

Music & Youth Work

Rev William Paterson

The time of vacancy after the ministry of Rev Dr Fred Cawley was not long. The church gave a call to Rev William Paterson who was the minister of Lochgilphead Baptist Church, and he was inducted to the ministry of Falkirk Baptist



William Paterson

Church on 1st December 1935. William Paterson was born in Wishaw in 1908 and attended the Baptist church there. He graduated in Classics from Glasgow University in 1928, and was educated for the ministry at the Baptist Theological College in Glasgow. His first pastorate was at Lochgilphead, where he ministered from 1931 until being called to Falkirk Baptist in 1935.

Youth Work

His time of ministry at Lochgilphead brought him a lot of joy and satisfaction, and he often spoke of his first church in subsequent ministries. He was very interested in youth work, which was his main emphasis, and he brought many young people there into the church. The church membership grew from 32 to 40 over the period, however the Sunday School nearly doubled, increasing from 45 to 85 children. The church, under his leadership, entered a new era after a long and faithful ministry of 48 years. He brought a new impetus to the work in Lochgilphead and a number of people were baptised and youth organisations

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started. Both of the other churches in the town were vacant during part of his ministry and Mr Paterson, who was well-liked in the town, gave very good service to the community. Mr Paterson considered the Lochgilphead church to have “exercised a powerful influence in the community through the lives of the members and the public testimony of its Services”.

At his induction to Falkirk Baptist, it was commented by Rev John Rigley of Rothesay Baptist Church (who was minister of Stirling Baptist from 1940 - 1955) that “he had won the admiration and regard of the other ministers by his broad-mindedness and his big-heartedness, and he knew that he had won the love of the flock to whom he ministered”. William Paterson was still in his twenties when he arrived at Falkirk, and Dr Cawley must have been a hard act to follow, especially for a young and fairly inexperienced man. He was now the pastor of a church of over 200 members, which presented different challenges to one of 40 members in a rural location. He was inducted to the ministry at Falkirk on 1st December 1935. Being unmarried, he said he didn't require the use of a manse, so the church let out the manse for nearly two years. Mr Paterson stayed in the Comely Park area of Falkirk and paid his rent himself, as he didn't want to increase the financial burden on the church. Financial difficulties in the church, due to the economic climate at the time, continued during this ministry.

When speaking to the members of the church who recall William Paterson's ministry, he is often referred to as “the second Mr Paterson”, as the long ministry of Alex Paterson was still fresh in the congregation's memory at that time. Mr Paterson, who was over six feet tall, required the baptismal robes from Lochgilphead as the ones for the minister in Falkirk weren't large enough for him.

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They were duly exchanged, however the robes from Lochgilphead must have been in better condition than the ones from Falkirk as the sum of thirty shillings was given to that church as part of the deal! Mr Paterson took time to think about how the mid-week meeting could best serve the church, with a view to bringing out a larger number of members to the meeting. He decided to hold it more along the lines of Bible study and prayer instead of the service format. He also appointed stewards to assist at church services, and six men were appointed to this role initially. Like Dr Cawley, he enjoyed fishing as a hobby, and often took some of the deacons and members of the church on fishing trips.

In 1937 one of the members of the church, JJ Brown, was accepted by Spurgeon's College in London for theological training. His father was the Town Missionary, and they lived next door to the Baptist Manse. He writes, "My call to the ministry was undoubtedly influenced by Dr Cawley through the close contact of next-door neighbours as well as through his pulpit ministry. I attended the Bible Training Institute (as it was then known) as a day student for two years (1935/6) but had no clear conviction regarding future Christian service. Dr Cawley encouraged me to think about the Baptist Ministry, supplied me with a New Testament Greek grammar and directed my attention to Spurgeon's College where he himself had prepared for the Ministry. I had an open mind in relation to service overseas and service in the UK. I was student-pastor for a year at Thame Baptist Church in Oxfordshire. At the conclusion of the College Course an invitation to become Pastor at Queen Street, Erith, provided confirmation of my 'call'. I still marvel (in the words of the apostle) that God "counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim 1 : 12)".

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Marriage

The church secretary Mr William Grant (Betty Grant's father) retired from this role in 1937, being replaced by Mr J B Scott. Mr Scott became Mr Paterson's father-in-law, for on 6th September 1938 Mr Paterson married one of the members of the church, Miss Alison Scott. They were married at the Scott's home in Rosehall Terrace in Falkirk by Mr Paterson's friend, Rev John Rigley. An event was held in the church on their return from honeymoon, and the chairman, Mr Balfour Gray, spoke of the splendid work they had both done for the church. Mr & Mrs Paterson



Rev & Mrs Paterson

were interested in meeting the church members in a social capacity, and on more than one occasion held a garden party in the grounds of the manse. The deacons thanked him for "the great interest he took in the life and work of the church". Mrs Paterson's status in the church had now changed from *church member* to *minister's wife*, and some older members of the church recall how they were often referred to as 'Mr Paterson and Alison'! Mr Paterson said he felt more 'complete' now as a minister and wanted to treat his ministry in Falkirk as if he was starting again.

In 1938 one of the members of the church, Ian Cameron, went to the Baptist College in Glasgow for theological training. He recalls William Paterson's ministry in Falkirk : "William Paterson

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was the successor to Dr Cawley, and he came from the Lochgilphead Church. That was his first pastorate and it must have been a daunting task to follow Dr Cawley. He was six feet three inches tall and walked faster than any man I have known. He never seemed to be at ease in the pulpit. Always friendly, he seemed to be keeping something back. I think he was over conscious of his position and lacked the confidence to unbend. Maybe we young folk did not make it too easy for him. He belonged to our age group and perhaps we did not show him the respect he deserved. When he conducted our wedding service I almost put out a hand to steady him he was so nervous. Maybe he was fearful of what the future might hold for my wife! The Christian Endeavour Society which was in the church has many happy memories for me. It was lively but serious, and I learned many a lesson. Dr Cawley and William Paterson took the monthly meetings to our great profit. We gained experience in visitation, public prayer and preaching. There are names that come to mind. James Wilson became a Church of Scotland minister, although he wasn't a member of the church. John and Peggy Furmage, whose son John is now with BMS in Brazil. Grace McLeay who was a stalwart for the highest standards in Christian behaviour. Helen Kennedy and her sister Chrissie. Mary Guthrie, and Annie Liddle who became my wife. There are others whose names I do not recall. Rambles after the meetings during the summer were memorable, as well as deputations taken to and received from other local CE Societies. The Sunday School Superintendent was John Black, a moulder. I think his daughters are still active in church life. I remember Falkirk as happy and friendly. There was a section that was really evangelical and I can recall two outreach missions. But I always regretted that the church

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played no part in the Mission organised by Falkirk Christian Challenge Council and led by Alan Redpath. The town was really challenged”.

After returning home from College, Ian Cameron spent a time in the Forces. On returning to Falkirk, he was a deacon in the church during Rev Matthew Cook's ministry, before he was invited to be Lay Assistant at Gardner Street Church of Scotland in Glasgow in July 1947. The following year he was invited to Kingairloch (near Fort William) as Home Missionary in the Church of Scotland. Ordination was suggested to him in 1952, but he declined and contacted the Baptist Union. There followed pastorates in the Baptist churches at Alexandria (1953 - 58) and Girvan (1958 - 82). He retired to Stranraer, but became the Pastor of the new church there in 1984. He says that he really now is retired and doing Missionary Service where he began - in the Church of Scotland.



Rev Ian Cameron

Town Clerk

Andrew Balfour Gray, the treasurer of the church, retired in 1939. He had served in the church as both secretary and treasurer, and had also been



Andrew Balfour Gray

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the secretary of Falkirk Town Mission for a time. He held a lot of influence in the church over the years, and was usually the chairman at inductions and leaving socials of ministers. Mr Balfour Gray died in October that year. He was very well known in Falkirk having been the Town Clerk since 1899 and had continued in this position right up until his death. He was held in the highest esteem and respect in the community, and involved himself fully in community life, becoming one of the best known figures in Falkirk and in Scottish municipal circles. In his position as Town Clerk, it is recorded that “to Mr Gray fell a share of the credit for the discovery in 1906 of an ancient and forgotten charter granted in 1600 by King James the Sixth, creating Falkirk a free burgh of barony and conferring, amongst other privileges, that of creating free burgesses”. Mr Paterson paid tribute to Mr Balfour Gray’s service to the church, adding also that he had lost a friend. The communion table in the church, which has an inscription to the memory of Mr & Mrs Balfour Gray, was gifted to the church in 1957 by their daughter. The inscription reads : *“In loving memory of Mr and Mrs Andrew Balfour Gray, for many years worshippers at Falkirk Baptist Church. Gifted by*



Harry Clarkson

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their daughter Mrs Gladys M. B. Hardie. 25th June 1957". The position of church treasurer was taken over by William McClenaghan.

1939 also saw the end of an era in the church with the death of Harry Clarkson the organist and choirmaster. He had held this position for nearly forty-two years. Mr Paterson referred to 'his remarkable genius for friendship, and to his exceptional qualifications for the position he held, as well as to the noble example of a life lived in the love of God'. Harry Clarkson was well known and highly respected in the musical circles in Falkirk. He was conductor of the Carron Works Male Voice Choir and of Falkirk and District Christian Choir. Alex Braid took over the important role of organist and choirmaster.

Lighting Restrictions

The Second World War began in September 1939. Due to black-out regulations, severe lighting restrictions in the church were brought into force, and it was decided to change the times of some of the meetings. The timing of the second Sunday service was moved from the evening to the afternoon. As a precautionary measure in the event of an air-raid warning, a sentinel was posted in the vestibule of the church during services. Mr & Mrs Paterson arranged for an open meeting to be held on Wednesday afternoons for fellowship and intercession, hoping that this would prove useful to many in the church and community. In the summer of 1940 Mr Paterson cancelled his holidays "because I have found so much need for my services in the present circumstances".

At a special deacons meeting held on 1st September 1940, two important things happened. Firstly, Hugh McClenaghan accepted the office of church secretary after the retirement of Mr J B Scott.

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Hugh was to continue as an office-bearer in the church until 1983, serving both as secretary and treasurer. Secondly, Mr Paterson intimated that he had received and accepted a call to George Street Baptist Church in Paisley. His ministry in Falkirk had lasted for nearly five years, and he is remembered as someone who was friendly, and who worked hard at getting to know the congregation. Perhaps he was a bit liberal in his views for the church then, and his age and lack of experience of leading a large and varied church made him a bit uncertain and hesitant at times. However he had an evangelical spirit, and he said at his farewell social that he had been proud to have been the minister of the church.

In October 1940 Mr Paterson took up the pastorate of George Street Baptist Church in Paisley, which had around 160 members. His ministry there wasn't a long one, ending in February 1943. One member there recalls how Mrs Paterson, who didn't always keep well, would help make breakfast in the church for those displaced from their homes due to bombing. Mr Paterson was the minister when the church celebrated its Centenary in 1942. Both he and Mrs Paterson were well-liked in the church. Mr Paterson wasn't long there when the minister's baptismal robes were swapped once again for the ones at Falkirk!

Church of Scotland

'Difficulties in the operation of the machinery of the Baptist system of church government' was one of the reasons why he resigned the pastorate there in February 1943, to apply for admission to the Church of Scotland. In March 1943 Mr Paterson became senior assistant at Paisley Abbey. He was ordained and inducted to the Church of Scotland ministry at Selkirk Lawson Memorial in October 1944. Youth work in the church and

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community was prominent during these years, just as it had been at Lochgilhead. He was involved with the Boys Brigade, and was a member of the Selkirkshire Education Committee. It was said that when he left Selkirk, the church and the community were both spiritually richer for his having lived among them. He did a tremendous amount of work in reorganising the affairs of the church in the difficult years after the war. Mrs Paterson, as President of the Women's Guild, had raised the numbers from 30 to 120. She was also in the Selkirk Amateur Dramatic Society and was Chief Literary Critic on the Selkirk Library Committee.

Cantata

Mr Paterson was then called to Holy Trinity Church in Bridge of Allan from February 1950 until April 1956. During that period the Sunday School numbers doubled. Mrs Paterson led a large Junior Bible Class and was President of a flourishing Women's Guild. Never to stay more than six years in any pastorate, they moved in April 1956 to the newly created charge of Forgue-Inverkeithny, formed by the union of the two congregations (both are small villages near Huntly). Mr Paterson was the first minister of the church. He brought the union of both churches into operation with a tact that was favourably commented upon. They are remembered there as being good with children and very fond of music, and were a well-liked couple. The main aspect here of Mr Paterson's ministry was music, and the church had a strong choir. They rendered a cantata, which was quite an achievement for a small country church. Mrs Paterson was a trained singer and very talented, but didn't keep well. Mr Paterson's brother, Ronald Paterson, was a well-known London couturier, and the ladies of the church there remember the great

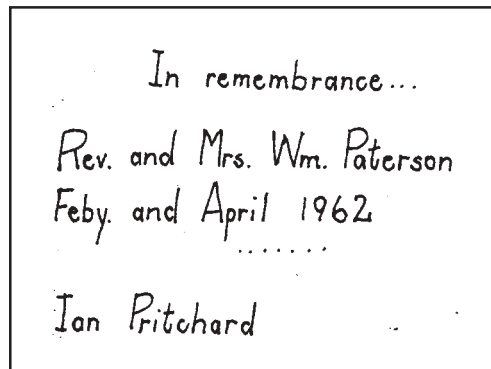


Mr Paterson
at
Forgue-
Inverkeithny

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excitement in their small village when Ronald Paterson visited, and how well-dressed Mrs Paterson was when she wore his creations!

William Paterson was known as a faithful and diligent pastor, and exercised a good pastoral ministry. He involved himself energetically in various Church of Scotland committees. Towards the end of 1961 he became unwell, and died while in the ministry there on 4th February 1962, aged 55. Sadly, Mrs Paterson died just 2 months later, aged 46. It was fitting that each member of the Sunday School and choir received a Bible in their memory, reflecting 31 years of ministry where youth work and music played important parts.



Inscription on bible to the memory of Mr & Mrs Paterson which was presented to Ian Pritchard, a Sunday School member at Forgue-Inverkeithny Church of Scotland.