Birmingham Baptist Churches Exploring their Black History Project

Leader's Story: Lebert (Bert) Balfour 'A Faithful Servant'

Authors: Gale Richards with Leoner-Gardner Howard, and Julie Large.

Bert Balfour was born in St Ann, Jamaica. Prior to coming to England in 1960, Bert did masonry work, and worked as a porter at a Jamaican airport. When he moved to England, he initially lived in London, where he met Thelma, whom he went on to marry. They moved to Birmingham, in 1965, where Bert had relatives, and he found a job working at the Lucas car factory.

Bert Balfour came into membership at Edward Road Baptist Church on 4 October 1981. Thelma recalls Bert as going on to regularly preach in the church's worship services, and serving as an evangelist, who regularly knocked on people's doors, locally, seeking to share his Christian faith with them. Indeed, the church members' meeting minutes on 25 March 1983 record that Bert Balfour was helping to continue local evangelism alongside Peter Donaldson (who was a student serving as Pastor's assistant).

An annual church groups report April 1985 – March 1986 (a supporting document for the March 1986 annual church members' meeting) also mentions Bert as a joint leader of one of the church's house groups. Bert was later elected as a deacon, as recorded in the church members

meeting minutes 8 May 1987. He was the third Black man to hold this role at the church.

Bert was also a management committee member of the Birmingham Baptist Churches Inner City Project, that helped to birth the Jericho Project at Edward Road Baptist Church. Today, that project is an independent charity, known as the Jericho Foundation, and has gone on to offer practical help and support to many people in need (e.g. unemployed), and continues to do so.

Bert died in 2008.

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References

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‘Birmingham Baptist Inner-City Project Annual Report and Accounts 1988–1989’.

Edward Baptist Church, Church Roll Book.

Edward Road Baptist Church Members' Meeting Minutes 25 March 1983.

Edward Road Baptist Church 'Annual Church Groups Report April 1985 – March 1986' (a supporting document for the March 1986 annual church members' meeting).

Edward Road Baptist Church Members' Meeting Minutes 8 May 1987.