trinity has hired are all recently-built, funded under the BER program, which requires that such buildings be available for public use as a condition of the subsidy grant. Sunday church gatherings readily meet that requirement with little disruption to the schools’ weekday use of the space. This is, perhaps, an unexpected outcome of government policy, and one which would have been unlikely in earlier generations, so intent have bureaucrats been on maintaining a clear demarcation between church and state. Of course, the option of building a new church on freehold land has not been available to any denomination in Adelaide since the 1980s. It has become too expensive. Trinity is not alone in resorting to school halls: the Lutheran Church has made good use of its school halls for Sunday worship spaces too.

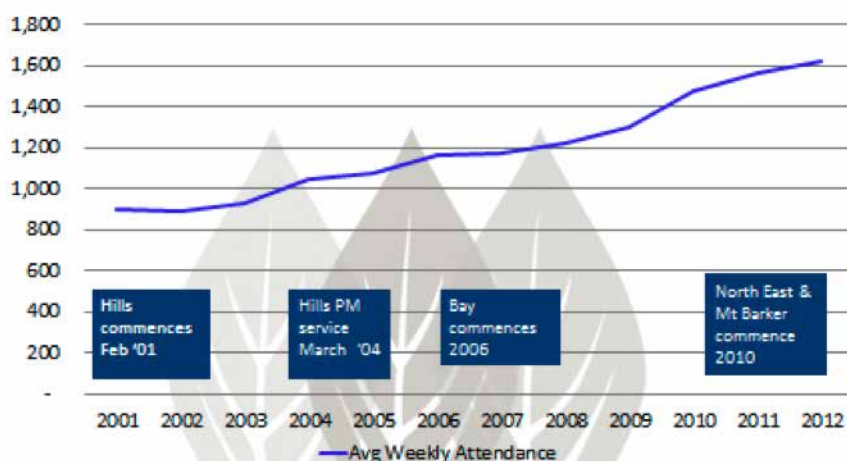
The sort of church planting described in this chapter has been carried out within a metropolitan environment, where the populations of suburbs are growing and changing, and where all sorts of new endeavours

in business, school and church are being attempted. In addition, each metropolitan environment will offer different options, for the Anglicans largely dictated by the style and attitude of the diocese in which these church plants are being envisaged. Here in Adelaide a largely unresponsive diocese of generally Catholic liberal style and outlook has permitted a very clear product differentiation of the strongly Evangelical gatherings promoted by Holy Trinity. No doubt in other dioceses different patterns would evolve.

We should notice, too, that the leaders of the church plants have reported that most of their new members have acknowledged a background of church experience, often in the long past, but sometimes quite recent. This is confirmed by the National Life Survey data. In other words, the church planting model in use at Trinity relies on some degree of former contact with public Christian ministry. Now, others have pointed out that in terms of the census, the proportion of the population who acknowledge some Christian contact, however tenuous, is falling steadily. Alongside it

Average Attendance per Week

2001-2012



in the recent census data is the rapidly growing proportion of the community who report never having had any contact with Christianity. Might the pool of new members for Trinity's sort of church plant be drying up? Might there soon not be any more people to call 'back' to Christianity? It is a matter of debate, because data other than the census remarks on a very large proportion of the population acknowledging the influence of Christianity in a variety of ways. There are always family baptisms, marriages and funerals. There are the large and growing numbers of students educated at Anglican secondary institutions. Put off they might be in the short term, but they remain a long-term field for evangelism. While others

within the diocese, notably Bishop Tim Harris, whose brief includes the development of evangelism, explore what they call ‘new expressions’ of Christianity, Trinity continues to pursue the church planting model which has produced such spectacularly successful results over the last decade or so.¹⁷ There is plenty of room for concurrent action.

To capture the impact of these sustained efforts at church planting by the Trinity congregation Andrew Severin graphed the combined weekly attendance figures for all the Trinity network churches for the years 2004 to 2012. When taken together, the sharp upward slope of the graph is plain to see: an overall increase of something approaching 100%. It reinforces the current church-planting doctrine that growth is achieved by creating new congregations.

While all these energetic efforts at developing new congregations proceeded, much still remained to be done at North Terrace. There must be efforts to maintain the health of those congregations and to provide continuing opportunities for sharing the gospel in a myriad of ways, new and old. It is to these endeavours that we will turn in the final chapter.

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- 1 Harrington to Dickey, 25 Jun 2012.
 - 2 This section is largely based on an interview by Brian Dickey with John Warner, 15 Aug 2012.
 - 3 Including Simon & Sue Pike, Sally and Miles Harper, and Grant & Keiko Neilsen.
 - 4 He later joined the staff as an administrative assistant.
 - 5 This section is based on an interview I conducted with James Harricks on 19 Jun 2012.
 - 6 James Harricks, Matt Lehmann, Jane Dewing, Chris Porter, Jessica Robertson, Simon Barbour, Mark Phillips, Debbie Edwards, Andrew Lee, Andrew Kennedy, Lydia Kennedy, Will Vaastra.
 - 7 Michael Sams came as a priest from four years’ service as an assistant minister at Earlwood in Sydney with his wife Jen and three children.
 - 8 Paul Harrington to Brian Dickey, 22 Aug 2012.
 - 9 Most details in this section rely on an interview I carried out with Clayton Fopp on 20 Jun 2012.
 - 10 Clayton & Kathy Fopp, Angus & Belinda Rainbow, Andy & Taimi Buchan, Doug & Roma Bower, Andrew & Naomi Harris, Wayman & Ruth Chapman, Matt & Kristen Pearce, Richard Austin.
 - 11 *Lessons for New Churches: 16 studies for church planting teams*, Trinity Mount Barker, 2009, (for sale on Amazon).
 - 12 In preparation for the move, a community prayer was distributed: its central petition was ‘May the new AM gatherings and the Inner South Church Plant be opportunities to grow and serve together, so that many more may come to know Jesus as Lord. Strengthen your people for their work and witness in this City.’ *Pew Bulletin*, 9 Sep 2012.
 - 13 *Pew Bulletin*, 13 Jan 2013.
 - 14 Paul Harrington to Brian Dickey, 22 Aug 2012.
 - 15 ‘Trinity Network growth Fund’, insert to Trinity Bay mid-year ministry report 2012.
 - 16 ‘Constitution of Holy Trinity Ltd, 2012’; ‘Trinity Mount Barker Incorporated: Rules of Association, 2012’; ‘Structure Chart, 2011’; briefing from Brett Cowell.
 - 17 This paragraph relies on conversations with both Paul Harrington and Tim Harris.