Short History of

Westbourne Baptist Church, Calgary

By Raymond Hall - Second Son of Morley Hall

As I can recall my father sharing

the beginnings of the Church to us as a family in the early days of our childhood.

Westbourne was born out of a desire of the folks at Westbourne Park in Scotland in or about I would guess the latter part of the World War. The Christians of Westbourne Park felt the Great Commission of our Lord did include establishing a missionary work somewhere across the sea in Canada.

Upon looking ever so closely at a map of Canada they came across the name Calgary, way out in Canada's wild west, they were especially taken with the name of Calgary because it is a Gaelic word for clear running water being as they were Baptists they figured that if there were a Baptist Church in Calgary, that it would be called First Baptist. So they set about to write to a First Baptist Church in Calgary.
Their correspondence went well and necessary funds to start a missionary work in Calgary. Thus Westbourne Baptist Church was born.

Through the 1920's to the 1930's the location of the Church at 4th Street & 13 Ave SE was a very lovely middle class neighborhood, with tree lined streets & boulevards. It was an area where most residents worked for CPR (Ogden Shops - or Round House at Aylmer Yards) Burns Meats - Royal Crown Snow Co etc. Some of Westbourne folks came from Elbow Park - St. Boniface - Rideau Park and Crescent Heights.

In the early 1920's Mr. William Aberhart was invited to come over to Westbourne to teach a Sunday afternoon Bible Class. He was a member of Grace Presbyterian Church (a large sandstone building at 15 Ave & 95 St. SW). As time would have it, Mr. Aberhart took over Westbourne Church and became its pastor.
In the latter part of the 1970s, Mr. Aberhart decided to build the Prophetic Bible Institute near the T. Eaton store on Save West. This would leave the Westbourne building empty. Upon finding the children of Westbourne Sunday school didn’t walk up to Save from 4th Street to the new institute, a group of Mister Aberhart’s people asked to go back to the Westbourne building to save the Sunday school. They asked and received permission to purchase the Westbourne church and call a new pastor to carry on the ministry. The folks wrote to the Baptist Home Mission Board in Toronto. They sent out a young man to candidate. The Westbourne people were taken with the young man and called him to come. I don’t recall all the details, but it seems there came up a very pressing family need and he couldn’t come. The Westbourne people were disappointed but asked the Home Mission Board if they
Might recommend another candidate, they recommended my father, Morley Hall, who was pastoring the First Baptist Church in the Gold Mining Town of Timmins, Ontario. Dad played music and sought the Lord's will in the matter. I guess to use the language of today, the rest was history. On to the Wild West of Calgary and Westbourne Baptist Church. It was February 1, 1930. (til June 1944)

P.S. Along with starting a Bible College in the basement, Dad had an extensive radio ministry in the 30's. It was called the Back Home Gospel Hour, 9:00 to 10:00 PM Sunday evenings. After the evening service, CFBN 10,000 watts at the time, would not allow the evening congregation to stay for the broadcast. As in those days, people coughing or babies crying in the background was a no no on radio. It was also not legal to mention money of any kind for any reason, CFBN charged Westbourne $200 for one hour. I remember it was all Dad could do in those hard times to raise $200. (Remember it was the Dirty Thirties, Depression Years). God hundreds of words many found the Lord as victorious Dad got mail from the Texas Panhandle to Hawaii.