

Body Life

1973–1979

There was no public discussion about choosing Shilton's successor. The trustees no longer thought it appropriate to canvass such matters openly. They were looking for 'someone who would be complementary', who was 'less managerial', who would have 'more empathy with people in the congregation'. Lance Shilton himself was active in the search, which concluded in April 1973 with agreement that Paul Barnett be appointed. Within a month, the approval of the governor, the formal acceptance from Barnett, and the license from the archbishop, had all been obtained, but the last only after Archbishop Reed

had quite correctly insisted the churchwardens and trustees seek his approval for the rector to reside outside the parish. The process was swift and non-controversial, a style the trustees had learnt under Shilton's tutelage. He had advised the trustees in 1964, after distressing divisions in vestry meetings that year, that the vestry should be excluded from the consultations surrounding the selection of a rector.

Because the Barnetts were concerned for their children living in the North Terrace rectory, a house was purchased in Prospect, which has remained the rectory since then. The purchase was funded in part by selling an existing house (the curate would move into what was now labeled the 'Old Rectory'), by consuming the building fund credit, and by raising a



Paul and Anita Barnett (with Peter Smith behind) on the occasion of his induction, 20 December 1973.

Photo Don Gee.

loan of about \$5000, which was soon paid off. He was inducted on 20 December 1973 by Archbishop Reed supported by a number of clergy from the diocese.

The move of the rectory family to Prospect reinforced the changing role of the rector's wife at Trinity which Joan Shilton had already set in train. After the Shiltons returned home from their major overseas tour in 1964, she had consciously sought more time to develop her own interests. She completed a degree at the University of Adelaide, and steadily passed leadership of parish women's groups to the wives of successive curates. Anita Barnett likewise had a very large involvement in Trinity during her years there, but consistent with her character it was 'behind the scenes' and not 'up front'. She opened the Prospect house weekly to parishioners for dessert and coffee nights in order to generate a deeper sense of community; she entertained a constant stream of visiting clergy who stayed at the rectory – John Stott (three times), Leon Morris, Graham Delbridge, Peter Jensen, Philip Jensen, John Reid among others; she pastored the curates' wives and the two 'lady workers', Sue Lewis and Jill Phillips. There were other more intimate contributions too that helped sustain members of the parish in times of personal crisis.¹

This refocussing was part of a larger shift in community expectations for women. The wives of clergy were, more and more, thought entitled to live their own lives without becoming unpaid almost full-time parish servants. In particular this more domestic model Anita Barnett pursued was largely imitated by her two successors at Prospect, Dorothy Piper and Sue Harrington

Paul Barnett, rector

Paul Barnett was aged thirty-six, and married to Anita; they had four young children. Barnett had trained at Moore College after working as a quantity surveyor in the 1950s. Ordained in 1963, he lectured full-time at Moore College for the next four years before being appointed rector of St Barnabas, Broadway, in 1967, where he had previously assisted on Sundays. He was also the part-time Director of Inner City Parishes, a coordinating role with other similar parishes, and had just completed an MA at Macquarie University. His experience was therefore as a biblical teacher and scholar, and with a vigorous city church oriented towards students. Now he was rector of an entirely different city church, where the shadow of his predecessor stretched long.



Paul Barnett. *Photo Don Gee.*

The man was different: so were the times. Many in the congregation had openly expressed the hope that they would gain a pastor who would concentrate on the needs of the people in the congregation and not worry

about major public statements. Already, Paul Barnett's insistence that he and his family live off the city site, in the privacy of suburban life, signalled his concern for his own family to be able to escape the incessant demands of the media and stray callers which had been such a part of the life of the rector of Holy Trinity. Moreover, first impressions were of a man of great concern and sensitivity.

Pastoring a city congregation

The concern was genuine. As the Barnetts set about meeting their parishioners they quickly discovered that not many in the large Trinity congregation had much idea of the identity of others in it. This was a matter of great concern for Barnett. While he was content to accept the structure of committee government, and especially the crucial work of the Finance and Administration Committee, he would not let this facelessness remain.

He turned to the concept of home Bible studies. There were already a number of groups scattered about the suburbs loosely linked with Trinity. He now saw a comprehensive structure of such groups as a way of creating a more caring and pastorally alert congregation which would be able to escape from the legacy of Shilton's time, when troubled parishioners turned only and always to the rector.

Ian Cox, one of the curates, was tasked to develop the scheme in 1974. The first phase was to be a specific period in mid-year, in which clergy would visit a series of homes in rotation to give the program a start. It was a highly centralised concept, imposed on the congregation, which was told which group was geographically appropriate for each family. The syllabus was laid down by the rector and all coordinated by the clergy.

The scheme did not stick: it was too fast, too soon, too centralised. Another attempt, in 1975, to create 'area groups' for pastoral care, likewise based on fixed geographical arrangements, was similarly unsuccessful. What people wanted, and what they gradually got after some years of experimentation, was centralised leadership training and briefing, along with encouragement to form Bible study groups where these seemed most relevant. There should be no compulsion, especially to exercise pastoral care. Nonetheless, using the study series *In the Spirit of Love* which had been produced to support the Leighton Ford Crusade in 1978, Peter Brain and Paul Barnett were able to show many people how home Bible studies could have a significant and permanent role in providing mutual support. By 1979 there were twenty-three groups operating, involving between 200 and 300 people on a regular basis. It was to be an important base upon which much was built in the 1980s. Home groups, alongside groups still gathering on the property for Bible study, had become a permanent part of the life of Trinity.

Mutual responsibility

Integral to this emphasis on home Bible studies was Barnett's constant emphasis from the pulpit on the mutual responsibility of all members of the body of Christ to minister to one another. The key passages in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4, about life in the body of Christ, often featured. Just as the congregation had been anxiously looking for encouragement and recognition of their gifts and identities, so

now Barnett gave them clear Biblical teaching and authority. For some in the Trinity congregation it was no new discovery, for like him they had listened closely to Donald Robinson, vice-principal of Moore College and read the arguments of Howard Marshall over the previous fifteen years. New or old, this emphasis on mutual exercise of gifts was a release from authoritarian attitudes. People were now actively encouraged to minister to one another, to share burdens, to support one another in times of grief or challenge. Teaching was clearly not the prerogative of the rector alone, now that so many study groups were operating.

This development of 'body life', the popular phrase to refer to this mutually sharing experience in the church, the body of Christ, was profoundly satisfying to many members of the Trinity congregation. They were being given theologically significant roles within the life of the church beyond sitting in a pew on Sundays or writing a cheque. What is more, it went hand in hand with the process of reconsidering the role of ministers. Barnett was quite clear that Ephesians 4 spoke of their role as equipping the saints for the work of ministry. These pastor-teachers should not expect to do it all themselves; rather the Bible taught a phased and delegated approach in which all were expected to play their parts. It fitted well with the perceptions many in the congregation had about the need to escape from the centralised style of the previous rectors.

Moreover, these moves at Trinity in the mid-1970s were pace-setting, at least within the Anglican Church. Here was lay participation, lay leadership in key roles of teaching and pastoring. Here was an emphasis on mutuality and responsibility. Here was the clergyman becoming pastor among pastors, minister among many ministers. By the 1980s, everyone was doing it. Roman Catholic parish priests were learning the art of delegation and the value of parish barbecues just as quickly as their evangelical Anglican colleagues. Many Uniting Church parishes had been doing the same thing for years. Trinity's strength and self-confidence, combined with Barnett's clear thinking, had led the congregation to an early and successful application of this reality of the body of Christ.

At another level, the congregation experienced this same emphasis on responsibility and trust as Barnett began to develop his own leadership style. He sought to define goals for the parish at the annual vestry meetings. In 1974 he proposed 'that through us God's character will be accurately and honourably made known'. He went on to exhort the parish to

know God's character and ... to express his character in their lives. Christian teaching and exhortation, therefore, must always be a vital part of the life of Christians and churches so that there can be growth toward Christian maturity.

He required the 1974–5 parish councillors to participate in the committee work of the parish as recognition of their leadership role. By the 1975 vestry he could signal objectives for the parish more clearly. There would be training for expansion, with an emphasis on family life, the promotion of friendship and a sense of being the family of God. Not only in the thrust of these goals, but in their clarity and very enunciation, Barnett was developing a more informed, involved and committed congregation.

One result that could be observed was the quiet disappearance of

some worshippers for whom this more demanding style of Christian life was too much, for whom the loss of Shilton's public visibility and strong leadership was a disappointment. Perhaps some had been attracted in the 1960s to Trinity as a 'leading city church'. Now that its emphasis was on mutual ministry, involving some degree of personal exposure, some people decided to go elsewhere. There was, for this reason and perhaps others, a decline from the high point of attendances under Shilton: the rounded figure for communicants fell from 650 (the late 1960s figure) to 550 by 1978. It should be noted, however, that a similar decline occurred in many Adelaide churches during the 1970s.

Trinity Church Trust Inc.

Supporting the rector and the congregation, the trustees carefully continued the task of managing their investments and properties, and providing counsel for the wardens and rector, with whom they met twice yearly. In 1972 they were quite clear that they should firmly reject the invitation to adopt the Church of England Property Act and the Diocesan Model Trust Deed introduced that year. They had no intention of yielding their independence and their control over the evangelical tradition they wished to promote. Two years later they strengthened their defences by incorporating as Trinity Church Trust Incorporated. It also saved tiresome legal changes and expense each time a trustee died or retired. Their objects were to be custodian trustees 'for the purposes of the trust deed'. The documents of 1836 and 1837 were to remain the constitutive texts of the congregation's legal identity.

In 1977 the trustees were able to realise on a bequest which came to them: the Swan estate property yielded \$53 000, which they added to their gradually growing base from the 1920s. By 1988 their investment capital totalled over \$100 000; in addition they owned four houses, which the congregation had committed to their charge, plus the original city acre and its buildings. They steadily placed a proportion of their annual income aside, not only as protection against future inflation, but also in order to allow Trinity to react to new opportunities or major maintenance tasks in refurbishing the church building.

They even resolved in 1978 to support the writing of a history of the congregation which would include reference to 'the Church's evangelical heritage right from the formation of the Trust'. It was to be done in fifteen to twenty pages!² I have found such a limitation impossible, but otherwise I have endeavoured to discharge that call. Skip Tonkin, Peter Smith and Max Hart, the trustees during the 1980s, were firm in their commitment to that evangelical heritage. Their support, in reserve behind the rector, wardens and vestry, remained a major strength, much appreciated by the congregation.

Staff roles redefined

Another result of Barnett's clear thinking was a reconsideration of the roles of the staff team. While Lance Shilton had expanded the staff to four clergy, there was no clear differentiation of roles: the curates were very much his ordained assistants, who acted under his close supervision, learning on the job. Paul Barnett sought to address important specific

areas of ministry which concerned him in the congregation. Members of the pastoral team could then be given fairly comprehensive responsibility for a particular area of action. We have already seen how Ian Cox, and a succession of subsequent assistant clergy such as Boak Jobbins, was given responsibility for preparing the study booklets and developing the home Bible study movement. Peter Brain worked with great effect in bringing pastoral encouragement to parishioners, making it possible for Barnett to address the more acute personal problems which affected his congregation, as they did all Christian congregations. A register recording visits to members of the congregation resident in aged care facilities or shut-in at home makes the point. Over twenty years (1977–1996) the register lists each person visited, usually monthly, until, sadly one by one they are ruled out, marking their death. The visiting duties were spread among the curates, while later, the lady worker Sue Lewis, followed by Jill Phillips, and Max Hart, shouldered much of the task. No doubt such visits occurred before this register was begun, and of course they continue with great diligence ever since. It is the devoted regularity of the visits and their careful record to ensure no one missed out which was important.³

Youth work and the evening service

Soon after his arrival, Barnett began to ask himself ‘where are the young people of the Trinity families?’⁴ They were not obvious in the congregation; they were even less obvious in exercising leadership in the youth work which did exist. There was a structure on paper, but when put to the test it was a different matter. When it came to running a youth camp, the leaders had to be found from other congregations and denominations. To rectify this weakness, which could obviously have significant long-term implications, in 1974 he charged John Paterson, his most recently appointed curate, to develop structures of encouragement and training for the youth of the parish. The focus was to shift somewhat, from ministering to students and others attracted to this ‘city church’, to the children of the congregation.

John Paterson did a fine job in organising a more comprehensive range of youth camps and other activities, including a real form of participation in decision-making among the youth. On his departure in 1977, Barnett went even further. He gained the appointment of Tim Hawkins, trained at Moore College specifically as a youth worker. Hawkins was not ordained. He vigorously set about identifying himself with the teenagers of the parish – by dress, speech and activities. Building on Paterson’s foundations, he expanded the range of activities for young people and so strengthened their sense of group identity and hopefully their sense of worth within the congregation at large. In due course they would become the leaders of the next generation in the congregation.

Concurrently, Barnett recognised that the evening congregation was weakening. The service was still largely Evensong from the *Book of Common Prayer*, with some experimental services from time to time. The significance of the service as the opportunity for adult Christians from other congregations around Adelaide to come to hear the authoritative pronouncements of the rector of Holy Trinity was fading. A vigorous report from Paterson to parish council in June 1975 urged that the form of the

service shift away from chants, anthems and formal prayers towards a more informal pattern of worship. The rector responded cautiously, reasserting his control over the forms of public worship. He agreed to the holding of occasional special, i.e. non-liturgical, services based on *Sunday Services Revised*, which was currently the authorised experimental service. He also allowed the clergy to use ‘prepared and checked prayers’ offered by members of the congregation, role plays, dramatic readings or the like. The choir however, would be retained. It was a tight response which would rapidly be overtaken by the changing expectations of the evening congregation.

Another response aimed at more effective congregational participation was the introduction of ‘Trinity Songs’ by the end of the year as an alternative source of congregational singing to the *Anglican Hymn Book* which had been in use for a decade. This collection was an in-house collation of chorus-style material best sung to the accompaniment of guitar and lead singer. In addition, by the end of 1976, the clergy decided to cease standing at the door at the end of the evening service, and instead to move about informally after the service among the congregation within the body of the church. This, they hoped, would develop a sense of social interaction and sharing. About this time, too, Barnett asked the choir to lay aside their robes in recognition that they were not a special class apart from the rest of the congregation, even though they stood at the front to lead in worship through singing. Not all the choir members were pleased at this apparent loss of status and identity. Barnett was of course right to fear a formalistic claim to special privilege among the choir: it has always been a problem with choirs. Certainly, too, formality was the problem in the evening service. Nonetheless, the loss of morale among the choir led Barnett’s successor to allow the return of robes for the two morning services. The problem of special status remained for a bit longer, but only in the minds of a few. Robes had completely gone by the turn of the twenty-first century.

Barnett vigorously resisted the criticism that moves towards greater informality were creating a ‘non-conformist’ atmosphere in the services at Trinity. He insisted at parish council that it would be pastoral neglect to conduct a form of service which ignored the young adults present at the evening service. They should not be driven out to the sects by an over-rigorous insistence on past practices.⁵

Even greater rapport was achieved with the worshippers of this congregation by Robert Forsyth, who joined the staff as a curate in 1978. As a student he had been a Sydney University Evangelical Union leader and an anti-war protester. He was articulate and pragmatic. What is more, he soon became involved in a Sunday night radio talk-back program on 5DN. His capacity to answer difficult questions ad lib on air and still be friendly gained him wide publicity and many supporters. He showed that he could address questions that were important to denominationally unattached teenagers and young adults. Many came to talk to him and worship at the evening service. They found an accepting informality, a vigorous music group and strong evangelical preaching, for there was no compromise on the last. The evening congregation was transformed and revived over five years. Numbers began to climb above 200 again at a



Robert Forsyth at 5DN, where he conducted a widely supported talk-back radio program from 1978 to 1983.

time when many churches, especially Anglican, had given up conducting an evening service at all. It was a major achievement.

Ministering to women

Another matter which early attracted Barnett's attention was pastoral work among women. It would not have been a problem for Fulford or Dillon, or even Shilton. Their wives took it for granted they should lead Bible studies, exhort women, and lead the Mothers' Union or the Guild. It was part of their self-identity. Their husbands were untroubled by notions of equality of men and women. By the 1970s much of this had changed. Anita Barnett, living at Prospect, was intent on caring for her four children. She would not be the extra member of staff many clergy wives had been. Instead, she made an enormous contribution to her husband's work by offering frequent hospitality to fifteen to twenty parishioners at a time in their home. In addition she regularly attended the women's meetings, but she did not take charge. She was also able to offer significant pastoral support to members of families experiencing deep personal crises. But none of this could meet the expanding needs in this area of the parish's life. Barnett himself did not regard it as seemly that the male clergy should visit women in their own homes unattended: there was a question of temptation and propriety which he wanted dealt with. The times emphasised recognition and equality of women alongside men. This also

meant that questions women wanted answered had to be taken seriously. Their problems needed to be addressed in ways that acknowledged their reality. It is likely that some of the dissatisfaction being voiced in the congregation towards the end of Shilton's ministry arose out of dislike for his authoritarian and public-oriented style that implicitly ignored the more personal and domestic outlook of women members of the congregation.

Building on a resolution at the 1972 vestry (under Shilton) which supported the presence of women (up to half the membership) on parish council, Barnett welcomed Sue Lewis, who was elected to the council in 1975. He appointed Miss L. Shelton in 1976, who joined Mrs Eleanor Cabrera. Since then there were always several women elected each year during the remaining life of the parish council. Going beyond that in 1975, Barnett signalled his concern about ministry to women by suggesting that a 'Lady Staff Worker' (a term which quickly disappeared) could visit women and attend to reorganising the women's groups. This idea was favourably received. In addition, when it was agreed that he might take study leave in 1976 in order to complete his doctoral studies in England, the appointment of a woman to the staff was also seen as a way of easing the increased load which Ian Cox would have to bear as his deputy. Consequently, it was agreed to make an appointment of a lady worker for twelve months. Sue Lewis, a trained nurse (and currently a parish councillor), was appointed. All agreed that she did a superb job, counselling, visiting and simply modelling the role of a woman of worth.

The appointment also permitted Barnett to rearrange the women's groups. Alongside the monthly meetings of the Mothers' Union branch and of the Women's Service Fellowship (the renamed Women's Guild), less formal meetings were now held for Bible study. At first these were led by Paul Barnett in his home, then later at Trinity by the lady worker. Indeed, these church-based Thursday Bible studies still continued thirty-five years later. Once again the theme of accessible and informal gatherings was apparent. The move also created the framework of a daytime fellowship meeting for men and women when occasion required it.

While funds did not permit the continuation of the appointment of a lady worker in 1977, it became possible again in 1978. Jill Phillips, another former nurse, was appointed after she finished her studies at the Bible College of South Australia. She continued the work of ministering among women, whether at home, or in nursing homes or hospital. In addition she provided organisational support for the women's groups. For example, she initiated an annual weekend conference for women and sustained the Mothers' Union retreat day, at which the rector presented a series of Bible studies. This is not to say that the rector had withdrawn from such pastoral work among women. Nevertheless, the seamliness which



Jill Phillips, pastoral worker 1978-2010.
Photo Brian Dickey, 1987.

Barnett desired had been achieved; so with it a significant recognition of the free-standing competence of women to minister in the congregation. Jill Phillips concluded her salaried ministering in this way in 2010.

There is little doubt that lady workers, or women pastoral staff, or whatever new naming fashion applies, will remain a central priority among the paid staff appointments at Trinity in future years. The spheres of their ministry will no doubt need further debate. In the last resort there is the question of whether such workers should become fully equal with their male colleagues by the normal Anglican means of ordination. This has not been an issue at Trinity. The declared position of successive rectors and trustees has been to oppose the appointment of ordained women to the staff in a position of equality with the male clergy. While there was a vigorous debate in much of the Anglican Church of Australia that eventually led in the 1990s to the ordination of women as clergy without qualification in most but not all dioceses, all this passed the Trinity congregation by. If there were those who disagreed with the rector and trustees, they made no fuss about it or quietly moved elsewhere. Nor, to be fair, did the then rector (Reg Piper) comment in any way when members of the Trinity synod delegation voted in favour of a measure to authorise women's ordination in the diocese. In 2011, the Revd Caroline Litchfield was appointed in succession to Jill Phillips to this pastoral role among women without any public objections. She was the first ordained woman to join the Trinity staff. She accepted the limitations upon her ministry that meant she does not preach in Sunday services, nor preside over them and found a busy and fulfilling set of duties in mentoring and counseling women in the congregation and in leading Terrace Studies, the main women's weekday fellowship: it is the 'women's church' as she has put it.⁶

Some assistant clergy

It was noticeable, as the curates came and went, how each appealed to different groups in the congregation: one to the aged, another to students, a third to young marrieds, and so on. By and large their contribution was valued and recognised. One curate, John Paterson, was a man of powerful personality and strong views. His work among the youth of the parish was effective, but his theological convictions led him into trouble. He followed a Reformed, or 'Calvinistic,' view of theology which placed great emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Some felt it meant that evangelism was not necessary, since all was in the foreordained purposes of God. Despite what Barnett believed was an agreement from Paterson to be restrained in his public statements on these issues, especially while Barnett was on leave in 1976, Paterson managed to antagonise or even frighten important members of the congregation. His time at Trinity came to a close in 1977 when he was appointed to a presbyterian-style congregation in New South Wales, amid somewhat tense scenes.

Robert Forsyth's immensely successful term as an assistant which followed has already been mentioned. Perhaps it was a pity that the flexible and at times theologically incoherent evangelicalism current in the parish could not accommodate the more rigorous, if sharply expressed, thinking of Paterson. It might have been beneficial for such rigor to have had more extensive application. However, the rector's first priority remained

sensitive pastoral concern for individual people. Forsyth ably met that requirement. Not only on radio but with students and other young adults he possessed an open and fluent style which both heard the problem and supported the worth of the enquirer. His, therefore, was an extension of the ministry of the congregation in his own right.

Financial questions

The finances of the parish had their ups and downs in these years. While income rose from \$64 000 in 1974–5 to about \$90 000 in 1976–7, there were difficulties. Income fell while Barnett was on leave in 1976: the combination of his absence and dispute within the congregation had its effect. Barnett eagerly rallied support on his return. A year later there was renewed concern. The continual and easy increments in income of the 1960s were no longer being achieved. No doubt this in part reflected the harsher economic conditions of these years where successive governments grappled with the mysteries of ‘stagflation’ and other significant economic puzzles.

One outcome was continuing discontent at the size of the assessment or tax paid by the parish towards the costs of the diocese. A complaint to the diocesan office in 1974 elicited a ‘lengthy and unenlightening reply’ defending the current rate and consequent amount required from Trinity.⁷ By late 1976 the wardens were investigating the possibility of a trust fund which might receive some of the giving from regular parishioners, but which would be outside the reach of the assessment calculations which were based on the income received by the churchwardens. This idea, suggested by the diocesan registrar himself, was pursued, along with protests in person to the archbishop about the growing proportion of Trinity’s income which was being syphoned off for no apparent benefit to the parish. At the 1978 vestry the creation of the Friends of Trinity Trust was announced. Its trustees were the same as those who administered the principal Trinity Church trust. Its aim would be to receive funds which would be spent for the benefit of the parish. In practice this fund attracted about twenty-five per cent of the money given to support the work of the parish, later growing to a much larger proportion. Its income was spent on what were called ‘lay ministries’, that is, activities which the synod or the archbishop did not have any capacity to limit or license. For example, only clergy benefited from the retirement and insurance scheme underwritten by the diocese: any other staff had to be separately provided for, which was exactly what the new trust proposed to do. It accepted responsibility for the salary and support for the lady worker and later the youth worker along with the office staff. The wardens continued to be responsible for the clergy and the vergers, as well as the expenses of running the services.

Some parishioners were vigorous in their condemnation of what they regarded as tax evasion, especially at a special meeting convened to air the issue in April 1978. Others took the view that Trinity’s synodal assessment contributions were being spent by the diocese on matters that disregarded or were even inimical to the gospel. There was too a pragmatic view that tax minimisation was feasible and sensible in this context. In any event, only those who chose to do so contributed to the new trust, which operated independently of the annual vestry meetings. Even so, some

families withdrew their support. As a procedure for reducing unpopular payments to the diocese, the procedure was a success. While conducted with tact and moderation, the arrangement soon taken up by some other parishes, was hardly popular with the diocesan council, and from time to time attracted fiery condemnation in synod. It should be noticed that at the same time a growing number of parishes in the diocese failed to maintain their assessed payments, but that the diocese consistently has taken only limited steps to enforce payment of such arrears. Meanwhile, notwithstanding the rearrangement of their financial affairs through the establishment of the new trust, the people of Trinity continued to make by far the largest parochial contribution to the annual assessment income of the diocese of Adelaide. It remains a difficult issue.

New forms of fellowship

A number of new ways of gathering together were developed under Paul Barnett. One reflected his concern for the integrity and quality of family life. He arranged for a ‘family camp’ annually. People were encouraged to come to a campsite, Tanunda was the first used, for a weekend, along with their children. Teaching, relaxation and supervised activities for the children were all offered, while the central focus of the teaching was on the application of Christian doctrine to family life. These annual events continued for some years, attracting forty to sixty families, and permitting some open sharing of sensitive family problems.



Trinity Conference, 1974: Peter Jensen (later Archbishop of Sydney) and Ian Cox.

Photo Brian Dickey.

Another innovation was the convening of day conferences to which were summoned outstanding Christian teachers from various parts of Australia. These built on a couple of ineffective efforts organised by Shilton in the late 1960s that relied on people living-in over a weekend. Parking difficulties on North Terrace dictated that these Saturday events be held at other locations around the city: a parish hall or a school meeting room for example. These too were well supported and encouraging occasions, where social interaction and

real enquiry was possible. The greasy chicken and ice-cream lunch that was invariably provided became notorious after a few years, and was thankfully replaced by nutritionally more sensible food!

By contrast, the Sunday afternoon study courses were first moved to the morning, to follow the 9.30 service, and then effectively abandoned, as demand fell. Only a course for newly converted Christians survived the Barnett years. Some members meanwhile eagerly took up the opportunity of attending courses at the Bible College of South Australia on week

nights, after it was moved from Victor Harbor to the Adelaide suburb of Malvern in 1977.

The Trinity Fair was also abandoned, but the Trinity Tea, that longest surviving of the special gatherings of Trinity people, continued for a few more years. Its logistic miracles and its amateur-hour humour continued on, including that annual form of licensed fun against the rector which provided another way of expressing the love and respect in which he was held.

A new venture which Barnett himself inaugurated was lunch-time Bible studies in the business district of the city. He modelled this on the work of Dick Lucas of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, London. The State Administration Lecture Theatre was the first venue for these weekly meetings, which attracted solid and interested attendances. Some among the audiences were unable to attend any church, perhaps out of respect for a hostile spouse. Others got no such biblical exposition in their own churches, while others still simply enjoyed yet more biblical teaching. By 1988 there were three venues in use, at which the rector held regular Bible studies: the State Administration Centre in Victoria Square, the Capita Building opposite the university on North Terrace, and ETSA on Greenhill Road. Another iteration of this ministry would be undertaken in the 2000s.

There were always new ways of evangelism to be explored. Bishop John Reid of Sydney was brought to Trinity in April 1975 to conduct 'Dialogue Evangelism', a concept he and Canon John Chapman had pioneered in Sydney. It was intended to be informal, discursive, and sensitive to the interests of the outsiders. Some positive results probably accrued from this and subsequent visits of Chapman, although how much was not clear. Barnett also tasked Peter Brain to establish an 'Evangelism Explosion' program, based on that begun by Dr James Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This more substantial form of evangelism was only mildly effective during Barnett's time, although it attracted much more effort in the 1980s.

Sacraments and services

Changes in the more formal aspects of ministry occurred too. The number of marriages and baptisms conducted at Trinity contracted. The clergy made plain that they expected those involved to attend sessions of instruction before these services, and that, in the case of baptism, they would refer enquirers who were not members or local residents of the area around Trinity to their local Anglican rector. The emphasis once again was on real belonging to a congregation. Baptisms were only conducted in the morning service, in the presence of a friendly, welcoming and supporting congregation. As a consequence of this more demanding policy, the numbers baptised dropped from 110 in 1973 to 10 in 1978, the first full year of its application. The number of marriages conducted at Trinity fell steadily too: from 109 in 1974 to 67 in 1978. It was more likely than ever before that at least one of those marrying had a prior link with Trinity.

Barnett, New Testament scholar that he was, moved from Shilton's use of occasional sermons, to regular, sustained exposition of sections of the Bible, based on syllabuses prepared and publicised in advance. This

conscious and deliberate attitude to preaching was Barnett's first priority. It was the base upon which all his other work was built. At the central sacrament of Holy Communion, another form of congregational bonding was achieved. With the support of a special vestry, Barnett nominated five men who were then authorised by the archbishop to assist in administering Communion. This was a practice widely adopted in Anglican parishes in the 1970s, and one that Archbishop Rayner was keen to support. Whereas most Anglican churches appointed both women and men as assistants, Trinity was unusual in Barnett's decision to name an all-male group. Later rectors moved to the appointment of women as well as men for each service. The first five men were all well-known and well-respected members of the congregation, including two trustees: it was a step widely appreciated. In the 1980s this expanded group also made possible the administration of communion at the 9.30 a.m. service from three separate locations (the front and centre of the nave as well as the sanctuary), thus speeding what was becoming a very long drawn-out service with possibly 400 communicants. With the subsequent re-arrangement of service times this practice ceased.

Close on the heels of this change came the authorised introduction of *An Australian Prayer Book* in 1979. Bishop Donald Robinson of Sydney, a much loved and well-known evangelical leader, had been a member of the Liturgical Commission which drafted this new service book on behalf of the General Synod of the Anglican of Australia. He remarked that there was nothing in it which he could not use in good conscience, which was an important reassurance which he gave to the 1978 Trinity conference, which had been especially convened to hear him explain the new services. As everywhere else in the Anglican Church in Australia, it provided significant flexibility in the forms of public worship at Trinity – for example in the expanding ministry on Sunday evenings.

Dr Barnett's departure

Paul Barnett maintained a punishing personal program. With funds generously provided by his former parish of St Barnabas, Broadway in Sydney, he took nine months leave to research a PhD in New Testament history at the University of London. He completed the dissertation in remarkably quick time and to the plaudits of his examiners. He lectured at the Bible College of South Australia, he wrote occasional pieces for the *Advertiser*, he was Chairman of the ongoing Billy Graham Crusade committee in Adelaide, and president of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students for a year, conducting missions and speaking in all states except Queensland and the Northern Territory. He spoke on various occasions around Adelaide. He hosted a steady stream of visitors who felt they had to pay their respects to the rector of Holy Trinity. He sought to counsel Sir Mark Oliphant, the governor, despite the latter's open agnosticism. On one occasion at least, he prompted Oliphant to an intervention which caused difficulties with the premier, Don Dunstan. This was over particular pornographic publications available in Adelaide, much to Oliphant's anger when Barnett raised the matter with him.⁸

On the other hand, he had found little within the diocese with which he wholeheartedly agreed. He was much more isolated than Shilton had

been from most other clergy of the diocese. He was critical of some of the liturgical and ceremonial trends he saw around him. On the other hand, he strongly supported Keith Rayner's election as archbishop in succession to T.T. Reed at the electoral synod, and their personal relationships were always cordial. At Barnett's initiative Rayner welcomed John Stott to Adelaide on several occasions, and warmly congratulated Barnett for his PhD. Several times Rayner arranged for Barnett to speak at meetings of the Adelaide clergy.

The trustees and many in the congregation were surprised to learn in 1979 that Dr Barnett had accepted appointment as Master of Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University in Sydney. But in no sense did he or they consider he was leaving the diocese because he was unhappy in it. A few of them knew of pressing family commitments in Sydney. Paul Barnett deeply regretted that his ministry did not see out the decade he had originally hoped for in Adelaide. Both Paul's and Anita's widowed mothers, who depended on them for care, became quite unwell at about the same time. This made their return to Sydney essential. Moreover everyone realised that his new appointment would be a post where his commitment to scholarship and the extension of the Kingdom would go hand in hand. After his Trinity years, first at Robert Menzies College, then as Bishop of North Sydney, Barnett began to write extensively and to lecture widely, including at Regent College, Vancouver and Oak Hill College, London. In retirement since 2002 he has intensified his activities as a writer.⁹ He always looked back on his Trinity years as formative. They alerted him to some blind spots in his home diocese and his involvement in a family church, as distinct from the student church from which he had come, broadened his outlook and prepared him for his years as a bishop.

At the core of Barnett's ministry while rector of Holy Trinity was a concern to teach and pastor the congregation. He led them to a fuller grasp of their individual abilities and their responsibilities to one another. It was a liberating experience, and one which helped many to accept full responsibility for their own spiritual progress under God. It meant that the life of the congregation was even more secure, and certainly more independent of the quality of the incumbent. No doubt Barnett's successor, Reg Piper, was grateful for that development.

- 1 Paul Barnett to Brian Dickey, 30 Jan 2012.
- 2 As a result, Phil Coward, a former warden, authored another version of the pamphlet history of the church.
- 3 A4 unnamed writing book, recording visits 1977–1996.
- 4 Based on interview with Paul Barnett by Brian Dickey, 24 Feb 1986.
- 5 Parish Council, minutes Mar 1977. SRG 94/2A/20.
- 6 In an address to the Men’s Shed fellowship, 17 Mar 2012. While she does not preach on Sundays, her Tuesday Terrace Studies addresses appear on the website in sequence with the Sunday sermons.
- 7 Parish Council 28 May 1974.
- 8 S. Cockburn & D. Ellyard, *Oliphant: the life and times of Sir Mark Oliphant*, Axiom Books, Adelaide, 1981, pp.313–14.
- 9 These included *Is the New Testament History?* Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986 (dedicated to his trustees at Trinity, Max Hart, Peter Smith and Skip Tonkin); *The Message of Two Corinthians: power in weakness*, (The Bible Speaks Today series, ed John Stott), Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1988; and the After Jesus trilogy, *The Birth of Christianity: the first twenty years*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2005; *Paul: missionary of Jesus*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2008; *Finding the Historical Christ*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2009.