

WEEKLY SERMON

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Sowing seeds will bear fruit ... in time

Many years ago I met Tom Baker, the fourth Doctor Who, at a book signing in Glasgow.

To tell this story I have to time travel back in my mind to 1975.

Baker had only recently become the Doctor and had recently completed his first year on TV.

He was at the height of his powers.

I was a big fan of the series (I still am) and this was a seminal moment for me in a number of ways.

I met my TV hero close-up and he spoke to me as he signed two Doctor Who novels for me (both of which I still have).

Baker totally inhabited the part, turning up for the event at the big John Menzies newsagent on Sauchiehall Street in full costume; long scarf trailing behind him as he entered to cheers from hundreds of young people.

My mum and I waited for several hours to see him. As I was near the front of the queue I didn't have long to wait (after Baker settled himself at a table groaning with books, posters and badges) before I was standing in front of him, clutching my mum's hand and slightly in awe of the wild-haired man with the toothy smile in front of me.

He quickly put me at my ease.

As he asked my name and wrote in my books, my mum told him she loved his scarf.

"I'll send you the pattern!" he quipped, and my mum laughed.

Then, as soon as I had arrived at the table it was over (for me) and the next child was having their moment.

Years later I read an interview with actor David Tennant (the 10th Doctor) who hails from Paisley near Glasgow. He talked about waiting in a queue to meet Tom Baker at John Menzies in the city and have a book signed!

Then a few years after that I read another interview with actor Peter Capaldi (the 12th Doctor, also from Glasgow) who was a bit older than Tennant and me but also wanted to get his book signed. He was delayed and got there just a bit too late to meet our mutual hero.

Around the same time, I read yet another interview with Stephen Moffatt (who became Executive Producer of the series on television from 2010-2017) and - guess what - he had also been in the same queue!

So, while I was waiting to meet my favourite Doctor, his 'future selves' in the shape of a young Tennant and teenage Capaldi, alongside producer Moffatt, were all nearby!

He may not have realised it at the time but Baker's appearances were dropping seeds of inspiration wherever he went - even so far as inspiring two of the future actors who would play the same role and the future producer of the series as well.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

Our actions 'in the now' can have a ripple effect in so many ways can't they?

Sometimes it can feel a bit soul-destroying when we are telling people about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

In the moment our words may fail to inspire. As in the Parable of the Sower in Luke's Gospel they may seem to have fallen on rocky ground; to have had little impact worth measuring. But don't give up hope.

I already loved Doctor Who in those far off days, but my love of the series was cemented in that moment of meeting the Doctor in person. I still love to read about the series now (and to watch it of course) all these years later.

Meeting Christ for the first time was a seminal moment in my life as well.

And now I also love to read and hear about Him and tell others about the way He changes lives.

So, tell your story of how you came to Christ and what He means to you.

You may not see the fruits in the moment but, like Tom Baker, you will still be planting seeds that could sprout bountifully many years, even decades, later.

Meanwhile, meeting Baker was important in another very special way to me.

Sadly, less than a year after our encounter together with the real Doctor Who, my mum passed away from cancer aged just 53. She was actually diagnosed within weeks of the book signing event.

The whole event therefore is my last, vivid 'happy memory' of my mum. What's more, it was only years later I suddenly realised the last time I actually remember hearing my mum laugh was when Baker quipped about the scarf pattern. A moment to cherish.

As I said before, we never know what impact our words and actions will have.

Let's remember that as we move forward in life from today.

Ronnie Semley, Communications Manager