

Evangelical Congregation 1957–1973

Lance Shilton, leaving school at fourteen to commence work in an office, studied accountancy and spent four-and-a-half years in the army, followed by training at Ridley College, Melbourne. After working as a curate at St Columb's, Hawthorn in suburban Melbourne, he became priest-in-charge of the run-down St Jude's, Carlton, on the edge of the city centre. He committed himself to expanding an evangelistic ministry among both the residents and the university students and nurses who lived and worked in the area. At the same time he completed a Melbourne BA and began a London BD, which he completed at Tyndale House in Cambridge, an important evangelical study centre controlled by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. It was while visiting missionaries working with CMS in East Africa on his way home to Australia with his newly-wed wife Joan that the invitation to succeed Graham Delbridge reached him. Aged thirty-five, Shilton launched himself into a vigorous ministry at Trinity which was to last nearly seventeen years. Under his leadership the congregation continued its expansion in numbers and income, significant additions were made to the physical plant, the full-time staff grew to four clergymen, a verger and two office secretaries, the congregation's commitment to evangelical Christianity was reinforced again and again, despite frictions with the diocese, a larger administrative structure was created, and the rector became a public figure, well known in Adelaide for his outspoken application of Christianity to the issues of the day. Centrally, the gospel was proclaimed openly, repeatedly, actively and effectively.¹

Shilton's first moves

Within three months of his arrival the new rector introduced what he termed 'guest services' as an effort by the whole congregation at bringing people to hear the gospel message. These services were vigorously publicised, and members were encouraged to invite friends and acquaintances to come. The sermons were designed to present the gospel, and concluded with an explicit invitation from the pulpit for hearers to become Christians. In addition, explanation and counselling were offered after the services, followed by pastoral visits. Many who made commitments at these guest services later became leaders in the life of the congregation.

The parish also accepted responsibility for developing an Anglican congregation in the suburb of Kidman Park, a new housing development a few miles to the west of the city. This was a gentleman's agreement with the diocese, which supported this effort (one of several such exercises in church extension through sponsorship from established parishes) with a contribution towards the salary of a curate to work part-time in that area. Ron Herbert was licensed as Shilton's curate by the bishop on these terms late in 1957. For some years an enthusiastic outstation work went on at St Athanasius', Kidman Park. To the disappointment of Shilton and many others at Trinity, Bishop Reed decided to terminate the arrangement in 1963 when it became possible to create a self-supporting parish of Lockleys, which included the church at Kidman Park. The parish council at Trinity was not impressed that the matter should simply be announced without consultation, especially since the rector was overseas. Nor were they pleased at the removal of the diocesan subsidy and the direct proposal by Bishop Reed to the incoming curate, Charles Barton, that he should not now proceed to Adelaide. It seemed to them that Trinity had been slighted by a bishop suspicious of its success and unwilling to permit the development of what might have been thought to be an evangelical enclave in the western suburbs. Although the bishop had acted within his legal rights, it was a move that rankled.²

Other forms of expansion were eagerly grasped. Certainly Trinity was not going to close down, as the outspoken the Revd Howell Witt of Elizabeth hinted. Witt was probably focussing on St Mary Magdalene's, Moore Street, and the difficulties he had experienced while rector of that tiny congregation. On behalf of Trinity, Shilton replied vigorously to Witt's claim that there were too many Anglican churches in the city square in an interview in the *Anglican*:

Over the years, Holy Trinity has provided a preaching centre where public relations with the city have been built up. Far from being redundant, Holy Trinity had now made plans for increasing [its] congregations.

Shilton mentioned the work at Kidman Park, the increased giving to the Bishop's Home Mission Society (for new parishes) and to missionary societies, and the plans of several parishioners to serve as clergy or missionaries, as further evidence of the vigour of his congregation. Neither he nor they were about to enter a period of contraction. Far from it!



The Revd Lance Shilton: a formal portrait by Don Gee when Shilton was at the height of his powers at Trinity.

Billy Graham Crusade

By August 1958 Shilton had committed Trinity to vigorous support of the Billy Graham Crusade which was to be held in Adelaide in May 1959. At first the diocese of Adelaide, as represented by the Dean, supported this great evangelistic venture by attending the planning committee meetings. But it was not long before Bishop Reed distanced himself from the forthcoming Crusade, almost certainly because of Graham's American style and outspoken emphasis on the Bible, which caused him to be labelled a 'fundamentalist'.³ This did nothing to discourage Trinity people from participating as counsellors, organisers, donors, and attenders. When the Crusade was actually held Skip Tonkin and a colleague laid out the seating plan at Wayville Showground. It was a time of great anticipation and excitement. The outcome was a large increase in attendance at many Protestant churches, Trinity among them. Over 300 people were referred to Trinity and another 60 to Kidman Park from the Crusade. Lance Shilton expressed the belief (in an interview with the author in 1986) that many of these people could have been former Anglican attenders who had drifted away from the ministry of the diocese. He also believed that, by contrast, some in the diocese thought that they were active members of other parishes 'stolen' by Trinity. It may have been that both of these assertions were true; but whatever the case, the equivocal response of Bishop Reed to the Billy Graham Crusade, so obviously a great event for many Christians in Adelaide, did not endear him to the Trinity congregation.

Expansion

Steadily through the 1960s the wardens reported increases in attendance and in financial support: the annual number of regular communicants rose from an estimated 450 in the late 1950s to 650 by the early 1970s, while acts of communion rose by over 60 per cent during the same period. Income for the year 1957–8 was £9928 including £3046 for missionary purposes. At the 1973 annual vestry, the last which Shilton chaired, parish income, apart from support to missionary societies, was \$46 301, more than three-and-a-half times the 1958 figure. It could be averaged as an annual increase of about 24 per cent, not taking account of inflation, nor counting the substantial special giving to building projects.



Billy Graham Crusade, Wayville Showground, 1959. Skip Tonkin laid out the seating plan. *SLSA, B 24999*

Lance Shilton himself generated many other measures of the behaviour of the congregation: aggregate presences on Sundays, the number of cups of tea served and meals consumed, attendances at weekly Bible studies and so on. All the numbers showed increases. The critical importance of privately-owned cars was even more apparent. It was unmistakably a period of continued growth. Joan Shilton gave whole hearted support to the

traditional women's meetings. She automatically took over as president of the Mothers' Union branch and was soon presenting a series of Bible studies there. She was hostess on many occasions, and at the same time gained a BA at the University of Adelaide, where again she made her faith plain.

Why did they come? Mrs Millicent Bennett, who was in her fifties when she first heard Shilton one Sunday night when she was 'feeling very low', described how the rector preached a 'marvellous sermon ... he drew people to him, and got them to think and to follow his explanations ... he drew you to him. You always felt that you came away ... much better and much broader in your mind about your Bible work and your Bible study'. His sermons characteristically had many headings, each cleverly constructed, often exploiting alliteration. Many were subsequently printed in summary in *Trinity Times* or later, in full as pamphlets.



Lance Shilton in his crowded rectory office in 1959, with Pauline Hayes, H. Watson (warden), Norm Allchin and Ron Herbert. A carefully posed photograph to make a point. *Photo Don Gee.*

'Where this church stands'

In his New Year Sermon for 1961, Shilton explained 'Where this church stands'. There were twelve points in the summary in *Trinity Times* and they touched on the essentially Anglican evangelical stance maintained by Shilton and his immediate predecessors, foursquare within the four-fold definition of evangelicalism presented by David Bebbington discussed in the introduction. First came the supremacy of the scriptures, not augmented by tradition nor reduced by the measure of men's minds. 'They are accepted in faith as the revealed Word of God'. Then 'the authority of the prayer book', the universality of the church and the efficacy of the sacraments: in none of these matters would Shilton allow Anglo-Catholicism to claim an exclusive hold on the teaching of the Church of England. To make this point firmly, he then asserted that 'we trust the reliability of the reformers'. Indeed, for most of his incumbency, Shilton celebrated the Reformation each spring with special services and guest preachers. It was an important claim that Evangelicals made, in direct challenge to the

efforts of Anglo-Catholics to define the Anglican heritage in a very different way. ‘Simplicity of worship’ was a thoroughly Protestant preference too, as was ‘the centrality of Christ as the only way of salvation’. The Holy Spirit ‘is continually active in the life of the believer’, while the gospel possessed universal application. Eternal life was certain, while the return of Christ would be the final act of the human drama as we know it. In his 1961 annual report to the parish Shilton made the same points more briefly:

Trinity stands for the authority of the Word of God and the necessity of personal conversion to Christ. We also desire under the Hand of God that the message of His redeeming Love in Christ should be known to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Within that framework of instructed evangelical Protestantism, Shilton’s elaborate sermons hammered home such themes as ‘What Christ Offers You’, ‘Your Friend the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Praying to Live’. The appeal to heart and life of the sinner remained as much part of the evangelical rhetoric of the 1960s as it had been with Howard and Farrell.

Alongside those seriously theological sermons were others of a more occasional character presented at special services, for example the one commemorating Trafalgar Day, with the Naval Brigade present and appropriate flags flying. Or again, he would take up some current controversy and assert the rights of Christians to develop a moral critique of the issue in question (for example ‘The Challenge of Agnosticism’, 1967; ‘How can the Church mind its own business?’ 1968). The most frequent form of preaching, however, remained expositions of Bible passages, sometimes in sequences over a period of weeks, with strong exhortations about proper Christian behaviour attached.

To this instruction was added his regular teaching at the Wednesday night Bible study, a tradition already established at Trinity, and one which under Shilton attracted up to two hundred people. Copies of the study notes of these sessions were sent to missionaries and indigenous Christians in many parts of the world. By the mid-1960s he realised that even more instruction was required by the congregation and that week-night journeying to the city was disliked, especially when challenged by television. The first showing of the ‘Forsythe Saga’ was not till 1967, but it stands as a major alternative night-time attraction. He instituted a program of Sunday afternoon teaching courses in 1964. One was for intending Sunday school teachers, another offered introductory theology classes, a third a form of adult leadership training, another on New Testament Greek. ‘Trinity at Five’ was one of the names for the program, coordinated by one of the curates. Increasingly, in the programs offered each term, there was a course on some aspect of family relations, a question which, not surprisingly, attracted interest from a congregation full of young parents grappling with the reality of Christianity in the home. In February 1966 about 120 people were attending the range of Trinity Study Courses.⁴ This was probably the peak: by the end of Shilton’s time the range of topics and attendances had contracted somewhat. Indeed by the early 1980s almost the whole program had disappeared, although there was always a need to offer instruction to newly converted members, and those seeking regular, authoritative Biblical exposition. It was an

organisational task to which Trinity's leadership would return thirty years later, this time in association with other evangelical churches.

Home Bible studies

Shilton also observed that the Wednesday night program was not holding its own by the mid-1960s for other reasons: he knew that some members now met informally in their own homes for fellowship and Bible study. In August 1967 he announced his aim of establishing fifty such gatherings under the sponsorship of Trinity. By study, prayer and fellowship the members would build one another up in Christian effectiveness and overcome the increasing penalty of distance imposed on the congregation as it drew its membership from an expanding radius in suburban Adelaide. To maintain control, Shilton required that the groups use study notes provided by the church. Some did, others did not. But the practice of home fellowship groups in loose association with Trinity was well established by the time Lance Shilton left. They were an important recruiting ground, and a means whereby the growing Sunday congregations could be made to have a more personal impact. They were, too, a recognition, if sometimes less than fulsome, that wisdom and competence extended beyond the trained and ordained staff. The days of centralist, authoritarian leadership such as Shilton himself personified were being brought to a close. In part this was the result of the very effectiveness and attractiveness of his ministry, as able people were brought to join the Trinity congregation. In part, too, it represented the accumulation of people who possessed theological and professional training every bit as significant as Shilton's, and whose ability to minister to others would not be limited by a narrow notion of leaders and led defined simply by ordination and appointment as rector. Men such as Malcolm Jeeves, a professor of psychology at the University of Adelaide, or John Court, Anne Fander and Chris Purton, among others, possessed substantial theological knowledge and ability which they shared with other members of the congregation.

New buildings

Such a vigorous and attractive program, which succeeded in bringing more people to join the Trinity congregation, building on the strong base established by Fred Dillon and Graham Delbridge, soon meant that attention had to be given to the provision of additional physical resources: seats in church, office space, meeting rooms, and houses for the extra clergy.

Shilton moved quickly. The funds being gathered to install stained glass windows in memory of David Hardy were released by a special vestry meeting on 3 November 1957 to pay for a gallery at the back of the nave. In part it would replace the seating lost by the expansion of the organ, rebuilt rather than replaced in the eastern gallery. The organ was re-dedicated on 2 January 1958. Archdeacon Delbridge and Bishop Reed preached and 1500 crowded the church to hear them at the special services, which were attended by the governor, the premier and the lord mayor. It was an example of Shilton's flair for the exploitation of a public occasion. The second-hand nature of the instrument reminds us of the pragmatism of the Trinity leadership. The organ frustrated Ray Kidney from time to time as its parts showed signs of wear or just failed to work.

WHERE THIS CHURCH STANDS

Regular attenders at this Church are often asked the question, “Why is it that so many people attend your Church?” “Why is it necessary to build galleries in a City Church?” Some may think that the answer is to be found in its location, or its age, or its public relations. Others think it may be because of organisation, personnel or publicity. But the real reasons are much deeper. Here are the significant 12 points for which this Church of Holy Trinity stands:

1. We recognise THE SUPREMACY OF THE SCRIPTURES:

They are not augmented with the traditions of men, nor are they reduced to the measure of man’s mind. They are accepted in faith as the revealed Word of God.

2. We respect THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRAYER BOOK:

Its formularies are as satisfying to the worshipper today as they were when first written. They glorify God and the truth of the Word of God. Its teaching needs no revision for it is in accordance with the Scriptures.

3. We acknowledge THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH:

The word ‘Catholic’ cannot be restricted in meaning to suit any particular theory or any particular denomination. It is ‘the whole state of Christ’s Church,’ ‘the blessed company of all faithful people’. It is the Church embracing all times, all places, all people and all truth.

4. We value THE EFFICACY OF THE SACRAMENTS:

These are effectual signs of God’s grace to those who receive them in faith. The mere performance of a rite does not automatically convey grace: it comes in response to faith in the written and Incarnate Word of God.

5. We trust THE RELIABILITY OF THE REFORMERS:

There is no desire to go back to pre-Reformation times. We thank God for the heritage which is ours. Because the Reformers stood for ‘justification by faith alone’, we stand where the Reformers stood.

6. We prefer THE SIMPLICITY OF WORSHIP:

Worship needs to be in the ‘beauty of holiness’ and not be obscured by an over emphasis on the holiness of beauty. Worship through the senses should not be a substitute for worship in the Spirit. ‘God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him should worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.’

7. We emphasise THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST:

Christ must have the pre-eminence, not ourselves, not the saints, not our theories, not our services, or our organisations. Speaking to the disciples about the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, ‘He shall glorify me’. Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.’ He is the only way of salvation.

8. We experience THE ACTIVITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit is continually active in the life of the believer from the time he is born again. He guides into all truth. He provides power for service. He unites true believers. He makes holy those who trust Him.

9. We maintain THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL:

The fact that Christ died for all must be made known to all, and it is the personal responsibility of each Christian to ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.’ This missionary responsibility must be exercised at home and abroad in obedience to the leading of God.

10. We affirm THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION:

because Christ died for all, it does not mean that all are automatically saved. Each one needs to recognise Christ as His personal Saviour and turn in humble repentance

and willing faith to Him for forgiveness and new life. Jesus said, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.'

11. We acclaim THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNAL LIFE:

The Scriptures plainly state that 'he that hath the Son hath life'. Absolute assurance comes to those who truly believe because their trust is solely in the merits of Christ and not in themselves, or in anything they have done. Prayers for the dead are therefore unnecessary.

12. We rejoice in THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S RETURN:

Although we know not the day or the hour of Christ's Coming Again, we rejoice in the final triumph of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He says, 'Surely, I come quickly'. To which we reply, 'Even so come, Lord Jesus', and say:

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me, a sinner condemned, unclean. How marvellous!
How wonderful!
Is my Saviour's love for me.

In 1969 and again in 1985, Kidney sought quotes for repair and upgrading of the organ, though with limited success. The 1969 'improvements' were costed at \$5800, at which Shilton suggested Kidney canvass the matter at the next annual vestry, but to no effect. Those in 1985 were costed at \$28 700 in total. This time Parish Council approved at least the most pressing repairs after investigations into electronic organs proved unsatisfactory.⁵

Similarly, when the Hardy Gallery was dedicated in September 1958, Fred Dillon preached to a congregation which included the lieutenant governor of South Australia and the lord mayor of Adelaide. Nor should we be surprised that the subject of Dillon's sermon in the evening was 'Prophecy and the World Today'.

'The Next Project' addressed the cramped working conditions for the clergy and the support team growing around them. Shilton recalled how interviews, records, typing and preparation all went on in his study in the rectory; meetings were held in the lounge room; children were cared for during services in the back room. Once more, the trustees were asked to approve the plan for an office and a hall. Of course they did not have to pay for these extensions: by this time they could not even pay the rector's salary. But Shilton knew he had to keep them on side. He found them

low church people ... who really didn't have much idea what evangelicalism meant, or ... what I was on about. They were old men, belonging to an old school, who looked upon their rights [as] having been established, and no young clergyman coming in here was really going to tell them how they should act according to the Trust.

But on pragmatic matters such as office space they were happy to support him.

By the time the proposal reached the 1959 vestry it included a flat above the hall and office, all to be sited against the western side of the rectory. The £8500 cost would be covered by interest-free loans from parishioners. The foundation stone of the 'Charles Beaumont Howard Building' was laid by Sir Herbert Mayo, who had long been a trustee before being appointed to the supreme court bench. The building was opened on 8 May 1960 by Sir Mellis Napier (the lieutenant governor) and Bishop J.C.



Lance Shilton and Fred Dillon welcome the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Mellis Napier, to the dedication service for the Hardy Gallery in 1958, one of the many ceremonial occasions Lance Shilton used to publicise Holy Trinity. *Photo Don Gee.*



New offices and C.B. Howard Hall, with flat above, opened 1960. *Photo Don Gee.*

Vockler (coadjutor bishop of Adelaide). Both events were used to publicise Trinity and its evangelical heritage, as was the commemoration of C.B. Howard in the building's name. Indeed Shilton worked hard to exploit every significant event around the church for the publicity it would generate in the media. He was encouraged in this by a recent member of the congregation, Helen Caterer, an established journalist with the *Sunday Mail*. They struck up a strong and enduring friendship around their shared commitment to promote Christianity in the public life of Adelaide.

At the annual vestry the previous Wednesday at the end of April 1960 Shilton had already launched his next project, a gallery to provide even more seats in the western transept. He proposed that it be in memory of Fred Dillon, who had died not long after his visit to Adelaide in 1958. Not surprisingly, there were some voices at the meeting expressing doubt about the congregation's capacity to pay for yet another building project. The rector's enthusiasm carried the meeting, and once more the appeal for funds went out. By the 1961 vestry the Hardy Gallery had been paid for, the C.B. Howard building fund still needed £5050 to repay the loans from parishioners over five years, while £598 was in hand for the Dillon Gallery. A few months later the trustees agreed to a scheme to refurbish the parish hall with a new stage, an improved kitchen, a sound system, partitions to create areas for Sunday school classes, cupboards, heating, lighting and much tidying. All would make the building more usable both for the Sunday school and the increasing number of other meetings that were held there.

A minor but interesting effort to create yet greater awareness of the church's heritage saw Lance Shilton act to rescue the discarded original gravestone of C.B. Howard, which had turned up in the Oddfellows Building in the city: they had replaced it at West Terrace cemetery in 1949. The family plot at the Cemetery had been renovated and another new stone commemorating Howard installed. Shilton placed this original gravestone on the wall separating the cottage from the entrance to the vestry. The mid-nineteenth century language does not hide Howard's short life, nor his leadership of Trinity Church.⁶

Meanwhile, the cracking pace of building continued. The Dillon Gallery was dedicated on 18 February 1962. The vestry approved the parish hall scheme, to cost about £5000, on 1 May 1962. At the trustees' meeting in December 1962 Shilton proposed another building, to house a crèche and carry a flat above for the verger, thus freeing the existing flat for another clergyman. Shilton was strengthened in his resolve to erect this building by the knowledge that a



The gravestone to Charles Beaumont Howard rescued from oblivion and installed outside the vestry at Holy Trinity. Photo Brian Dickey.

From Crèche to Tiny Tots

By the early 1960s, a decade of church growth amidst the rapid process of family formation was showing up in growing numbers of families with small children attending Trinity. While Shilton encouraged the school-age children to attend church services for a period before withdrawing to attend Sunday school classes, care of babies and toddlers was another matter. The consensus was that their presence in church was more distracting than it was worth. Joan Shilton therefore threw open the rectory on Sunday mornings to provide a place where mothers could leave their small children, to be cared for by some of the mothers in rostered turns. But it was a growing crowd in a setting hardly designed for this purpose, as these images show.



The child care provided in the rectory lounge room

One helper recalled how they were startled to find two active little boys swinging from the balustrades of the staircase landing, several metres above the floor below. (Names and addresses supplied!) It was not difficult to convince church leaders that a purpose-designed crèche should be built as the next project in equipping Trinity for more effective ministry. There could be a series of rooms containing baby cots, changing tables, playrooms for toddlers, a meeting room, toilets and sinks, outdoor access, all with appropriate fittings and furniture, supported by up-to-date toys and books. It would be based on best practice in the conduct of kindergartens and child care centres, informed by the knowledge and experience of the mothers themselves.⁷ This was approved by the 1963 annual vestry meeting.

It was not till late in 1964 that the plans for the crèche building were agreed to: building began in mid-1965.⁸ The upward curve of income had stalled somewhat, and Shilton had been overseas on a study tour. The crèche, not surprisingly named the 'James Farrell Building', was costed at £11 000 by February 1966. A proposed story was abandoned, although the engineering works were put in place to carry it at a later date. The building was complete by the 1966 vestry.



In the rectory back-yard, looking towards the CB Howard Building

In Lance Shilton's 1964 administrative re-organisation (discussed later) a committee to oversee the activities of the rectory crèche was established. While it met only once or twice a year, for the next forty years or so it provided the supervision and personnel that made the crèche possible. While at first the rector chaired the meetings, followed soon by curates (usually with babies of their own), when Jill Phillips was appointed as women's worker she took over leadership of this committee, eventually passing this task on to Barbie Page. It was a women's achievement, a sustained delivery of responsible care to support the activities of the congregation, not only on Sunday mornings, but at times on Sunday nights, and also for special events held on and off the site from time to time. It meant regular and consistent attendance of mothers and other helpers to care for the various groups of children. Where possible they came to seek to give them instruction in the Christian faith, as well as the loving care to which they were entitled.

Meanwhile working bees of men set about clearing the sheds and former stable block on the south-east corner of the site behind the rectory.



Shilton grasped the public relations potential of the project. He arranged for the foundation stone-laying by Sir Bruce Ross, recently retired as a judge of the Supreme Court of South Australia, to be a major event, with choir and invited guests crowded into the space that had been cleared beside the rectory. The new crèche facility would be named, he announced, the James Farrell Building in honour of the church's second incumbent and first dean of the diocese.



This image catches Ray Kidney, church organist since 1955, and already balding but not yet wearing his wig, playing a piano for the occasion, aided by his youthful daughter Jenny.

A few months later the rector arranged for Bishop Reed to dedicate the building, praying that it would serve the congregation for years to come. Don Gee took a portfolio of pictures to show off the new facility, full of promise in all its modern efficiency.

Soon the children moved in, with their carers.

The crèche committee increased its tempo, grappling with typical and recurrent problems. The key appointment was that of a volunteer supervisor, supported by others who would watch over the rostering of helpers for each time the crèche opened. Plainly mothers were expected to help if they left children in the crèche, but of course not every week. Some other women offered their services too, out of love for children. Some would attend the early service and then help in the crèche. Margaret Barton, wife of one of the curates, described her work with the crèche in mid-1965. It was a very busy place for her and other helpers on Sunday mornings and evenings. In addition, Margaret was convening meetings for young married couples contacted through the crèche to provide opportunities for fellow-



ship. Discussions included disciplining children; activities included tennis and a beach party. It was, too, another opportunity to bring interested outsiders into contact with Trinity.⁹ There were toys to be bought with small grants from the wardens. Five dollars seemed to go a long way in 1966! Thankfully the grant grew over the years, but it was never generous. It was no doubt supported by donations, but supervisors had constantly to

guard against unsuitable toys. Keeping the evening service crèche going was always a struggle. Sometimes the number of children fell away, sometimes there were not enough women willing to attend. Frustrated at these problems and confronted by the desire of successive rectors to offer this option to possible worshippers at the evening service, the crèche committee passed the task back to the parish council, who found Kim Munday willing to take up the challenge and find helpers to continue the program. But it was necessary to install a panic buzzer linked to the back of the church after at least one intruder stole a purse from the crèche, which felt so isolated at night. This and subsequent security devices needed regular checking and coordination with the ushers in the church, to ensure that the systems really did provide the protection they purported to offer.



*Dorothy Gee supervises Jenny Kidney, David Gitsham faces the camera.
Courtesy Jenny Chapman*

Other problems that caught the committee's attention included the issues that came with a sand pit, as many parents will know. New sand, drainage, and secure walling were regular issues. Meanwhile care had to be exercised in logging the children in and out, in particular their exits had to be to authorised parties (preferably not an excited or impatient sibling). The complex age range had to be grappled with. Babies slept in cots well enough, but active toddlers were another matter. They were grouped separately, and supervised or taught in small groups. Eventually a program was developed that caught the 'minis', perhaps already attending day kindergarten, and willing to engage in learning activities. The meeting room ('room one') was much used for this purpose while it was big enough.

There were at first four carers and a supervisor each week on the roster, then five and then six, usually attending once a month: perhaps fifty different people, mainly parents, were involved. Crèche numbers at 9.30 grew from around ten to around twenty at peak about 2000, along with another fifteen to twenty in the minis program, also needing carers and teachers.¹⁰

Then there was the 11 am group, with another dozen or so in the crèche and eight or ten in minis. Add to these those cared for in the evenings: it was a major project. Occasionally a visiting 'expert' would address the committee. Miss Mellor did this in 1968, talking especially about caring for 3½ to 4 year olds. At the same meeting 'Mr Court brought along a box of interlocking wooden shapes which would be put to use immediately.'¹¹

John Court was a university lecturer in psychology and was serving that year as rec-tor's warden. Rules for the conduct of the crèche were developed that tried to capture the experience of working the facility, keeping in mind the various access points and other safety issues. Carpet squares came and went.

Just occasionally children presented behavioural or health problems. Mothers would advise what to do if the child seemed to be in crisis. In one special case the mother made sure the crèche people knew where she was sitting in church so she could be summoned. The known biters were identified and watched, like the ones who put stones in their mouths. No doubt they all survived.

Mothers came and went with their children, and each was thanked for her contribu-tion when she departed. Other helpers stayed for much longer. Some of the long-term lead-ers of the crèche for whom the congregation should be very grateful indeed include Joan Blakeway, Dorothy Gee and Chris Whitburn. When Barb Page took over the coordination of children's work, her brief included the crèche. Chris Whitburn continued as the coordinator of the crèche and Lynne Biedron continued as the roster secretary. They were followed by Sue Pyke and Sharon Seedsman, then Jane Dewing, and Vernon and Caren Sawers. Anne Havill, when she became children's worker in succession to Barb Page in 2011, rebadged the crèche to 'Tiny Tots', which is regarded as a much more user-friendly name. Whatever the name, the delivery of quality care in support of the Trinity congregation continues



Left: Joan Blakeway in 2001. *Photo by Janet Dickey*
Right: Dorothy Gee, taken in the car park.



Chris Whitburn, with her husband Tony and their daughter, 2002.

promotion scheme approved by the 1962 vestry had resulted in a thoroughgoing canvass of the congregation over the following year, with all of these projects and others, such as more staff, being clearly explained. The result was almost to double the pledged regular income, from £8500 to £15 000.

A year later yet another expansion to the seating in the church, a forward extension of the Hardy gallery, was proposed by the rector and accepted by the vestry. The rector and the wardens were encouraged by some substantial bequests, including \$2640 for the Hardy Gallery, about half the cost.¹²

Shilton's last on-site building project was his least successful. The addition of two 'vestries' between the cottage and the church, so it was argued by the rector to the parish council in February 1969, would provide on-site interview rooms for the two clergy now housed off the church acre, and more private space for visiting clergy than the existing vestry, which was now just a walk-way. But so constricted was the space available that only one fair-sized room could be contrived, divided by that great standby of economy-minded church builders, the concertina room-divider. Unlike the C.B. Howard Hall which, though frugal, has worked reasonably well, and the James Farrell Building which has served superbly, the 'New Vestries' have been an expensive white elephant that no one really wants to use, especially since robed visiting clergy have become rare events since Shilton's day. They serve mainly as storerooms for musical instruments, old choir robes and the brass communion rails when these are not needed for services.

Did Shilton have a plan in this helter-skelter decade of building? Clearly not, in the sense of a master-plan for the site. He wanted to respond to the physical needs that the activity and growth of the parish had generated. Thus he argued that a parish office should be provided outside the rectory. The resultant facility in the C.B. Howard Building was for long a hot and inconveniently shaped space with little privacy, except for the rector who was involved in many hours of confidential counselling each week. It was for Shilton a matter of maintaining the momentum of commitment from one project to another. A subsequent rector would abandon it to the growing number of administrative staff, retreating to the original study in the rectory. But Shilton knew too that if he was too formal and rational, presenting a fully developed and fully costed master plan, the overall cost of the whole project would terrify the trustees and deter the wardens. Instead he proceeded from one modest but achievable project to another without pause.

The result was and remains a hotchpodge. The original lines of the rectory, already masked by the parish hall, were further compromised by the C.B. Howard Building and other bits and pieces hung on it. The cottage, significantly amended and reoriented more than once, sits to the south of the church and denies any substantial view of the church from Hindley Street. It has served a variety of purposes once the last resident family moved out in the 1990s. The 1888 parish hall, refurbished expensively, might have been bulldozed in the 1960s according to Skip Tonkin. It remains, refurbished once more around 2000, more and more expensive to replace completely with a facility that would meet the congregation's

needs in the twenty-first century. We will return to that issue in later chapters. No doubt Shilton was practising the art of the possible with a congregation which needed to be shown what it could achieve. But as community interest in heritage matters and in the coherent appearance of built forms has grown, especially in locations of high visibility such as Trinity occupies, this reliance on pragmatic solutions tacked on all over the acre has become less and less acceptable. The result would be some speculative planning in the 1990s, and then a more sustained and self-conscious exercise since about 2000, which will undoubtedly stretch the pockets of the congregation to the limit.

More full-time staff

Concurrently with these projects on the city acre, and indeed undergirding this expansion of physical facilities, came an increase in staff and accommodation for them. In part this was driven by the very success of Lance Shilton's personal ministry. His private files, now deposited in the State Library of South Australia though generally closed to public view, reveal a great deal of pastoral correspondence.¹³ Much of it was generated by the 5DN radio 'meditations' he broadcast weekly. He received letters from a wide variety of people who wrote to thank him for his ministry, or to share Christian views, or simply to talk to someone. Sometimes he had to field letters from those with whom he obviously disagreed: for example proponents of the 'second blessing' of the Holy Spirit. Then there are the more personal matters people raised with him, sometimes from within the Trinity community, sometimes from beyond. There were failing marriages, misbehaving children and all those other private matters that gave people pain and for which they sought 'ghostly counsel', as the Prayer Book put it. All had to be attended to. Sometimes the replies are brief, but most of them bespeak a man devoted to Christian pastoral care and concerned to meet each case as personally as possible.

Beyond that personal correspondence there were the rising numbers of invitations to speak in public as his profile became more visible in Adelaide and then beyond. There was the invitation to commemorate the establishment of the Church of Scotland at the time of the reformation, to speak at ministers' fraternal meetings, at the Katoomba Convention, or to university or parish missions, or again to tours of Arnhem Land on behalf of CMS (which he gladly undertook because it widened his knowledge of the Christian landscape). He had to learn the art of the 'previous engagement' and the frank apology to old friends in order to maintain his core ministry at Trinity, for example by resisting invitations to outside ministry at Christmas or Easter.

In the late 1950s the rector was supported by one, and then two curates, one housed in the cottage, the other in the flat above the C.B. Howard Hall when it was built. Shilton wished to have as many of the clergy as possible living on the site to assist him in dealing with the many visitors by day and by night. But further clergy appointments made it necessary to find houses in the suburbs. This was achieved at first with the aid of a parishioner who provided a house rent-free after a special vestry declined in August 1964 to commit £10 000 to such a scheme. But by 1967 Shilton was looking for a fourth clergyman, to permit more specialised attention to youth

work and education programs. Once again a parishioner revealed startling generosity by giving £8000 to the housing fund. The council minuted that ‘God is supplying our needs because the Word is preached so faithfully’.¹⁴ It was a boast, and an unprovable assertion about cause and effect, yet it reflected the mood and the conviction of the congregation under Shilton’s leadership. The work was flourishing, and people did have confidence in the leadership. They admired their rector, for his selfless dedication to the gospel, his complete lack of fear, and his pragmatic capacity to squeeze results out of all circumstances. They were therefore willing to fund both capital purchases such as houses and the running costs for four clergymen, a verger and one-and-a-half clerical staff by the end of Shilton’s time. His secretary, Pauline Hayes, gave great support during all these years. The clergy prayed and worked together as a team with weekly staff conferences, which continued under Shilton’s successors as a key element in coordinating the full-time ministry of the parish. They met for prayer with Shilton on three mornings each week at 8 a.m., often joined by other members of the congregation, who recognised in these and other meetings the importance of corporate prayer for the work of the parish.

Administrative re-organisation

As the congregation grew under Shilton’s leadership, with his constant emphasis on evangelism and on exploiting the opportunities of the moment, problems began to show up. As we have seen, funding the expansion of staff and facilities seemed to go ahead quite remarkably, although no doubt many people had to struggle to reach deeper into their pockets. To Shilton the problem in the early 1960s was to organise the activities of the congregation effectively, so that while he continued to control the parish, others could join more effectively in working with him. He was an authoritarian leader in the evangelical tradition coming to realise that he needed a band of trusted subordinates to whom he could delegate with confidence.

He returned from an overseas study tour in February 1964 full of plans for a new administrative structure. But he found that first instead he had to deal with discontent among his parish councillors at the methods currently being used. Clearly some of the older men could not cope with the pace of growth and change in the parish. While he was away the council canvassed the methods of accounting being used to administer the development projects. Fred Warner insisted that the accounts should simply report the monthly cash balances, while others were suggesting the use of professional accountants to give a larger view of the situation, but of course at considerably greater expense. Another member presented a letter to the September 1963 council and, unusually, it was recorded in the minutes. He asserted the fundraising campaigns had ‘not been very successful’. He remarked that:

it is disturbing to find that, despite opposition from the Wardens, the policy is to still go ahead with various major projects without a stabilised financial program. I also note a definite division between the Rector and the wardens.

That such strong remarks had been made in Shilton’s absence and then embodied in the minutes was indeed unfortunate, as the rector proceeded



Lance Shilton welcoming Colin Tunbridge to the Trinity staff, with Ron Herbert (next to Shilton) and Norm Allchin (left), in 1959. *Photo Don Gee.*

to remark in a sharply-worded reply at the council meeting in March 1964. He pointed out that there was no written record of dissent between himself and the wardens, that the church was not ‘in the red’, and that the accounting system for the various buildings was perfectly workable.

The criticisms obviously hurt, and no doubt the council was chastened by Shilton’s vigorous defence. The whole exchange was an uproar in the life of the parish: men settled in their conservative, small businessmen’s ways, were quite uncomfortable. The minutes barely hint at the range or intensity of the disturbance. The transition and growth from the days of Dillon and Delbridge’s one-man-bands was more than some of these men could take. Shilton’s insistence on keeping up the momentum of growth was proving too much for them. It was a change of generation, as Warner and other of the older men passed on their responsibilities to younger leaders such as Peter Smith and Skip Tonkin. Some critics dropped out. Fred Warner died on 23 May 1964. It was appropriate that, at Shilton’s suggestion, his memorial is not a building but a fund, to assist people in training for Christian service.

But it was a learning time for Shilton, as he sought to ensure that such distress and want of confidence in his ministry should not break out again. Involvement and power-sharing became even more important for him as a method of engaging and developing the commitment of leaders among the congregation. Already Shilton had called for an administrative assistant and perhaps a youth worker. He told the annual vestry on 24 April 1963 that ‘untrained, voluntary office help is often of little value’. Therefore he advised the vestry next year of his scheme, which he later claimed he had observed in action at a church in Baltimore, USA, which

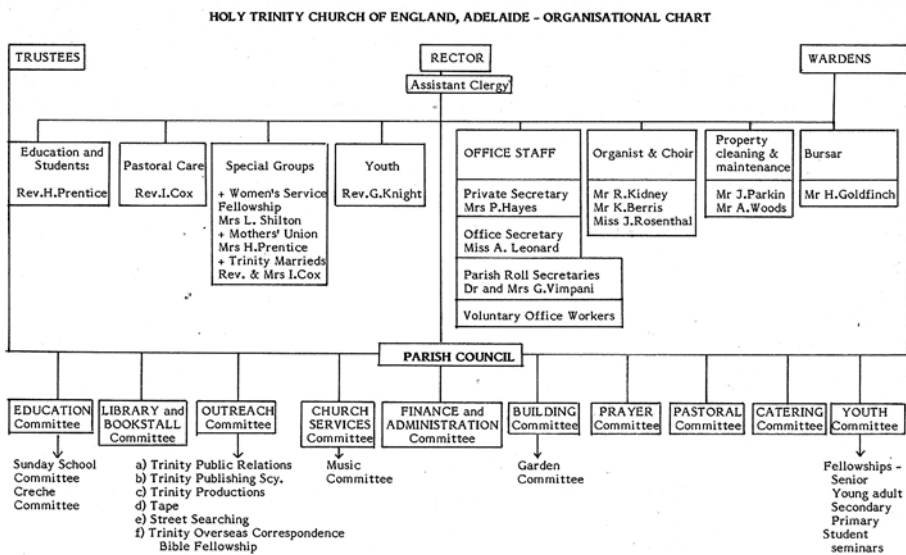
he had visited on that study tour. Aiming for delegation and participation to overcome the problem of the 'one man church', he planned a series of committees. He regarded them as committees of the parish council, although the legal basis was more complicated than that because of the continued reliance on the 1836 trust deed. The principal committees he proposed were a building committee, a finance committee, and an administration committee (although he was not sure about the last). He also wanted a catering committee and an education committee. He identified several other activities – the crèche, the parish library, the office, corporate prayer, outreach, and pastoral care – as all needing formal attention by responsible officials of the parish, probably each supported by a committee. Soon most of these areas acquired a committee with the exception of finance and administration, which were combined. This group became the key day-to-day committee which monitored income and expenditure against the budget agreed to by the annual vestry. It was Shilton's major and most successful administrative innovation. It meant that the parish council was no longer burdened with matters of detail such as costs, prices, wage variations, accounts for payment, and so on. These were now handled by 'F & A', which usually comprised the rector, all four wardens and a couple of other skilled managers or financiers.

Obviously, the paid staff would be associated with these various committees and activities in a way which reflected their skills and the significance of the tasks. The committees also extended the opportunities for members of the congregation to participate in shaping the policies and activities of the parish. Whether everyone would be willing to work as hard as Lance Shilton himself remained to be seen. Some of the committees became a burden to their members, for they lacked clearly defined roles and no way of dissolving themselves without appearing disloyal to the rector. Perhaps there should have been a greater emphasis on specific, limited tasks, rather than on the permanent model of mainly monthly meetings which Shilton used.

Nonetheless, the education committee for example, under the energetic leadership of a succession of eager young curates, was busily at work, as we have already seen, in the establishment of the Sunday afternoon training program. The building committee, which met in the late afternoons soon after work, was kept up to the mark in getting action on repairs and improvements: Shilton insisted on regular and prompt action, rather than the tendency to delay and procrastinate. Talk continued for several years about the idea of an administrator, until it dawned on even Shilton that he himself was the administrator, and that he would never tolerate a challenge to his authority by such an appointment. Secretaries, curates, lay committee members, all these, but no salaried administrator: that was the clear preference of the congregation. The money could be better spent on another clergyman who could strengthen the pastoral ministry. Shilton eventually admitted as much, but only after much debate and heart searching in parish council and in discussions with his wardens.

For the rest of Shilton's ministry this structure remained substantially in place, with each of these committees reporting regularly to parish council. At times this made attendance at council a weary, drawn-out burden, and yet more and more work was being achieved to meet the

growing needs of the congregation. A second publication, *Trinity News*, which appeared monthly, was inaugurated in 1964. Its role was to strengthen the transmission of information among members of the parish. It lasted till 1977, when only the quarterly *Trinity Times* was retained. Helen Caterer edited it, with pieces from the clergy or their wives, reprints of important sermons, and advertisements for the many forthcoming events. A ‘bursar’ was appointed in 1964 from within the congregation to control the parish’s accounting. Harry Goldfinch carried out this duty for many years, at a nominal fee, followed by Clive Meares and later, Barry McBride. They kept the increasingly complex Trinity accounts in good order and avoided reliance on an expensive city accounting firm, as had been the case for two or three years in the mid-1960s.



Each Committee is a sub-Committee of the Parish Council, and is comprised of one or more of the Clergy, one or more of the Wardens, Parish Councillors, and other members appointed because of gifts and experience, by the Rector and the Wardens.

Shilton’s administrative system inaugurated in 1964.

Curates wives, whom we have met guiding the crèche committee, also tended to be co-opted as successive president of the girls’ basketball (now called netball) club. It was founded in 1958, another effort to maintain interest and activity among the younger generation. They fielded three teams and competed in competitions over the next eight years. Participants had to be members of Trinity, the Sunday school or another church.¹⁵ Then there were marriage preparation courses. At the 1966 vestry the rector noted the conduct of three courses that year, and the continued growth of the parish library, recommenced in August 1964. He also spoke of the revision of the parish roll and the production of a prayer diary as further ways in which the congregation was being strengthened. Perhaps with an eye to the difficulties of the previous two years he remarked that ‘small mindedness, conservatism, sentimentalism and traditionalism, are the enemies of every church, but by the grace of God these things can be defeated’.



An unusual portrait of the congregation: church interior on the occasion of the Pioneer Service held during the 1962 Festival of Arts. The centre aisle was installed in 1930. Norm Allchin is on the left, Colin Tunbridge to the right. The Hardy gallery and the tablets recording the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles Creed can be seen at rear. *Photo Don Gee.*

New worship services

Another new venture of the late 1960s was the introduction of a weekday service to which the aged and the infirm might be brought. This required vigorous rostering of (mainly) women as drivers and co-ordination with nursing homes and caring relatives, administrative skills which Ena Reid and Alison Badcock soon proved they possessed in abundance. The service, held monthly on a Thursday morning, was always Holy Communion. All who participated as carers have been deeply moved at the sight of this congregation, many in wheelchairs, frail in body but still strong in spirit. Buses and cars were carefully manoeuvred in the grounds, people sat in alternate pews to permit ready distribution of the Sacrament, tea was provided afterwards in the hall. It represented an important extension of Trinity's pastoral ministry to many older people who still looked to the church but who could no longer attend without help. It remains a valued monthly service, under the name 'Friendship Service', more than forty years later.

So full had the eleven o'clock service become even after all the extensions of seating that a second service on Sunday mornings, at 9.30am, was inaugurated. During early 1968 the whole range of facilities for the service – Sunday school, crèche, choir, hospitality – were duplicated. The two services were identical. It meant an enormous extra effort, but it helped to redistribute attendances. It was an issue that would be revisited in future years more than once, as we shall see in the last chapter.



Another effort to exploit public events. These young members of the congregation dressed in period costume for the Pioneer Exhibit linked to the 1962 Festival of Arts. Courtesy Jenny Chapman.

Later in the 1970s, when prayer book revision, after a period of unsettling experimentation, had been completed, and *An Australian Prayer Book* (AAPB) became available, it was decided to retain the 1662 Prayer Book at 11.00am while adopting AAPB at 9.30am. The immediate effect was a marked shift to the earlier service and the creation of an 11.00 a.m. congregation of older, more conservative worshippers whose numbers fluctuated around eighty for the next two decades. Meanwhile real problems of accommodation emerged at 9.30 a.m., to the point where some were deterred from attending Trinity at all. Plainly it was to be a matter demanding further consideration in subsequent years, as we will see.

Trinity was, then, by 1970, not only a city church and a growing church, but a busy church. Participation no longer meant Sunday attendance only, with the occasional effort by the ladies. Long-term changes of attitude were being expressed in the parish as more members expected to be involved, and to take a lead in accordance with their abilities: not just as brickies but as bankers, not just as tea ladies but as teachers, not just as nominal Anglicans but as active, participating Christians.

Relations with the bishop and the diocese

Now that Trinity had become so large and so visible in the community of Adelaide, the way it related to the rest of the diocese and also to the community at large became matters of serious consideration. Everyone knew that Trinity was 'low church', or as Shilton took such care to explain,

an evangelical congregation. The special way in which the rector was appointed was sometimes the basis for talk that the parish was not part of the diocese, which was of course an uninformed view, as we have already seen. But as the congregation grew in strength, aspects of this problem of relations became controversial. The work at Kidman Park may have been undertaken by some at Trinity with an eye to reproducing an evangelical congregation, and the way the bishop terminated the arrangement left some feeling sore. There was some suggestion that others in the diocese feared Trinity would ‘steal’ their members through the Billy Graham Crusade in 1959. Shilton sought to be scrupulous in his handling of enquiries from the crusade, always inviting people referred to Trinity to consider their local Anglican church. However, the suspicion of a successful and different church remained even if all the evidence showed that ‘sheep stealing’ of Anglicans was little more than a hostile myth.



Rector and churchwardens, 1964: (l. to r.) Peter Smith, Skip Tonkin, Lance Shilton, Bob Roberts, Arthur Mack. *Photo Don Gee.*

The question of licensing curates also presented difficulties. Colin Tunbridge and Ted Watkins, both Trinity members from early childhood, were encouraged by Graham Delbridge to study towards ordination. They both proceeded in 1957 to Moore College in Sydney for that purpose. Watkins had been accepted by the diocese of Adelaide as a candidate, and the diocese paid his fees at Moore. Colin’s sister Dorothy understands that Reed, while administrator of the diocese while the see was vacant, approved of this plan.¹⁶ Tunbridge, however, funded his own studies. Both received financial aid from the Men’s Society at Trinity. When they both returned to Adelaide on completion of their training, Bishop Reed agreed in 1959 to license Colin Tunbridge as an assistant to Shilton, while Watkins went

to St Augustine's, Unley to serve under Reginald Sorby Adams, a former CMS missionary. Unfortunately, Reed went on to remark to the Shilton: 'It would be regrettable for men to be ordained and serve curacies in this Diocese and then be unable to be licensed by me to other churches because of their views on ceremonial matters.' He explained to Tunbridge that he should not expect permanent work in the diocese because the 'general standard of Churchmanship differs from that in Sydney'. He instanced the eastward position in celebrating Holy Communion, the presence of cross and candles on the altar, the wearing of coloured stoles and eucharistic



Rectory and C.B Howard building, looking SE towards the city. Offers of 'parking' are prophetic of problems in following decades. The whole area between Trinity and Hindley Street was redeveloped by the mid-1990s. *Photo Don Gee*

were sent to St. John's College, Morpeth NSW. Its moderate Catholic ethos reflected the predominant tone of the diocese, and Bishop Reed was clearly not about to accept a permanent diversification of that predominance, even if he did send some men (eg Ralph Holden) to Ridley College in Melbourne. At Trinity, however, this was seen as a grievance, as the parish council remarked in February 1961:

They view seriously the unwillingness of the Diocese to accept candidates from this church, and wish to say ... that they will not agree to any increased financial commitment to the Diocese.

This was because it meant Trinity men must leave Adelaide permanently for training and appointment or do damage to their convictions.

vestments: in none of these matters could he tolerate the idea of a new incumbent changing existing parish practices. Shilton and Tunbridge had no option but to accept this warning and the limitation it imposed: Tunbridge was, after all, expecting to proceed from Trinity to missionary service. The same limitation was imposed by Bishop Reed on all the succeeding curates: in plain terms they would not be invited to stay in the diocese after completing their time at Trinity.

What made it worse was that even more men in the parish began to offer for training towards ordination, beginning with Ian Cox and Kevin Giles. But the bishop of Adelaide would only accept them as ordination candidates, and so pay for their training, if they agreed to be trained at a college nominated by the bishop. At this stage most candidates

Meanwhile the parish was still expected to pay its diocesan assessments, which included an amount to support theological training, from which the parish could expect no benefit at all. Shilton drove the point home the same month when he declined an invitation from the bishop to serve on the organising committee to raise funds for the new St Barnabas College, the theological college being established in Adelaide which was opened in 1965: ‘it would be inconsistent of me’.



The folding team, ca 1970. Photo Don Gee

Reed and Shilton exchanged strong letters in March and again in October 1961, which reveal the toughness of the two men. The sticking point remained: Trinity’s leaders believed that evangelical convictions could not be brought to bear to challenge or interact with the existing traditions of the diocese. Shilton robustly asserted that these traditions lacked legal or biblical authority. Bishop Reed simply ignored such invitations to debate. He made his views on the requirements for ordination public in the *Adelaide Church Guardian* in October that year, assuring Shilton privately that these remarks were in no way a criticism of Trinity, but a general attempt to make clear his concern to avoid controversy and division. It was no wonder that Shilton gave sermons on ‘Where we stand’ already quoted and reiterated the commitment of the parish to the evangelical tradition at the 1961 vestry meeting, as we have already seen. In October that year he remarked in *Trinity Times*:

The evangelical Christian is not an obscurantist refusing to move with the current ecclesiastical tradition, but one who believes in the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures and as enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer should be maintained with the same tenacity of purpose which led the Reformers into suffering and death.

These were strong words. They arose out of deep disappointment and anger. Shilton perceived that the bishop and the diocese were quite deliberately seeking to frustrate the expanding and successful ministry at Trinity, or at least to contain its impact as far as possible.

To be fair, there was another side to the argument. Perhaps Bishop Reed gave no opportunity for men to consider whether or not they would accept his conditions, but many young evangelical clergy in the 1950s and 1960s were exceedingly prickly about ceremonial matters. Nor was Reed completely hostile: during his episcopate he ordained and licensed men who were evangelicals. Many clergy in the diocese, too, readily recalled the similar constraints imposed, so it seemed, on young men of Anglo-Catholic outlook who sought ordination in the diocese of Sydney: it was Moore College or departure. That rankled too, even if Shilton claimed the cases were legally different.

Essentially the matter remained at that impasse. Men from Trinity hoping to serve in the Anglican ministry negotiated with more sympathetic dioceses, notably Sydney and Melbourne. The rector brought in men already ordained as priests to serve as his curates for a few years and then sent them off again; and the parish council continued to grumble about the growing amounts Trinity contributed to such an unsympathetic diocese. On the other hand, some withdrew from Trinity because they found themselves more at home with a more tolerant moderate Anglicanism than with the increasingly clear enunciation of evangelical Christianity this struggle evoked.

Such a situation helped to create confusion and suspicion elsewhere in the diocese. While Shilton felt he was ‘faced by a brick wall’, a fearful



A reunion of rectors' wives with Lance Shilton: (from left) Iris Fulford, Doris Dillon, Joan Shilton, Audrey Delbridge. Photo Don Gee ca 1970

and defensive attitude that was unwilling to face criticism or theological truth, no doubt others in the diocese felt threatened by Trinity's success and wondered why Trinity rejected the products preferred by the bishop. Why should Trinity insist on being so different? The underlying theological issues were understood only by a few, although surely Bishop Reed must be included in that group. But it must be emphasised that Reed and Shilton maintained a courteous recognition of each other's conviction and a friendly personal relationship. To most Adelaide Anglicans, brought up on an easy comprehensiveness, or on an exclusive Anglo-Catholicism, it did not make sense: it was Trinity's fault. All that Shilton could do was to be meticulous about procedures such as contacts with other clergy, while at the same time insisting on the rights of his parish to minister in the hospitals, campuses and meeting places of Adelaide. He was well liked and respected by many Anglican clergy. Within the limits he set himself, he supported diocesan activities. But the tension has remained unresolved from that time onwards. It is moderated by tactful tolerance on the part of both parties, to which there could in the future be found limits. It is to be hoped, however, that a lasting and theologically durable solution can be found. It is an issue to which later chapters will return.

Adelaide's Christian spokesman

Turning from these problems with the diocese to Trinity's links with the community of Adelaide at large, the narrative largely focuses on Lance Shilton. He was the principal spokesman, mainly because of his status as rector. Sometimes others joined in the debates, for example John Court, clinical psychologist and academic, on the question of homosexuality, or Brian Dickey, an academic historian, on the question of censorship. Occasionally the Mothers' Union, largely at this point comprised of mothers with young children, took up the challenge. In June 1972 they heard three of their members, Eleanor Cabrera, Janet Dickey and Dorothy Prentice, talk about issues arising from the emerging 'women's liberation' movement. All three sought to emphasise what was positive about the emerging self-consciousness of women in the community seeking independent voice and power. But they also reiterated their commitment, and that of the Mothers' Union, to the importance of marriage and the family. They found many of the 'Women's Lib' claims overblown and inconsistent with Christian teaching.¹⁷

But usually it was Lance Shilton who examined these public issues. He never passed by opportunities to publicise the existence of his church and to speak to the press. Thus the commemorative and special services, as well as the guest services, were a continuing feature of the church's program. In addition, assisted by Helen Caterer, Shilton made himself available for the media, answering their questions and presenting a Christian comment on matters of public discussion whenever they asked. In addition, from 1957 he took up opportunities to speak regularly on 5DN, in the closing religious 'Meditations'. In the later 1960s he began writing a column called 'Guideline' for the *Advertiser* after the Billy Graham syndicated material lost its local relevance.

As with his sermons, these public presentations were forthright and purposeful, confident in their application of Christianity to complex ethical

questions. They were prepared with great care, after a search for silence and time to pray and think about the particular point to be made. Pinky's Flat, on the opposite side of the Torrens River to Trinity, was a favourite venue for their preparation.

Shilton often resorted to an informed use of the principle of utility to undergird his Christian claims. He would assert that it was good for the community that drink and gambling be curbed, that there was an excess of benefit over harm in not making divorce more accessible, that easier censorship harmed the community. These views, presented confidently and without the qualifications of the scholar, gained wide attention, indeed notoriety, even if they left more thoughtful and sensitive members of his own congregation uneasy at the potential for inconsistency. Was Shilton merely protecting the status quo of a conservative-minded, pompous and not very Christian community in some of his statements? Did his appeal to social utility weaken claims about the authority of the Bible in all circumstances? What if his assessment of benefits and losses could be shown to be wrong? While such puzzles occasionally disturbed the thoughts of a few, for the most part his congregation welcomed his lead. To them, his willingness to attempt authoritative statements on behalf of Christianity was proper and necessary in a society whose values were perceived to be less and less Christian. It pointed to the strength and commitment of Trinity; by implication the silence of the Anglican cathedral and the bishop seemed inadequate, even pusillanimous. To be fair, while Reed did muzzle the social questions committee and made few public statements on current social issues unless they directly affected the diocese, this arose from his firm conviction that such activities were not part of his role as bishop. In addition, many members of other Protestant churches supported Shilton. To them he was enunciating shared Protestant attitudes well-entrenched in the society of South Australia, which they too feared were under siege.

One outcome was a busy appointment diary and a substantial correspondence file. Ministry in his own parish, especially at Easter and Christmas, became central. To some extent radio and press pieces replaced the public appearances outside the parish, for he did not wish to be completely silenced in the larger world.

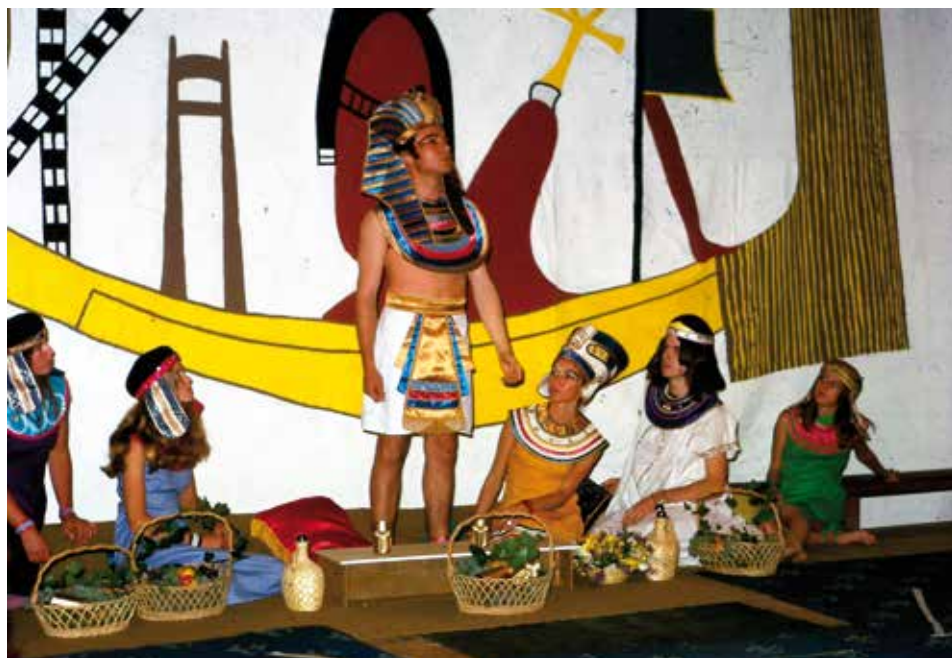
Within the larger sphere of evangelical Christianity, the parish welcomed the rising status of their rector. He led the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, he was a vice president of CMS and its state president, he was invited to attend and speak at the Congress on Evangelism convened at Berlin in 1966 by the Billy Graham organisation. He wrote to the parish after that gathering:

It is not that anything new was said, but rather a re-emphasis upon the simple fundamentals of the Christian faith so easily neglected and the great need of making it known to all the peoples of the world ... I trust that we at Holy Trinity will see before us a great vision of the world in need of the Gospel, and because of that vision, our conviction for the need to make this Gospel known locally will be reinforced.¹⁸

Such remarks suggest much of the way Shilton integrated his own public activities with the life of the parish, seeing it all as a large venture in



Clergy staff 1973: (l. to r.) Graham Knight, Hugh Prentice, Lance Shilton, Ian Cox.
Photo Don Gee.



1972 Festival of Arts production, 'Dream of Kings'. Euan Bidgood appears as Tutankhamen.
Courtesy Jenny Chapman.

presenting the Gospel in which he and the members of his congregation were jointly involved. That is why in that same letter he called on 'lay members' to play a more active part in evangelism, teaching and pastoral care in the church.

By the late 1960s we find this search for relevance in the community leading to elaborate presentations at the time of the biennial Adelaide Festival of Arts: relics of the pioneers, archeological displays from the lands of the Bible, a dramatic musical 'God So Loved' using the choir, actors from the congregation, light and sound. The four performances were supported by the sale of recordings and the provision of supper.

The obvious and substantial gap in this development of Christian views on public issues was total silence on the Vietnam War. Logically it was as much a moral issue as any of the others upon which Shilton spoke so confidently. But not one sermon nor any press releases from Shilton addressed that deeply hurtful war or the divisive protests against it. Probably most of the congregation silently if unenthusiastically accepted the government's commitment of troops to South Vietnam. There were some who did not, though never many. They were undecided and unwilling to embarrass the rest of the congregation with their views. The one or two tentative comments by a curate from the pulpit on the war aroused so much vehement condemnation they were never repeated. Therefore the issue was ignored. Shilton focused the congregation's attention on questions on which he and his parishioners could readily agree.

The rector was preaching on 'The Challenge of Agnosticism' in 1967 and 'How can the Church mind its own business?' a little later when the ALP government was canvassing the introduction of TAB betting facilities, which Shilton vigorously opposed. Here were forceful confrontations with the weaknesses of agnosticism, based on the assertion that God has revealed Himself in history in Jesus, and in personal experience. Matched with that was the clear claim that the people of God are called to declare God's values to the world and especially to seek to protect people, especially the young and the vulnerable, from the harm of wrong policies and practices.

The climax of this abrasive and assertive confrontation with the extending secularisation of Adelaide life came with the mounting in Australia during 1970–71 of the review *Oh, Calcutta!* It contained full frontal nudity and representations of sexual congress: though he had not viewed it, Shilton was appalled by all that he heard about it. He lobbied in public and private to have the play banned in South Australia. He widely publicised his own abhorrence to the sensationalism and degradation which he judged to be in the play, and he encouraged others to do likewise. He presented a petition with over 15 000 signatures against the play to the state parliament in April 1971. He convened a 'Moral Action Committee' to rally people against this and similar trends. In response, people demonstrated outside the church on Sunday nights, hostile to such criticisms of their claim to enjoy life unfettered by wowsers. Shilton confidently argued his case with them on the footpath, watched by the excited representatives of the media, always willing to report community confrontations. Shilton followed this up with a strong piece in the *Sunday Mail*, 'Call Us Wowsers' that reasserted the right of those concerned with moral standards to make

their voice heard against the strident claims of libertarians such as Max Harris, bookseller, litterateur and proponent of a free society.¹⁹ He then published *No No Calcutta*, a hard-hitting book putting the case against the play, written by a number of people, including John Court who drew on evidence of the psychological effects of pornography on ordinary people.

While the government did not ban the review, it was never put on in Adelaide, because of a successful court case which resulted in an injunction preventing its performance in South Australia. But the call to arms Shilton had so boldly launched, with the vigorous support of Helen Caterer and John Court, gained enough momentum to be institutionalised in the 'Festival of Light' by 1973. This group had significant but not complete support in the Trinity parish. In its early years it gained widely distributed support among many other Christians in Adelaide who wished to resist what they believed was the collapse of Christian moral standards in society at large. Some of its later stridency and inflexible conservatism lost the organisation much of its support within the Trinity congregation. Opposition for its own sake had few attractions, while there were many in the congregation who sought to make a measured if difficult assessment of the gains and losses of the social changes of the 1970s. Not all was as bad as the imported spokesman of the Festival of Light claimed; not all change was wrong; it wasn't always feasible to impose 'Christian standards' by law alone; not all government action was atheistic; not all applications of medicine to human circumstances were questionable.

Shilton's departure

One immediate result was apparent: these controversies were wearing on everybody. There was a feeling during 1971 or even earlier that the moral crusades the rector seemed ever willing to undertake were distracting him from pastoring his congregation. His trustees knew there were undercurrents of frustration and distaste in the parish at the rector's frequent public statements. They did their best to support him within the congregation. In addition they also were willing to go in deputation to the newspapers when they felt Shilton had been unfairly reported. They were concerned, however, that the man was too willing, taking on too much. They were relieved when the Festival of Light gained organisational strength sufficient to allow Shilton to get out of the limelight a little.

The continuing use of special services distracted and annoyed some members of the congregation. Some were even saying that Shilton had lost his capacity to minister effectively to the Trinity congregation. He himself, when asked: 'did you stay too long?' admitted that in the last five years of his time at Trinity (that is from about 1968), he was restless, fearing that he might be churning out the same thing, worried that he was over-attentive to social issues. To some extent this admission was probably wisdom after the event, but it is consistent with the evolving character of his ministry in those years, and the effect it was having among the congregation. There was undoubtedly disaffection and a tendency to critical gossip. The congregation was in danger of losing its coherence and self-confidence.

Of course, as Shilton later put it to me, 'Anglican parsons did not then directly apply for jobs', nor could parishes withdraw tenure. People

continued on loyally amid the noise of controversy and the pattern of the weekly ministry, although that involved a succession of experimental services as the Anglican Church in Australia worked its way towards a new prayer book. Some of the experiments had little to commend them. Quietly the trustees began to give thought to the sort of successor they should be looking for: someone who would complement the ministry Shilton had exercised by developing greater empathy with the people in the congregation. They knew that in effect many were either dissatisfied or simply afraid of the eminence of their rector. No one was going to push Lance Shilton out, least of all the trustees, who had deep love for the man who served the parish with such dedication. But the invitation to Lance Shilton to become Dean of Sydney was one they urged him to accept, because it would permit him to exploit to the full his experience and skills in evangelism, apologetics and administration to the full. This decision was announced to the annual vestry on 17 April 1973. Skip Tonkin spoke for the congregation when he remarked:

As Rector of Holy Trinity [Lance Shilton] has combined leadership, spirituality, scholarship, application, consistency, pugnacity and wilfulness, and he has generated a great affection among us all.

These were not conventional words of thanks: they were from the heart. None would gainsay them, even those who felt it was a time for change. The achievements of the parish as an evangelical congregation under Shilton had been enormous.

Within a few weeks, arrangements were in hand for the appointment of Paul Barnett to succeed Lance Shilton. At two crowded services on 25 November 1973 Shilton preached on 'Faith, Hope and Love' to a city farewell service and then he had his 'Last Say' the same evening to the Trinity congregation. These two sermons reiterated his concern for the strategic role of the parish in the Adelaide community as a platform for the presentation of evangelical Christianity. He urged the congregation to accept the need for delegation or the sharing of burdens; but he balanced this by calling for authoritative, though not authoritarian, leadership. He called for peace with God and continued prayer; he called for the presentation of the 'whole counsel of God', including its application to society; he emphasised the need for loyalty and forgiveness within the congregation. It was a comprehensive charge to the congregation on an emotional occasion.

The wardens, Peter Smith and Phil Coward, had the duty at the end of the service of reading and presenting to Lancelot Rupert Shilton the illuminated farewell address from the congregation. It was a fervent and thankful review of the powerful ministry Shilton had exercised as rector of Trinity since 1957. They remarked several times on his vision, dedication, energy and leadership. They rejoiced in his ministry of evangelism. They acknowledged how much the parish had got done under his forceful leadership, but even more they emphasised how much the parish had learnt about the reality of Christianity in day-to-day experiences. True, the Address also contained references to the wiser, more mature, somewhat less overwhelming man Shilton had become, one who had gained a growing understanding of people, especially those with whom he had to work. Nor did they forbear to warn him that he could not run at the same pace

in Sydney as he had at Trinity. Many in the congregation smiled in assent at that friendly exhortation. But they all rejoiced at the work Shilton had done in developing Trinity into a self-confident evangelical congregation. They looked forward eagerly to the ministry of their new pastor.

- 1 Lance Shilton's own account of his years in Adelaide is in his autobiography, *Speaking Out: a life in urban ministry*, Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, Sydney, 1997, chs 7–11.
- 2 Parish Council, minutes, 10 Dec 1963.
- 3 *Adelaide Church Guardian*, Aug 1958.
- 4 Parish Council, minutes, 22 Feb 1966.
- 5 J.E. Dodds & Sons to Trinity Church, 29 Jan 1969; Leith Jacobs Organ Builder to Ray Kidney, 31 Jul 1985; Brian Wheatley to Brian Dickey 27 Jan 2011 (Wheatley was an organist and member of Parish council involved in the investigations).
- 6 *Sunday Mail* 30 Apr 1980.
- 7 Minutes of Crèche Committee, 18 Sep 1964, Green folder of minutes of Crèche Committee, 1964–ca2003. .
- 8 Finance & Administration Committee, minutes, 15 Dec 1964.
- 9 *Trinity Times* May 1965
- 10 Roll books and roster sheets with minutes.
- 11 Minutes of Crèche Committee, 7 May 1968.
- 12 *Trinity Times*, Oct 1967.
- 13 I was privileged to oversee the preparation and deposit of these files after Lance Shilton's death into the Trinity record group at SLSA.
- 14 Parish Council, minutes, 22 Aug 1967.
- 15 Trinity Girls' Basketball Club, minute books and other records, 1958–1966, SRG 94/2A unlisted.
- 16 Dorothy Tunbridge to Brian Dickey, 30 May 1988.
- 17 Eleanor Cabrera, Janet Dickey & Dorothy Prentice, 'A look at Women's Liberation', Jun 1972. (Copy held by Janet Dickey). Eleanor Cabrera was a nursing sister, Janet Dickey a computer scientist and Dorothy Prentice, president of the Trinity MU, was a medical practitioner.
- 18 *Trinity Times*, Feb 1969.
- 19 21 Mar 1971.