HUGHES, DEWI ARWEL (1947 - 2017), Christian leader and theologian

Name: Dewi Arwel Hughes
Date of birth: 1947
Date of death: 2017
Spouse: Margaret Ruth Hughes (née Hughes)
Child: Rebecca Rhian Hughes
Child: Daniel Rhodri Hughes
Child: Steffan William Hughes
Child: Anna Mari Hughes
Child: Lydia Ruth Hughes
Parent: Gruffudd Evans Hughes
Parent: Annie Hughes (née Edwards)
Gender: Male
Occupation: Christian leader and theologian
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Arfon Jones

Dewi Arwel Hughes was born on 1 January 1947 at Bugeilfod, Llangwm, Denbighshire, the youngest of four children of Gruffudd Evans Hughes (1912-1975), agricultural merchant, and his wife Annie (née Edwards, 1908-1957), a seamstress. He had three sisters, Elen Haf, Lona Wyn and Gwenan Arwel. A year after his birth the family moved to Garth Isa, Frongoch, near Bala. His mother died in 1957, when Dewi was ten, and the following year the family moved to Garth (the old 'Bull Bach') on Bala High Street.

His mother's death left its mark on Dewi's life. He wasn't close to his father, but he thought the world of his older sister Haf, who gave up her work in Oxford to come back home and look after her father and brother. Then, when he was in his early teens, he had a spiritual experience that changed the direction of his life - he dedicated his life to Jesus Christ.

His early education was at Cwm Tir Mynach Primary School and later Tŷ Tan Domen, the Boys' Grammar School in Bala. In 1964 he went to the University College of North Wales, Bangor to study Welsh. His first year at college was a time of deep doubt about his faith, and he went through a very dark period of depression and fear of death - a fear that kept coming back to torment him for many years.

After graduating in Welsh, in late September that same year he married a young Liverpool student, Margaret Ruth Hughes (b. 1946). He stayed on at Bangor to study Theology, which eventually led to a PhD he completed in 1980.

Dewi was a founder member of Ebenezer Evangelical Church, Bangor. Then in 1975 he moved to Pontypridd to lecture in the Religious Studies Department at the Polytechnic of Wales. Dewi and Maggie raised five children there - Rebecca Rhian, Daniel Rhodri, Steffan William, Anna Mari and Lydia Ruth. Dewi was an elder at Temple Baptist Church, Pontypridd. He was also a keen supporter of Welsh Education and served for many years on the Governing Boards of Pont Siôn Norton Welsh Primary School and Rhydfelen High School (later Gartholwg).

In 1987 he began working for Tearfund, the Christian relief organisation. He was Tearfund Wales co-ordinator for six years, before being appointed as the charity's Theological Consultant, from 1993 until his retirement in 2011. He was passionate about justice for the poor. He travelled to many of the world's poorest countries with his work, and always enjoyed connecting with the minority cultures in those countries.

Despite all his international travels and his significant influence on the development of Tearfund's work and on the wider evangelical world, Dewi still regarded himself as an ordinary rural lad from the Bala area. He loved mountain walking and bird watching. He spent most of his working life in the study, but the hours spent in front of a computer screen were balanced by time at his allotment, growing organic vegetables and fruit.

He was a man who was well versed in the Scriptures, and was internationally respected as a theologian, preacher and lecturer. He was Chair of the Evangelical Alliance in Wales from its inception in 1989 until 1996. He was also a member of the UK Evangelical Alliance's Theology Commission (ACUTE). He wrote several influential books: *Has God Many Names*? (IVP, 1996), *God of the Poor* (OM Publishing, 1998); *Power and Poverty* (IVP, 2008); *Castrating Culture* (Paternoster Press, 2011) and *The World on our Doorstep* (Evangelical Alliance, 2016). Yet, through it all, he was an unassuming and modest man who always regarded it a privilege to serve his God and his fellow human beings.

Dewi Arwel Hughes died on 4 October 2017 from bowel cancer, and is buried at Glyntaff Cemetery, Pontypridd.

Author

Arfon Jones

Sources

Personal acquaintance and family information

Additional Links

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