

CHANCE, THOMAS WILLIAMS (1872 - 1954), minister (B) and principal of the Baptist College, Cardiff

Name: Thomas Williams Chance
Date of birth: 1872
Date of death: 1954
Spouse: Mary Maria Chance (née Morgan)
Child: Sidney Morgan Chance
Parent: Mary Chance (née Williams)
Parent: Thomas Chance
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (B) and principal of the Baptist College, Cardiff
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born 23 August 1872, son of Thomas Chance (died 5 January 1873, 29 years old) and Mary (born Williams; died 15 August 1908, 79 years old) of Erwood, Breck. He received his early education at Pen-rhiw school, but because of his father's early death he had to leave school when he was 11 years old to earn his living as a farm servant and maintain the family for the next 9 years, initially at Erwood and later in the neighbourhood of Cathedin. He was baptised 17 April 1887 in Hephzibah church, Erwood, and at the urging of his pastor, John Morgan, he began to preach. He resumed his education, spending 2 years at a grammar school held by Daniel Christmas Lloyd (Congl. minister), in his home, Hampton House, Glasbury, and then at the Baptist College and University College, Cardiff, where he graduated B.A. in 1898 with first-class honours in Hebrew, M.A. (1900) and B.D. (1916). In 1899 he was ordained minister of High Street (B) Church, Merthyr Tydfil. In January 1904 he was appointed part-time lecturer in Church History at the Baptist College, Cardiff, and full-time professor and financial secretary in 1908. He became acting principal on the death of John Morlais Davies in April 1928, but despite being recommended by the executive council to an enthusiastic meeting of nearly nine hundred church representatives in Cardiff on 20 September, he conceded the principalship to [Thomas Phillips](#) (1868 - 1936) by only four votes, because, it was generally held, of his lack of knowledge of Welsh. After the death of [Thomas Phillips](#), he was appointed to the post, July 1936, though not without much debate for some months in *Seren Cymru*. He remained head until he retired 30 June 1944 when he was made principal emeritus.

In addition to his academic abilities, he had business acumen and exceptional administrative gifts. One of his main achievements was to set the college's finances on a sound base, securing the freehold of the site as a gift, and ensuring that both the land and funds were available to build the residential hostel which he had long been advocating. He was dean of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Wales, 1928-32, and he was instrumental with others in helping to establish a Joint School of Theology at Cardiff in 1928, and in 1934 in designing a diploma course that met the requirements of non-graduate students preparing for the ministry.

He was a member of Albany Road Church, Cardiff, and enthusiastically supported the work of his denomination in the city, e.g. as chairman of the Cardiff Baptist Board for 21 years. He was also president of the East Glamorgan Baptist Association, 1934-35. He took a keen interest in the missionary work of the Christian Endeavour Movement, and was president of the Welsh National Christian Endeavour Union in 1906-07 and 1923-24, and president of the British C.E. Union in 1924-25. In June 1954, as a tribute to his long-standing service to the East Glamorgan Baptist Association, he received a gift of an oil portrait of himself, painted by Alfred Hall, Cardiff, which he later presented to the Baptist College. He edited and contributed three chapters to the biography of one of his predecessors, *The life of Principal William Edwards ...* (1934).

On 8 August 1900 he married Mary Maria, daughter of his first pastor, John Morgan (died 8 September 1922 aged 82) and Margaret his wife (died 14 April 1924, aged 74), and they had one son, Sidney Morgan Chance, South Park, Gerrards Cross, who was alive when his parents celebrated their golden wedding but died before them. Thomas Williams Chance died 22 December 1954 after an operation in the County Hospital, Hereford, and was buried two days later in Hephzibah graveyard. His wife died 22 July 1956, aged 81.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

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The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary, 1956, 114-5

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Who was who?

information from the Rev. W. George Evans, Whitchurch, Cardiff, Ivor Hayward, Cardiff, and E. C. Davies, Erwood

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