

Heart for Evangelism

Rev Colin Cameron

During the time of vacancy which followed, the church again considered the matter of Eldership. Rev Colin Cameron of Drumchapel Baptist Church was asked to give the deacons teaching on Eldership. He made an impact, and was considered by the church Vacancy



Colin Cam

Committee. A call was made to him, which he accepted, and his induction to Falkirk Baptist Church was on 15th August 1992. Rev Donald McCallum carried out the Act of Induction, and Rev Archy MacMillan of Larbert Baptist preached the charge to the new minister.

Colin Cameron was born and brought up in Glasgow, and responded to God's call to the ministry while employed as a professional photographer. He studied at Glasgow Bible College for two years, and gained his BD degree from Glasgow University. He is also accredited through the Scottish Baptist College. It was as a student at Glasgow University and while driving buses, particularly in the Drumchapel area of Glasgow, he felt called by God to work in that area. He was ordained and inducted to the pastorate at Drumchapel Baptist Church in 1979. He recalls how the main aspect of his work there was local mission, and the congregation there were keen to be involved in outreach into their community. Colin Cameron is married to Audrey, and they have two sons and two daughters. Early on in Mr Cameron's

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ministry a series of Sunday evening gospel services were held. And two important constitutional changes were proposed by the leadership of the church. The first proposal was Eldership which was agreed by the church, although an elder has never been appointed. The second proposal was 'closed' membership, when baptism is a prerequisite before church membership, but this proposal was not passed by the church business meeting.

There Is Hope Falkirk

In 1992 There is Hope Falkirk began when a group of people from Falkirk Baptist sent letters to churches in the Falkirk area inviting them to a meeting in Falkirk Christian Centre. David Hill, the national co-ordinator of There is Hope, spoke to the meeting and presented a vision of churches working together in evangelism and praying together for revival. Ten churches were involved initially, and Bill Leishman was the coordinator. The Easter to Pentecost campaign started with a service in The People's Church, where Rev Bob McGhee of St Andrew's West Church encouraged God's people to share the Good News. The campaign was geared round the theme *Say Yes To Jesus*. Ten thousand leaflets were distributed, and posters appeared on buses, baillie boards, and bus shelters. Banners were hoisted outside each of the ten churches and joint events were held.

The There is Hope Falkirk theme for 1993 was *You Matter*. A launch service with Jim Martin was held in Falkirk Baptist. Over four Thursdays in May, following a month of prayer and preparation, Falkirk Baptist embarked on a major door-to-door initiative in the Bog Road area of Falkirk. Twenty-four church members went out in two's, while others stayed in Bill & Ray Murray's home to pray.

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Many were invited into homes to share the Gospel, and a small number of people attended the church for a time as a result. The climax of the Campaign in 1993, and subsequent years, was the Central Scotland Praise and Witness March, where Christians from a number of churches joined together in a joyful proclamation of their love for Jesus. In 1994 Ian White launched *Real Hope - Jesus* in the Dobbie Hall in Larbert. Bob Howells, the TES evangelist, made a distinctive contribution to the 1994 Campaign, as did the Good News Bus - a mobile gospel display with coffee lounge and video facilities. Members from Falkirk Baptist and Struthers Memorial had an on-going partnership to reach the young people in the High Street on Friday nights, again using the Good News Bus. Langlees was the destination for the church's outreach using the bus, and a number of people accepted an invitation to watch the 'Jesus' video.

By 1995 the Scottish Good News Bus was in action and was used as an integral part of the *There is Hope - Jesus* campaign. Falkirk Baptist's campaign involved ten people, going out in pairs, offering the 'Jesus' video on loan to people living in the area around the church. The take-up rate was about 10%, and a number of good



Bill Leishman

discussions took place when team members went back to collect the videos. A group in the church made a banner for the church sanctuary, with the text 'There is Hope' and depicting the empty tomb. Bill Leishman recalls that although *There is Hope* Falkirk was fairly short lived, its impact was significant as barriers between churches were broken down during the Prayer for Revival meetings and as leaders met together. More

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importantly, though, it served as a catalyst for the churches to share the Good News, and for people to hear about and respond to the love of Jesus.

Bill Leishman is the latest in the long line of Falkirk Baptist members entering the Ministry. His story in places intertwines with those of others who have trained for Christian Ministry ahead of him. In 1979, during a film showing in the church hall, Bill listened to Bill Ferguson as he shared a simple presentation of the Good News (Bill Ferguson is now Minister of St Annes Baptist Church in Lancashire) and he responded to the Lord Jesus. Bill was baptised a year later, at the age of fifteen. For Bill, the awareness that the Lord was calling him to Ministry didn't come all at once. He traces the start of the process back to a world mission conference he attended as a teenager. Over time, it became clear that his particular calling was to the Christian Ministry. By 1995, he was convinced that the Lord was speaking to him through a variety of people and circumstances, telling him to 'take the next step'. Arthur Hembly, who was himself training for Ministry at Spurgeon's College, was instrumental in challenging Bill to step out and test God's will.

Bill's calling and gifting was recognised by the fellowship at Falkirk and by the wider church. This was confirmed in a dramatic way during a visit to the church by American preachers Al and Daniel Dovidio. During a Sunday morning service, Daniel broke off in the middle of his sermon to prophesy to Bill with the words, 'The Lord has called you out' - to minister elsewhere. Bill recalls that he had been asking the Lord for a sign to confirm His will, but was rather 'blown away' by such a direct confirmation! Bill was ordained into the Christian Ministry at Falkirk Baptist Church on 3rd October 1998. Bill's story links to one more of Falkirk's 'old boys' - his ordination service was

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attended by JJ Brown, who had got to know Bill while he was at Spurgeon's. On 24th October 1998, Bill was inducted into the pastorate of Mills Hill Baptist Church in Lancashire. A strong contingent from the church made the trip to Oldham to witness the latest and hopefully, in God's grace, not the last in the line of Falkirk Baptist members entering the Ministry.



David & Ann MacFarlane

In September 1993, David and Ann MacFarlane, recent members of the church, were accepted by the Baptist Missionary Society to work in Italy. They were initially based at Perugia for one year of language training, before moving to Altamura in the south of Italy. There they supported workers in the Baptist churches in the south in preaching, teaching and training, before David took over the pastoral responsibility of the church at Altamura. In August 1996 the MacFarlanes moved to Barletta to pastor the church there.

As well as There is Hope Falkirk and Step Out (a Scottish Baptist Union initiative which provides a first taste of mission for Baptist young people) a further mission was held in 1995 when a team from Ayr Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev Noel McCullins arrived in September to hold the 'Choose Life' outreach. Prior to the mission there was a week of prayer, when the church was open at 7am and 7pm for an hour of prayer. The 'Choose Life in Christ Jesus' banner hung high across the sanctuary, and a logo was designed for the event. The team from Ayr, along with Rev Colin Cameron, spent most of the week days in Falkirk's secondary schools. In the evening,

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Deacons Court, 1995. Bill Leishman's last deacon's meeting before going to study for the ministry.

Front row: Rev Colin Cameron, Bill Leishman, John Milne.
 Second row: Hugh McClenaghan, Alex Day, Olive Robb
 Third row: Bill Murray, William McIntyre, Duncan Dougall
 Fourth row: Ron Polland, Peter Wright
 Back row: Steve Downs, Bill Black, Iain Stewart, Ken Short, Tom Taylor

meetings were held in the church, and a number of people from Ayr took part. Although the outreaches held that year didn't result in a number of people being saved and brought into the church, the church did make a significant effort and a large number of people in Falkirk heard the Gospel. As well as reaching out to the unchurched, Falkirk Baptist, along with a number of local churches of different denominations, was involved in the launch of Crossline Central in October 1995. Crossline offers telephone and face-to-face Christian counselling, and is a national network of independent helplines and counselling ministries with centres in several major population areas in the UK. Its aim is to show needy people the love and compassion of God.

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Dawson Mission

At the end of 1995 temperatures were among the lowest in living memory, and this caused extensive frost damage to the church heating system. The congregation moved to the Dawson Mission in Carron for six months until June 1996, as a new heating system was required. Occasionally it seemed right to go back to Orchard Street. One such occasion was the funeral service for Hugh McClenaghan who died in April 1996. Hugh, along with his wife Isa, had contributed much to the fellowship over many years, and Hugh's memories of Falkirk Baptist life have been included in this book as a tribute to him. It was while meeting at the Dawson Mission that the congregation were introduced to RushAid by Duncan Dougall and Fraser Adams. RushAid's purpose was to take the Good News of Jesus Christ in a very practical way to the people of Belarus, who had suffered terribly as a result of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. Food, clothing and scriptures were gathered and sent to Minsk. Praise parties were used as a way of promoting RushAid. RushAid was perhaps a prelude of things to come. In June 1997, after months of preparation, the church was again involved in meeting the needs of the people of Belarus through the Baptist Union of Scotland's Kids Aloft programme. Kids Aloft enabled a number of children who would benefit from improved health, nutrition, and environment, to come to Scotland from Belarus for a three week holiday paid for by Scottish Baptists. Rev Colin Cameron had seen the opportunity for the church to get involved in Kids Aloft, and the church gave a positive response. A group of twenty-three children and two interpreters came to Falkirk and Bo'ness for a week. Bill Black from Falkirk and Dr Archie McIntyre from Bo'ness were the co-ordinators, assisted by a committee of people from both churches. The children were given a civic

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reception by Falkirk Council when they arrived.

The children stayed with church families, and came together daily for praise, prayer, outings and activities. Each day was busy and full of fun for the children. People were generous, and financial gifts totalled over £6000. So many clothes were donated that the church sanctuary looked like a department store! The people in the church who were involved in some way with Kids Aloft will long remember the visit of the Belarus children to Falkirk Baptist. A few weeks after Kids Aloft, Colin and Audrey Cameron went on a three month sabbatical. They were invited by Rev Bill Wilson, the field Director of the Zambesi Mission, to Malawi in Africa for six weeks. They shared their experiences with the church on return from sabbatical through videos taken while out there. Since then the church has sent out £400 for a church building project at Mongichi in Malawi.



Church sanctuary, looking from the platform, early 1999.

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Purpose Statement

While considering church strategy, and influenced by Rick Warren's book "The Purpose Driven Church", Rev Colin Cameron challenged the church to re-discover the New Testament purposes given to the church by Jesus. Warren's book examines the purposes which drive Saddleback Valley Community Church, the fastest growing Baptist church in America, and explains the philosophy and structure which has enabled that church to grow and to reach the unchurched in their community. This led to a series of church conferences early in 1998. The outcome was a church purpose statement and a structure by which the church could implement this. The purpose statement developed was :

"The purpose of Falkirk Baptist Church is to glorify God, to lead people to faith in Christ Jesus, to develop together as lifelong followers of the Lord Jesus in submission to the Holy Spirit and in obedience to God's Word".

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This will be achieved through worship, fellowship, prayer, evangelism, teaching, and pastoral care. Core groups have been set up for each of these ministries, led by Duncan Dougall, John Milne, Isabel Day, Bill Black, Norman Graham, and Ron Polland respectively. The work of these groups is beginning to make an impact in the life and witness of the church. One aspect of Mr Cameron's ministry was early morning 'prayer for revival' meetings, and joint 'prayer for revival' meetings with the People's Church in Falkirk. Rev Colin Cameron resigned from the pastorate of Falkirk Baptist Church in August 1999, leaving the church in September. He accomplished much in drawing the church's attention to its God-given purposes and in setting up a structure to fulfil these purposes, and he leaves behind memories of a rich prayer life and a heart for evangelism.

This concludes a look at Falkirk Baptist Church life, covering in particular the time from the ministry of Rev Alex Paterson onwards. It is by no means comprehensive, and much more could have been written about organisations attached to the church. However it does try and pay tribute to the people, especially the leaders, who through the years have left their mark on the church and on the town in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the church enters the 21st Century it has been worthwhile reflecting on church history in the previous two centuries, to be inspired by those who have lived their lives for Christ, and to be encouraged to face the challenges which lie ahead.

Ron Polland

Falkirk, October 1999.

