

Trinity Baptist Church was born as a result of the conviction that a Baptist church was needed which would be committed to the great doctrines of sovereign grace, and to the primacy of the preaching of the Word of God.

On Sunday, October 8, 1972, a small group of people gathered in the home of John and Wilma Haughie at 733 Ashley avenue in Burlington for morning and evening services. The text expounded by Pastor William Payne to that small but enthusiastic gathering was Psalm 84:14, "For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death" (KJV). Both John and Wilma Haughie are now with the Lord, and of them we may say with the Psalmist "the memory of the just is blessed".

Following this initial service, on Wednesday October 11, 1972 a meeting was convened, also at the Haughie home, to formally bring into being a new church. The name Trinity Baptist Church was chosen and William E. Payne was formally invited to accept the position as pastor of the new church, while a four man finance guidance committee was appointed "until such time as elders and deacons are appointed, at which time this committee would be dissolved" (taken from the minutes of the meeting). On October 11, 1972, the first official services of Trinity Baptist Church were held at Trefoil Lodge in Burlington. Trefoil Lodge was a Girl Guides meeting place on Brant St. just North of Caroline St. in Burlington, and while we were grateful for the use of it, it did have certain disadvantages. There were no facilities for a Sunday School and nursery had to be held in the small kitchen at the end of the auditorium. The services were often punctured by the howls of little ones and sometimes with the exasperated commands and exhortations of frustrated mothers! Trefoil Lodge no longer stands, but it will always be remembered with a certain nostalgic affection by those involved in those early days.

In those days no Sunday School had been organized because, as indicated above, we did not have the facilities for classes to meet. We did however enjoy midweek activities, for beginning on November 15, 1972, we rented public school facilities so that a program of Bible study, prayer and youth activities could be enjoyed. On February 4, 1973, we began to rent the Central Public School on Brant St. in Burlington, and at this point a Sunday School was organized. We were able to use the school auditorium for our services and the various classrooms for our Sunday School classes. This was a significant step forward and our Sunday School has been well served of superintendents over the years as follows:- Bruce Langford, Roy Thomson, Joe Schofield, Hank Veenvliet, Gordon Vanderpol.

It might be interesting and worthwhile to note in this brief history the names of those who were the first officers in the church. They were voted into office at a business meeting held on January 5, 1973. Elders: Hugh Clarke, John Haughie, Bob Wilkins, Roy Schaub. Deacons: Jack Brouwers, Bob Clark and Dale Wilson.

Yet another move came about at the end of 1973 when we began to rent the Trinity Christian School on Walkers Line and hold our services and midweek activities there. Trinity Christian School was home to our church for just over two years, but through this period the conviction was growing that we somehow needed to find a permanent place for worship. There were many difficulties using rented facilities. They obviously were not our own and we therefore had no control over what was done to them. We had to carry hymnbooks, nursery supplies etc. back and forth every Sunday, and there was the problem of the perception of transience conveyed to the public. The problem however was that no suitable building ever seemed to be available for purchase in Burlington and the cost of land was prohibitive.

However, early in 1975 Hugh Clarke received information that a United Church building was

standing unused on Appleby Line at the Second Side Road in North Burlington. Could this be the building, but after much prayer and discussion it became a settled conviction of virtually all the congregation that this was a providential provision and that we should seek to purchase it. A price of \$30,000.00 was agreed on by the United Church. We had had a building fund operating for some time to which some very generous donations had been made and it stood at \$23,000.00. It was decided to have a special offering to see if we could buy the building outright; some thought that it could never be done. \$7,000.00 was the target and the month of July was set apart for the special offering. At that time, though the congregation had grown some since the beginning of the work, this represented a real challenge, but such was the commitment and spirit of the people that \$8,000.00 came in. There was great rejoicing and the building was purchased.

However, there was much work to be done in connection with the building. For one thing there were no washrooms within! And again there was a need for nursery facilities. Extensive renovations took place within the building and a complete new section was added to provide washrooms and nursery facilities. A bank loan of \$58,000.00 was necessary but the Lord gave us cause for rejoicing again when the loan was paid off in five years. When all the renovations were completed and the extension finished a service of praise and dedication was called for on February 28, 1976. This was a glorious occasion when we were joined by friends from other Sovereign Grace churches and together we praised God for His great goodness and His many blessings. Pastor Leigh Powell preached the sermon that evening and other pastors brought greetings from their congregations. It was truly a wonderful occasion.

In 1987 a further addition was made to the building as "the wing" was built, giving us an excellent and much needed facility for mid week activities, Sunday School classes and fellowship hours. Once again an excellent spirit of giving was demonstrated by the congregation and the financial need was met.

In more recent years we radically remodeled the platform within the church, cutting it down in size rather drastically but by this means providing room for twenty one extra seats to be introduced. Other changes were made in the auditorium for the same purpose of providing extra seats and the fact that we at times seem very overcrowded, and some must feel they are really under the nose of the preacher! Oh that we might not only have close dealings with one another but close dealings with God.

In 1995 the church was able to purchase two acres of land on Appleby Line across from 2 Side Road West. This acquisition has provided much needed extra parking space and has secured for the congregation some expansion room for the future, to which we look with faith and anticipation.

Looking back over twenty five years it would be sinful if we did not acknowledge that the Lord has done great things for us, and the glory belongs to Him alone. We have been enabled by God's grace to maintain our commitment to the sovereignty of divine grace and the primacy of the preaching of the Word. The congregation has grown slowly but steadily over the years and we have rejoiced to welcome new families and individuals to strengthen our hands in the Lord. People from many different backgrounds have been brought together and yet a good spirit of unity has prevailed for which we must praise God. To say that there have been difficulties and disappointments is to state the obvious and the inevitable! Yet God has blessed the work and we can but praise Him.

We have rejoiced to know that we have been part of a movement which has been evident in various parts of the world in the past forty years in which Baptist churches have been rediscovering and reclaiming their Calvinistic heritage. We feel ourselves very much at one with the great Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon in his glorious commitment to the doctrines of grace and also to the full and free offer of the gospel to all. It has been our privilege to enjoy the fellowship and

ministry of men from various parts of the world who have given faithful eldership in our day. Among them are included Erroll Hulse, Geoff Thomas and Herbert Carson from the United Kingdom; Walter Chantry, Al Martin, Thom Smith, John Reisinger and Earl Blackburn from the U.S.A. Martin Holdt from South Africa and John Campbell from Australia. These and various other brethren have ministered faithfully to our congregation and provided a visible reminder that we are part of a larger body of people who rejoice in the same great truths which have captivated our hearts.

Right from the beginning we have sought to have a missionary spirit. We were privileged to support Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Gordon who laboured for many years in Pakistan. We continue to support three families serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators in different areas of the world. We rejoice to be very much a part of the work of two other families, who must also remain unnamed for their safety, as they labour faithfully in the Middle East.

It has also been our joy to see young men from our congregation serving the Lord in pastoral and other contexts. Kirk Wellum has laboured faithfully and fruitfully in Sarnia for a number of years while Stephen Wellum, having pastored in South Dakota now teaches theology in North Western Theological Seminary, Vancouver. Carl Muller, having served the Lord in Blair and Kingston now labours right here in Burlington as pastor.

We have rejoiced to see other like-minded churches coming into being right here in Ontario and other parts of Canada and we have enjoyed fraternal ties and fellowship with them. We also rejoice in our participation in the Sovereign Grace Fellowship of churches, which although very small does bring us into contact with those of like precious faith, and there are churches in other groups with which we feel very much a spiritual unity and whose fellowship is prized. We have been enabled over the years to provide financial assistance to a number of other churches and we rejoice in being able to do so for this is a true fellowship in the gospel.

And what shall we say of the many people who over the years have contributed so much to our work here in Trinity. Elders and deacons, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, children's Club helpers, nursery workers, social committee members, those who record and reproduce sermons on tape, treasurers, secretaries; the list could go on. Praise God for all dedicated servants of the Lord who have given of their time, talents and energy for the kingdom of God.

As we look back over the years, we cannot but praise God from Whom all blessings flow. May He continue to strengthen the work so that its testimony to the glorious truth of God may continue into the future.

Update provided by Elder Mark Hudson

How the Lord Has Led Since Our 25th Anniversary

Pastor Payne's closing comment in his 'Brief History of Trinity Baptist Church' read, "May He continue to strengthen the work so that its testimony to the glorious truth of God may continue into the future." Little did any of us realize that God's plan for our future would begin with the home-going of that dear brother. On June 29, 1997, after the writing of this article, but prior to the celebration of the church's 25th anniversary for which it was penned, the Lord called our Pastor out of this world to his heavenly home. The labours of this servant of God were completed according to the Lord's perfect timetable and he departed to join the multitude on high, there to praise God in the presence of His dear Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the minutes of the Board we have recorded, "Pastor Payne's faithful, indefatigable and sacrificial labours have been used of God in the founding and building up of Trinity Baptist Church. The powerful proclamation of the Word has been the hall-mark of his ministry amongst us over these past 24 years. He will be sorely missed. As

elders and deacons we face the future with thankfulness for the ministry of so eminent an under-shepherd and confident in the ability of our Great Shepherd to supply the every need of our church." The work would indeed continue, but under the direction and guidance of others.

The first task facing the church was the selection of a new pastor. The elders, as pulpit committee, considered a number of individuals as possibilities, but our hearts and minds were continually drawn back to a young man the Lord had already placed in our midst. Pastor Carl Muller had been assisting Pastor Payne for a number of years in the areas of teaching, preaching, counseling and visitation. It seemed an unmistakable mercy from God that He had been busy preparing our next pastor in our very midst. Pastor Muller was known and loved by the people and, after much prayer and discussion, he was overwhelmingly voted in to be pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. In a humble, responsible and godly manner Pastor Muller has handled well the responsibilities, the expectations, the challenges and the privileges of following the Lord in the footsteps of his mentor and friend.

In the midst of change, it is comforting to know that the Lord never changes. He has continued to equip members of Trinity to fulfill all the required roles and responsibilities related to such a work. The willingness of men and women, both old and young, to teach in Sunday School, lead and help with ministries such as kid's club, young peoples, young adults and the ladies bible study, volunteer in the nursery, usher, take care of the offerings, clean the church, play instruments for worship, help with construction, and any other task that arose, has been a cause of great blessing and encouragement. The Lord has provided capable men on the board who have been able to offer leadership and counsel through the years. We give all praise and thanks to God for His wonderful mercies in all these areas of ministry.

Missions

We are thankful that the Lord has always placed a burden for missions on the hearts of the people at Trinity. We believe we are to be practically and prayerfully involved in the spread of the Gospel around the world and, as a result, we have chosen to support a number of mission families in various ways. Roland and Susan Seiler were accepted as missionaries with Wycliffe in April of 1999 and are now back on the field in Mozambique for a second term of service. J and C returned from Indonesia in the summer of 2003 and are now situated in Edmonton where J is a professor at a Christian University. We are continuing our ongoing support for Peter and Betty Green in the Philippines and Michael and Maha Ghiz in Lebanon. As well, Marco and Claudia Vandemerwe are situated in Brazil, working to develop life skills that will help local children survive the rigours of life in that challenging area, as well as bringing gospel light to help meet their spiritual needs.

To Build or Not to Build?

The Lord has also blessed us with a growing congregation. Many new families and individuals have joined us over the past few years. As well, there have been a number of baptisms as the Lord continues to save people in our midst and add them to the church. Because of this growth, however, the space in which we were worshiping was becoming too small for the numbers that were attending on a regular basis.

Overcrowding became an ongoing problem. In the spring of 1998 options were examined by the Board, such as purchasing an existing facility, putting up a new building on the present site or elsewhere, or starting another work. Each area was explored and, in light of the needs of Trinity at that time, it was decided that we consider expanding on our present site. A proposal was presented to the board in the latter part of 1998, building on many of the ideas used in prior years to obtain site plan approval from the city for a potential building on our present site. As always, the Lord knows best in such situations and, for a variety of reasons, the board proposal to go ahead with a

building plan did not achieve the required support from the church membership at that time. For a while, at least, it was back to the drawing board and overflow seating downstairs!

In the short term, some of the concern regarding overcrowding was deferred, as several families and individuals from Trinity joined Pilgrim Baptist Fellowship, a new work in Ancaster, under Pastor Don Theobald. For many, this allowed them to participate in a local ministry not always possible with the great distances traveled to Trinity.

We were still examining ways to maximize our present space when the Lord sent a very encouraging gift our way. In January 2000, Trinity received a gift from the sale of the church in London that had been pastored by Brian Robinson. The gift was in the amount of \$155 500! Some of the funds were used to help purchase a much needed vehicle for Brian Robinson, some went as support for the works at Pilgrim Baptist Fellowship and Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto. The balance (about half the total) boosted the building fund that had begun several years prior. In early 2001 detailed discussion about building occupied the board once again.

After considering several proposals put forward by deacon Jeroon Vande Merwe, the board opted to recommend to the congregation that we build on the present site. At a spring business meeting the church membership voted to go ahead with the proposed plan, agreeing that no construction would start until a specified amount of money had been collected. The Lord placed His hand of blessing on the project and, with special offerings, pledges and generous giving over the next 18 months, the spade was soon to be in the ground!

It was humbling and, at times, almost overwhelming, to consider all the details that needed to be discussed and the countless decisions to be made as they related to a building project: finances, time lines, building specs, acoustics, city regulations, pews vs chairs, weather considerations, water, fire plans, and so on. However, with the guidance of our project manager and Jeroon Vande Merwe, along with valuable advice and direction from members of the board and of the congregation, the church received sound recommendations and the details of planning and implementation proceeded. Finally, on March 15, 2003, after the Lord brought in the last of the required funds, the ground breaking ceremony took place and the long anticipated new church building was underway!

It was exciting to come week by week and see the progress made on the building. From a big hole, to a foundation, to block walls, concrete floors, the massive frame of the building itself (perhaps the first time we began to realize just how tall this addition was going to be!), the roof and windows, the bricking of the outside, the painting of the inside with all the final details of trim, wiring, baptistery set up, lighting and so on. Bob Draper has captured the construction of the building from start to finish. His photographs record a significant part of our history, an ongoing reminder of just how good the Lord is to us. The building committee made numerous decisions in the last months of the project giving the facility a wonderfully warm appearance and meeting the needs of worship, fellowship and program.

Finally, on Sunday, 13 June, 2004, the doors were opened and we enjoyed our first service in the new church building. The messages were preached by Dr. D. A. Carson and the people rejoiced to hear the word! It is a beautiful facility, but we must be careful to guard the primary reason for its existence: the worship and glory of our great God! We give special thanks to the Lord for the many individuals that freely offered their time, skills and resources in the construction of the church building. There are a number of internal renovations to be done in the old part of the church building that will create classrooms for our Sunday School program, as well as help with overcrowding in the nursery. These projects will form the next phase of the work that will begin when finances allow.

The Sovereign Grace Fellowship

Through the leadership of a number of pastors in the Sovereign Grace Fellowship, proposals were circulated for a constitution that would more clearly describe and define the SGF in terms of its make-up, purpose and procedures. The constitution went through several drafts and created detailed discussion on the part of the board and church members. Trinity agreed to formally join the Sovereign Grace Fellowship and has been a supportive member in its activities. Trinity will host the annual General Assembly in November 2004.

Special Highlights:

It would be impossible to record all the marvelous things that have happened in this seven year stretch. The following is a brief summary of some of the key events in that time period.

1. In March 2001 a telephone broadcast system was installed at the church whereby those at home can listen to a service 'live!' on their speaker phones.
2. A group of members have expressed a growing burden for a new work to start in the Grimsby area. Over the past couple of years they have sought the Lord's direction, holding weekly prayer meetings in homes of local families. We are waiting with anticipation to see what the Lord will do through their efforts and prayers.
3. Tracts and invitations for services have been distributed on several occasions in various parts of our local neighbourhoods.
4. Pastor Payne's sermons from 1984 to 1997 have been recorded and made available on CD by Jacob Kwakernaak.
5. We are nearing publication of a supplement to our Grace Hymns.
6. Gordon Vanderpol began a series of children's talks in the morning services that have been a great blessing to the entire congregation.
7. Elder Michael Haykin accepted the position of Principal of Toronto Baptist Seminary prior to the 2003-2004 academic year.
8. A new organ, donated by a church in Minnesota, has been installed and is now in use. It is better suited to the needs of the new building.
9. Pastor Muller and his wife Heather ministered to believers in Malaysia over a 3 week period in May/June, 2004.
10. Peter and Anna Pikkert were home for a period of 5 years (July 1999 to June 2004). In that time Peter obtained his Masters degree from Syracuse University and Anna became a Canadian citizen. They, along with Rita and Owen, were a great blessing to all of us. Peter and Anna have since returned to Turkey, while Rita and Owen have started school at Black Forest Academy in Germany.

Summary

As a body of believers we are certainly still a work in progress; we will see no 'perfect' church on earth! We do, however, have clear indications of the Spirit's ongoing work in us, individually and corporately. Over these past seven years we have mourned with those who have lost loved ones and rejoiced with those who have seen new life come into the world. Our prayer is that we will see great outpourings of the Spirit creating new life in those outside of Jesus Christ. We trust our Lord fully for the future and our heartfelt desire, and may it ever be so, is that the Lord would use us in the building up of the saints, in the conversion of the lost and in the glorifying of His great name. May God, in His infinite mercy, make it so!