

JONES, JOHN THOMAS (1889 - 1952), missionary

Name: John Thomas Jones
Date of birth: 1889
Date of death: 1952
Spouse: Madeleine Jones (née Hipeau)
Spouse: Emily Jones (née Bowen)
Child: Lilian Jones
Child: Philip Jones
Parent: Anna Jones
Parent: Thomas Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: missionary
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Ieuan Samuel Jones

Born at a farm called Ffos y Gaseg, in Llanegwad parish, near Carmarthen, 28 February 1889, son of Thomas and Anna Jones. He was educated at Ysbyty national school. His father died when John was 15 years old, and after leaving school he worked on the farm for several years. He began preaching in 1913, intending to offer himself for missionary work. To prepare himself he went to the Old College School, Carmarthen, and then to the Presbyterian College in the same town. He was imprisoned for two years as a conscientious objector and he suffered greatly. After the war he completed his college course, and after being accepted by the London Missionary Society as a missionary in Madagascar, he spent a further period of preparation at New College, London, and at Livingstone College to study the elements of medicine.

He was ordained to the ministry at Pant-teg, near Carmarthen (his mother church) on 4 and 5 July 1921. He married Nurse Emily Bowen of Pembrey at King's Cross chapel, London, and they sailed for Madagascar on 9 May 1922, arriving at Tamatave on 11 June the same year. He worked in Mandritsara in the land of the Tsimihety in the north. As the first missionaries there were Christians from the Hova tribe (who had conquered the Tsimihety some time in the past), only a few had accepted the gospel. The country remained primitive and travelling was difficult. Jones was received warmly and his efforts were very successful. The secret of his success was his unstinting devotion and the gentleness of his personality. Training native leaders was of great importance to him, and he travelled long distances on foot from village to village. He and his wife had three children. After the birth of the last, Mrs. Jones fell ill and she died in 1926 as she was being conveyed 200 m. over the mountains to Imerimandroso, where it had been arranged for a doctor from the capital to see her. (See *Tyst*, 17 June 1976, p.5). In November the same year his youngest son died, and in less than six months his second son was killed when Imerimandroso was struck by a tornado.

He returned to Mandritsara, and on 7 April 1927 he married Mlle. Madeleine Hipeau, a teacher and missionary under the auspices of the Paris Missionary Society, in the capital. After furlough in Wales he was appointed to work in another area because of his deteriorating health, but he continued to visit Mandritsara. By 1932 he was superintending 58 churches in Ambohimanga (near the capital, Antananarivo), 54 in Mandritsara and 25 in Anativolo. His health had deteriorated so much by 1943 that he was compelled to sever his connection with the north. After furlough in Wales and London he and his wife returned to Madagascar in December 1946. But the revolt against France had made the Malagasy people suspicious of all Europeans. These were difficult and dangerous days, but for J.T. Jones they were an opportunity to serve as a protector of those who were suffering and a peacemaker between warring tribes. He addressed the Union of Welsh Independents at Llanelli (1929), London (1937), Swansea (1945) and Bala (1951). He died in Eltham, 4 April 1952, having completed arrangements to return to Madagascar (against doctor's orders).

Author

Reverend Ieuan Samuel Jones

Sources

D. Brinley Pugh, *Triawd yr Ynys* (1954)(1954), 55-79

Y Tyst, 10 and 24 April 1952

Y Tyst, 17 June 1976, p.5

Adroddiadau Cyfarfodydd blynyddol Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg, 1929, 1937, 1945 and 1951

Further reading

Alun Lenny, 'Cofio cenhadwr dewr Pant-teg', *Carmarthen Journal*, 12 June 2019, p. 47

Additional Links

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