

Partnership

Rev David White

After a vacancy of seven months, Rev David White was ordained and inducted to the pastorate at Falkirk on 16th January 1988, his first ministry. He was educated at Strathclyde University (BA), London University (BD) and the Baptist Theological College.

Before his academic studies, he was working as an insurance underwriter when he heard the call to the ministry. He has been a member of Knightswood and Drumchapel Baptist churches, and then assistant minister at Trinity Possil and Henry Drummond Parish Church in Glasgow. He first came to the church as pulpit supply during the vacancy after Ian Reed and his preaching made an impact on the congregation. He came at a difficult time for the church. At the end of his first year, he reported to the church that he sensed there was a need of healing for many in the congregation. He also spoke positively of the pastoral group, the involvement of the young people, and the need for the church as a whole to be a church of mission.



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Baptist World Youth Congress

The Baptist World Youth Congress was held in Glasgow in 1988. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for young Scottish Baptists to come

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together with Baptist young people from all over the world. Angela Bennie, Steven Macdonald and Bill Leishman went as delegates from Falkirk Baptist. Arthur Hembling was a steward, while John Furmage was part of the multilingual translation team. A number of people from the church attended the evening celebrations. The theme for the Congress was 'Jesus Christ - our only hope' and the speakers were drawn from different continents. The event consisted of seminars, concerts, Bible Studies, small group activities and evening celebrations. Bill Leishman recalls attending the event : "Looking back at the Congress, inevitably a lot of memories are very fuzzy. Two pictures, though, are still very fresh. The first picture is one of hundreds of young people forming a massive conga, dancing round the SECC to 'We are marching in the light of God' - a picture of a vibrant faith. The second picture is one of people of different countries worshipping the Lord together in different languages - a picture of a world faith. After the Congress, these pictures remained an inspiration for me".

A group of American Baptists from First Baptist Church, Olvido, Florida, under the leadership of Pastor John Clough, conducted a Partnership Mission with Falkirk Baptist in October 1989. They were involved in visiting schools and retirement homes, and went along to the Open Door cafe and the childrens clubs at Langlees and the Bog Road. Other events included a Ladies Evening, a Men's Dinner, and a youth cafe for teenagers, as well as open air work and a Family Outing followed by an Evangelistic Rally. It was considered a good mission and there was a new enthusiasm for mission which resulted in an Evangelism Committee being set up. The church also had an active Missionary Committee under the leadership of John Fellows.

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Grangemouth Partnership

One important development for the church during David White's ministry was the partnership with Grangemouth Baptist. Rev Jim Murdoch, the interim pastor at Grangemouth, asked Falkirk Baptist to help Grangemouth Baptist maintain a witness in the town. This was agreed to, and a formal partnership was entered into. The purpose of the partnership was to provide the support, personnel and financial commitment to enable Grangemouth Baptist to grow and to sustain a full-time minister. Meetings were held between the two diaconates and representatives of the Baptist Union. As a result of these meetings, it was agreed that Falkirk, Grangemouth and the Baptist Union would each fund one third of the cost of a pastor for Grangemouth for a three year period. The person appointed would be under the leadership and care of David White. The two fellowships began to hold occasional joint prayer meetings, deacons meetings and services. David White ran a series of mid-week meetings in Grangemouth and led a number of Sunday services. He achieved much relating to reconciliation between the fellowships. A number of Falkirk members transferred to Grangemouth. Sadly, the pastor for Grangemouth was never appointed, partly due to the fact that David White moved on from Falkirk, and partly due to the fact that the Baptist Union was going through financial difficulties, and so was unable to continue to offer funding for the venture.

Health reasons, and the fact that he felt his pastoral niche was within the Church of Scotland, meant that in May 1991 David White resigned from the church and is now minister of St Columba's Church of Scotland in Kirkintilloch where he is exercising a fruitful ministry. His ministry at Falkirk will be remembered for the vigour and competence of his preaching and teaching, and his exceptional gift in speaking to the children.