

Tribute given at the thanksgiving service for the life of Rev Colin Peckham

by his son, Colin Peckham

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My earliest memories of dad involved going to the airport with mom to either see him off on a preaching tour or pick him up on his return. At that young age I didn't really understand what was happening, and mom had to explain that he hadn't spent a week up in the sky, but that the plane had landed somewhere in between leaving and returning. To mom and the three of us kids he was a loving person who would have done anything for us.

The timing seems so sudden and strange to us, as he had just finished writing his autobiography, and it was delivered just two weeks ago. He was in the process of sending it out to friends and dad would never forgive me if I didn't tell you that it's available at the Faith Mission bookshop for a very reasonable price after lunch. In fact, if dad had a say in this, I'm pretty sure it would be available at the back on special offer after the service.

The focus of his life was to tell people about Jesus, and to train others to tell people about Jesus. Even my parents' honeymoon was a preaching tour of what was then Rhodesia. In no small way was this passion a factor in my decision to make that my life's focus too, as indeed have my sisters Heather and Christine. Anyone who knew him will know that his advice as we grew up was never slow in coming, but contributed significantly to who we are today. It was always considered, although sometimes not always very logical. I recall when I told him that Norma and I felt that God was calling us to the missionfield in Africa that he asked if I really believed it was right for me to take a young Scottish lass away from her home and family to such a distant land... (think about it... I'm sure the penny will drop).

I also remember him taking me aside a couple of days before my wedding two years ago to say, in a quiet but instructional tone "son, I can still fit into the suit I wore when I got married." I don't think that advice was entirely thought through. I am sure he is now advising St Peter on improving admissions procedures and has probably already by now submitted plans for the addition of a library to his mansion.

My last memory of him was also at the airport, only this time he was taking me there to return to Cape Town a few hours after an event I'd been leading in Edinburgh. It was 4am, and we had to stop the car on the way as I was sick from exhaustion. We said goodbye at the airport and I went up in the sky. It was the last time I would see him as when I returned he had taken his final departure. Dad's not coming back from this one because now he is in a far better place, with the One he served so faithfully for so long; and one day we will join him.

We chose the next hymn for two reasons. It is by Charles Wesley, a hymnwriter that dad loved, and because it seems to sum up what Dad was all about. Proclaiming the Master, telling the world about Him.

*God ruleth on high, almighty to save,
And still He is nigh, His presence we have;
The great congregation His triumph shall sing,
Ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.*