

In Person – Our Minister Hugh

It's now almost two years since Hugh became our minister at Newtonhill. We asked Hugh the following questions...

Where were you born?

My parents lived in Glasgow but due to the 'Baby Boom' I was born in Paisley.

What did you do before becoming a minister?

My best to survive for about 30 years! Including a Mathematics and Physics degree at Glasgow, working as a computer programmer for 3 years, being ordained an elder and getting married to Ailsa.

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the Church today?

That's a hard one. How about 1) Renewing confidence in the gospel and developing a consistently Christian view of the world in a culture where much of the media acts as if Christianity were ridiculous and many claim that there is no such thing as objective truth in spiritual matters. 2) Attracting a generation that is shy of commitment to a faith that only 'shows returns' once you have committed yourself. 3) The Pharisees were so concerned with 'the tradition of the elders' they changed nothing, the Athenians 'spent all their time telling and hearing the latest new thing' We need to work out how to avoid both these mistakes.

What do you enjoy doing for relaxation?

Playing around with and on the family computers.

What kind of music and books do you enjoy?

I'm not terribly musical and don't listen to very much at all, in the car I'm usually tuned into Radio 4. I've been fond of Science Fiction since I was a teenager.

What is your favourite food?

Anything Ailsa makes. But Chicken Korma tops the list.

Who would you most like to meet, and what would you ask them? God. By then I'll know all the answers (1Cor 13.12)

When and how did you become a Christian?

On top of a number 58 bus going along Great Western Road in the spring of 1976. I had bought a Good News New Testament from a Christian Union bookstall because the chap selling it had asked me to so many meetings I was embarrassed to say 'No' to him again. Having nothing better to look at on my way home one night, I pulled it out of my bag and started reading at random. I was in Galatians. Then I got to Ch6 v7-8 "Do not deceive yourselves, no one makes a fool of God. A man will reap exactly what he plants. If he plants in the field of his natural desires, from it he will gather the harvest of death; if he plants in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit he will gather the harvest of eternal life." The Spirit touched me and, like dominos falling, I realised, 'these verses are true; the whole bible is true; Jesus really is the Son of God.' Immediately I bowed my head and became a Christian. The whole experience was so real it would have been impossible to do anything else. I stepped on the bus fairly tired and flat, but got off floating 3 feet in the air.

What issues or concerns do you get passionate about?

Probably not enough. But I am exercised about the need for Christians to really base our personal and church lives on the Word of God, which involves us knowing it better; about the growing religious persecution of Christians in many places, and, like most people, by obvious injustices and abuses of power.

What three ambitions do you have for the future?

To pray and study the bible more, to help more in the house, to meet the deadline for Reachout!