

Growth, Renewal & Restoration

Rev Ian Reed

The church then entered a time of vacancy which lasted 17 months. During this time, new songs and choruses were being sung at church services, and many people in the church were open to a fresh blessing from God. People were becoming more focussed on the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it was into this situation that Rev Ian Reed was called to the church. He arrived in Falkirk with his wife Elenor and young family, and was inducted to the pastorate of Falkirk Baptist on 13th March 1982.



Ian M Reed

Brought up in Glasgow, Ian Reed was educated at Bellahouston Academy before embarking on an engineering apprenticeship with Rolls-Royce in Hillington. He was brought up in the Church of Scotland in Glasgow, and became a Christian at a Billy Graham Rally at Ibrox in 1961. On completion of his apprenticeship he moved to Chrysler Motors at Linwood before moving south to work with Ford Motors at Dagenham. He left the motor industry to work with Rank Xerox at Gloucester as a senior work study engineer. Mr Reed was baptised at Monmouth Baptist Church, South Wales, in 1973. His call to the ministry came that year and after attending South Wales Baptist College in Cardiff, and Cardiff University, he returned to Scotland in 1976 for his first pastorate, at Duncan Street Baptist Church in Edinburgh, where he ministered from 1976 until

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1982. Mr Reed was inducted to the ministry at Falkirk Baptist by Dr David Bebbington, and the charge to the minister was given by Rev Edwin Gunn. The service was led by Rev Guy Finnie of Larbert Baptist, and the Welcome Service in the evening was chaired by Rev John Furmage.

Over the next few years, Ian Reed encouraged much of what had already began in a variety of new and exciting ways. Masterlife discipleship training classes were started, and many in the fellowship participated. Numbers attending the church services increased, particularly on Sunday evenings. People were attracted by the lively worship and Mr Reed's open style of leadership. Seeking and waiting on God for specific guidance was encouraged. At times, prayer meetings had up to 70 people in attendance. The membership of the church increased rapidly and baptismal services were regular events. People recall going to church services with a sense of anticipation, and had to be early to get a seat at the evening services. It was during this time that the Praise Band started in the church. Ian Reed was an approachable man, welcoming, and would readily go round chatting to the congregation at the end of the service. He exercised a charismatic ministry which for some took a bit of getting used to, but for others was helpful in the way they expressed themselves in worship and in using their gifts. He encouraged the members of the church to use their gifts. John Fellows was recognised as having a gift in teaching and became part of the teaching ministry in the church.

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Summer Camps

During his ministry, unemployment rose sharply in Falkirk when nine foundries closed in one year, the industry of ironfounding virtually disappearing. A need was felt to do something, and around

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sixteen members agreed to open the church halls as a meeting place and cafe for the unemployed, and so the Open Door Cafe began, a ministry which still continues today. Ian Reed offered much practical and encouraging help and the cafe was soon on a firm footing. Another highlight of his ministry were the four summer camps organised under his energetic leadership. These were held in Aberdeen, and were attended by church families and the children from the outreach Sunday Schools at Langlees and the Bog Road. Many look back to the enjoyable and spiritually profitable times spent there.



Barbara Connor

Barbara Connor transferred her membership from Grangemouth Baptist Church in 1985. Barbara grew up in Grangemouth and became a Christian at the age of 12. She was a founder member of Grangemouth Baptist Church, where she was Sunday School Superintendent for several years. She works as a missionary with King's Kids International, a child and youth ministry which is part of a broader interdenominational missionary society called YWAM (Youth With A Mission). King's Kids goal is to help children and teenagers grow in their relationship with God, and give them opportunities to share their faith with others both at home and abroad. Barbara's main emphasis is discipleship and evangelism, and she is part of the YWAM Scotland leadership team. She is also the regional adviser for the development of King's Kids ministries in Southern Africa, and this part of her work involves regular trips to nations such as South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. As well as working directly with children, teenagers and families, Barbara has a particular calling to training and leadership development. In this capacity, she regularly leads a four month training course called the PCYM

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school (Principles in Child and Youth Ministries), as well as teaching at training seminars for youth workers, both in Britain and overseas. As a volunteer with YWAM, Barbara receives no salary, but looks to the Lord to provide for all her needs, including all her living, ministry and travel costs. This comes mainly in the form of financial gifts from family, personal friends and people in the church.

ScotReach

Between 1984 and 1986, the church was involved with ScotReach, a programme developed by the Baptist Union of Scotland where churches were encouraged to hold outreach events in their community. The ScotReach committee in the church were very active, and a number of different events were held. One such event, and one of the memorable occasions in the life of the church during Ian Reed's ministry, was the showing of the 'Jesus' film at the cinema in Princes Street in September 1985. The 'Jesus' film was a portrayal of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, based on Luke's Gospel. The cinema manager had given permission for the church to place booklets on each cinema seat and for an announcement to be made at the end of each showing inviting people to a coffee bar in the church hall. Originally, the film was screened in Cinema 3 for one week. Numbers seemed to be low, and the film wasn't pulling in the people in the way that the action-adventure Rambo in Cinema 1 managed to do. When it looked like the showing for the second week was in danger of being cancelled, a church member had a dream in which she saw the boards outside the cinema advertising 'Jesus' in Cinema 1. This was taken to be prophetic, and an extended evening of prayer was arranged to pray in faith that this dream would be fulfilled. The numbers began to show an upturn and, against

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the odds, 'Jesus' moved the following week from Cinema 3 to Cinema 1, where it played to a packed auditorium every night. The cinema manager wanted the film to run for a further week in Cinema 1. This was not possible, as the copy of the film was already booked for another cinema. The headline in the Falkirk Herald that week proclaimed, "Jesus ousts Rambo!".

Polmont Fellowship

A number of factors, notably a visit to the church from Lewis Misselbrook under ScotReach, combined to suggest it was time to plant a church, as Falkirk Baptist membership was growing close to the 200 mark again. During the Masterlife discipleship course people had met in each other's homes and shared God's Word, and many wanted this to continue. Following a Church Conference in 1984, housegroups were started in the church. There was a very real desire in the hearts of all who were at the Conference to see the church moving out and not just to expect people to come to a central building. Ian Reed said that he not only wanted to take the message of the Gospel to people where they were, but also to create an opportunity for God-given ministries within the fellowship, and house groups were a way of achieving this. Each housegroup was free to develop and reach out into their community as and when God directed them. In particular, the one in Polmont grew under the leadership of John Birkett. From the start the Polmont housegroup was different from the others in that it included those of other denominations who lived locally and felt that a new Christian witness was needed in the area. After about two years, and following on from a time of prayer and visiting homes, accommodation was found in a church hall for a Sunday morning service with space for a Sunday School.

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Services under the name of Polmont Christian Fellowship began in April 1986 after a Commissioning Service in Falkirk Baptist. Thirty to forty adults regularly attended, plus fifteen children and teenagers. Polmont Community Centre was used for fellowship meals and other events, while the housegroup continued to meet mainly in the Birketts' home. A ministry was begun at the local retirement home. Initially John Birkett took responsibility for both organisation and preaching, but after a time Alex Watt shared in the ministry. The emphasis and style of leadership became more and more charismatic and as this was not how many of the congregation wished to be led John Birkett no longer felt able to lead the fellowship and it was sadly decided to conclude it. During these years there had been great warmth and friendship shared between members of the group.

At Falkirk Baptist, by 1986 things began to plateau and progress slowed down. The period from November 1986 to March 1987 was the only time there was a decline in church membership during Ian Reed's ministry. In May 1987 personal issues meant that Ian Reed resigned the pastorate in Falkirk and spent a number of years out of pastoral ministry. He was graciously restored to ministry at a church in Colchester, going on from there to a fellowship in Brightlingsea, Essex. Many are grateful for his short, vibrant ministry in Falkirk. At a visit to the church in 1997 he spoke of God's hand on his life and of his restoration to the ministry.



Rev Ian Reed on his visit to the church in 1997