

JONES, DANIEL OWEN (1880 - 1951), minister (Congl.) and missionary in Madagascar;

Name: Daniel Owen Jones
Date of birth: 1880
Date of death: 1951
Parent: Rebecca Jones
Parent: David Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (Congl.) and missionary
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Ieuan Samuel Jones

Born at Tŷ-gwyn, Rhiw-Siôn, Cwm-cou, Cardiganshire, near Newcastle Emlyn, 23 February 1880, son of David and Rebecca Jones. He was educated at Tre-wen British School. At 16 years of age he began preaching in Tre-wen chapel under the ministry of David Evans (who later became his brother-in-law). He received further education at Newcastle Emlyn grammar school, the Old College School in Carmarthen and the Heath, Pontypridd. In 1897 he was accepted to the theological college in Brecon. He graduated with honours in Welsh at the University College, Cardiff, in 1902, returning afterwards to Brecon to study theology. In 1905 he was ordained to the Christian ministry at the English Congregational church at Stourbridge. After the death of his mother in 1909 he offered himself to the London Missionary Society, intending to go to China, but the Society felt that there was a need in Madagascar for a man of his qualifications. Perhaps they were also conscious of the long connection between Wales and the mission there. For a short period he went to France to learn French. His commissioning service was held in 1910 at Lyndhurst chapel, Hampstead, and he arrived at Madagascar at the end of November that same year.

His first station was Ambohimanga, the old capital, where he ministered to eight churches and a school. On 1 May 1912, at Faravohitra Memorial Church, Antananarivo, he married Hilda Victoria Smith, a member of the Anglican church at Watford, who had travelled out there in March to marry him. They had four daughters. He was moved to Ambopotsy in 1915 to superintend a wide circle of churches and to lecture on three mornings a week at the United Theological College. He returned to Wales for his first furlough at the end of ten years. On his return to the island he was moved to Antsihanaka to restart the missionary work which he had been obliged to stop when the French occupied the country, and to establish an academy for ministers at Imerimandroso to serve the north. A missionary hospital had been opened the previous year. He also superintended about 70 churches in the area around lake Alaotra. The women of the Welsh Congregational churches in the Swansea district bought a motor boat (named *Abertawe*) to make travelling easier, but the venture was unsuccessful owing to the luxuriant growth in the shallow water. In 1927 he was awarded the M.A. degree of the University of Wales for a dissertation on 'The Eschatology of the Celtic Church'. During his absence in 1926 the mission station at Imerimandroso was totally destroyed by a tornado. After it had been rebuilt, he established there a theological college to train ministers in place of the old academy. Three native teachers were appointed to help him, and three ladies to teach the women. Students came to the college from as far as Mandritsara, 200 miles away across the mountains. In 1930 he was made principal of the United Theological College in the capital, and he superintended a large circle of churches in three districts. After returning to Britain on furlough in 1939 he was prevented from returning until 1944, on account of the war. In 1947 he found himself in the middle of the bitter revolt against the French government. By then he had passed retirement age after 38 years of diligent and dedicated service on the island. He died, three years after leaving the island, on 17 June 1951, and was buried in the churchyard of the Congregational church in Bushey. A memorial tablet to him was unveiled by his widow at Tre-wen chapel on 13 June 1956.

He was a kindly man with a good sense of humour, courteous in manner and totally dedicated to his work. He was a talented author and poet; he composed many hymns in Malagasi, and translated others from Welsh and English. He wrote a book on pastoral theology in Malagasi, which had a wide circulation, and also two commentaries on the Psalms. He made numerous contributions to ecclesiastical journals in Madagascar, and he was also the author of two books for children, *Ar lannau'r Llyn Mawr* (1929) and *Am dro i Fadagascar* (1950). In 1942 he contributed an article to the quarterly *Religion* on 'Primitive Cults and Beliefs in Madagascar'. He addressed the Union of Welsh Independents at Ammanford (1927) and Caernarfon (1949).

Author

Reverend Ieuan Samuel Jones

Sources

D. Brinley Pugh, *Triawd yr Ynys* (1954) (1954)

Tywysydd y Plant, February, 1941

Y Tyst, 5 July 1951

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Published date: 2001

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