

## Tribute given at the thanksgiving service for the live of Mary Peckham

by her son, Colin Peckham

Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010

My Mom was no ordinary woman. She was an Island woman, but not an ordinary one of those either. How many island women entered the man's world of preaching, lectured at a Bible college, traveled out to Africa, spent their honeymoon on a six-week mission trip to Rhodesia? My mom was always up for an adventure. Whether it was setting off on a mission trip at 4am from our home in Cape Town up to the wilds of Namibia to set up tent in a dry river bed for a youth camp, or whether it was standing up to preach in front of the South African president's wife, she had little fear of the unknown.

My mom's passion was the glory of God, and the holiness of His people. I don't think I've ever met anyone in life who had a better understanding of the phrase 'the fear of the Lord'. Mom's reverence for and understanding of the sense of the majesty of God stemmed from her love of the Old Testament. For Dad it was all about the apostle Paul, for mom, it was all about King David. I think some people were a little afraid of her, as a woman of anointed ministry through whom God would speak. I vividly remember services where she would sing, and there would be a breathless silence as she completed a verse of 'set Scotland now on fire', or read Hosea 5 and have the congregation visibly and audibly weeping before she even opened her mouth to preach. God, it seems, saw Mary Morrison and then Mary Peckham as someone through whom He could do business.

My mom was no ordinary woman, but to us kids she was just mom.

She was the mother who picked us up from school, who washed our clothes and ironed them ready for the morning, she was the baker of fine scones, and the hostess that effortlessly rustled up trays of teacups and treats when my dad arrived with unexpected guests, she was the woman who prepared extra food on a Sunday just in case we brought our hungry student friends back for lunch, which we did almost every week. She was a real friend to many people and a prodigious writer of letters.



One of my earliest memories of mom was at the City Hall in Cape Town. She had taken me to hear Handel's Messiah, and we spent most of the concert going through the orchestra list at the back of the programme trying, by process of elimination, to determine which instrument it was that sounded rather like a bluebottle in a jam jar. We eventually worked out that it was the harpsichord. Mom's love of music in no small way shaped what I was to do with my life. And her love and gentleness I see daily in my sisters Heather and Christine, and in the way Christine is bringing up mom's first two grandchildren, Sam and Eve, who are here today. I'd like you to see, if I may, mom's third grandchild, Andrew, born the day before her stroke. He can't be here today, cos he's too new! Mom was so proud of him, and telling all the doctors and nurses about him before she lost consciousness.

By her life, mom challenged us to live our lives every day, right up to the edges, knowing that this is no dress rehearsal, and that at the end of it all, we would stand before a holy God and give account.

During the week that mom lay unconscious in hospital I read these words that appeared in my reading for that particular day. "the time to honour her has come ". I phoned my sister Heather in Edinburgh and we wept together over the words. It seemed that God was preparing us for the next stage of His plans. Earth has lost an amazing woman, and a vital link to one of the last times that God moved in a major way in Scotland. This fact alone should cause us as the body of Christ and as individuals to redouble our efforts to humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways, lest another generation pass without knowing what it means for God to hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land. Mom

always said that having experienced the presence of God in revival spoiled you for anything less, and now she knows in full what she already knew in greater part than most people in this room.

Perhaps the phrase that best sums up mom's life is this: she was a faithful servant. A servant to God, her husband, the mission, her children. And at the end of the day, that's all she really wanted. Her first love in life was Jesus, and she wanted to hear His well done, and have others hear it for themselves when their turn came. Her passion to see the church return to God and know Him fully was all-consuming, and I can think of no more fitting way to end these few words than with some verses from Hosea 5 and 6 which seem to sum up God's message to the church through mom. I will read from Mom's well-worn bible:

"I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up... Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."