

Moderator acceptance speech - General Assembly 2019

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair

Right Reverend let me thank you for affording me this singular honour in being appointed as the Moderator of this General Assembly. With your approval of the nomination I also now covet your prayers both for this Assembly and for the year ahead for grace, wisdom and love, and forgiveness when I get it wrong!

I give thanks to God for all those who have graciously invested time into my life and shared with me in my ministry.

It all started at my first SU holiday that I attended back in the 1960s when I was attracted by a super 8 film of the activities and was willing to put up with “the religious bit.” I little knew then, how the person of Jesus and the story of his life, death and resurrection would get under my skin and never get out.

I am grateful to SU for those who led me to faith and subsequently nurtured me in the faith. Through that organisation, and the inspirational leadership of Richard Gorrie I would be encouraged to lead my first bible study group, give my first talk (and swallow a fly) attend my first prayer meeting and have the extraordinary privilege of leading another into a living faith in Christ.

Through SU I would serve in Africa, then here in Scotland and make contact with movements all round the world.

At the same time I was being increasingly brought into the Church of Scotland. Rev Ian Paterson, then Chaplain at Stirling University, greatly daring, allowed me to give my first sermon. Even more surprising, having heard it, he allowed me to do another- once he had time, a full year, to recover!

Rev George Philip, my minister in Glasgow, listened carefully as I talked through my sense of call at the age of 19 He told me to come back in a year! By then I did not need to ask him because I knew the congregations I served in Newton-on-Ayr in Ayr and now in Palmerston Place in Edinburgh have put up with me, shaped me, encouraged me, no doubt at times despaired of me but never given up on me, and their love and support means everything. Some from both congregations are in the Visitors' Gallery today.

And God, in his grace, gave me as my travelling companion along the way my wife, Ruth, whom I first met about 45 years ago. She is my best friend and has had a more profound impact on my ministry than even she realises. Now supported by my four children, all active in Christian work three now married and our four grandchildren and another on the way we rejoice in the goodness of God and in his grace and mercy. Three of my children, Jo, Rachel and Bethany are in the gallery together with my sons-in-law, Aaron and Alan and daughter-in-law Judith whose husband, my son, Tim, is one of my Chaplains. Also two of our four grandchildren are here Andrew and Levi.

I had no idea when Jesus said “Follow me” all these years ago as a teenager how exciting would be the adventure of faith, that it would take me around the world and into every sphere of life. Thank you once again and I pray I may be worthy of the trust you have shown in me.