

## LEWIS, DAVID JOHN ('Lewis Tymb'l'; 1879 - 1947), Congl. minister, popular preacher and lecturer

**Name:** David John Lewis  
**Pseudonym:** Lewis Tymb'l  
**Date of birth:** 1879  
**Date of death:** 1947  
**Parent:** Mari Lewis  
**Parent:** Dan Lewis  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Congl. minister, popular preacher and lecturer  
**Area of activity:** Education; Religion  
**Author:** David Peregrine Jones

Born at Mynydd-bach, a smallholding in the village of Hermon, in the parish of Llanfyrnach, Pembrokeshire, 28 December 1879, the second son of the family of five children of Dan and Mari Lewis. His father worked at the Llanfyrnach lead mine until it closed and he had to go to Aberdare to find work, but following a serious injury he was unable to continue working. He died aged 43 of lead poisoning. Despite this the children were given a good upbringing and the opportunity to make good; two of them achieved good posts in education and banking, but it was the preacher who was Mynydd-bach's most notable contribution to Welsh life.

David John received his early education in the elementary school at Hermon where [Principal Thomas Rees](#) had been a pupil ten years earlier. He entered the school on July 7, 1884; [T.E. Nicholas](#) was one of his contemporaries there. The headmaster at the time was John Davies from Felin-foel, a strict disciplinarian, who had succeeded [Robert Bryan](#) in 1883. According to that article, [Bryan](#) had been headmaster at Whitland but that was merely the postal address of the school at Hermon. The Sunday school at Brynmyrnach was more important to him in his development as a preacher than his day school. When he was 14 he was apprenticed as a tailor to Dafydd Jones, Brynawel, Hermon. He was one of nine apprentices noted for their talent. The discipline of this craft was to be reflected in the smart appearance of the preacher for the rest of his life. Religion and culture flourished in the area and under the firm influence of his mother, the inspiration of its literary figures, especially Brynach Davies and important ministers like John Stephens (Llwyn-yr-hwrdd), father of [Professor J. Oliver Stephens](#), O.R. Owen, Glandwr and [Ben Davies](#), Tre-lech (1840 - 1930), he was fired with the desire to be a preacher.

After a period at Myrddin School (the Old College School), he entered the Memorial College, Brecon in 1901. After some difficulty with mathematics he was able to complete the entry criteria to the University of Wales and he started his degree course in the University College of Cardiff in 1903. He graduated with 2nd-class honours in Hebrew in 1905. For the next two years he followed the B.D. course at the Memorial College. He received full marks in the New Testament Greek paper in 1906 and special praise from the examiner on the philosophy of religion paper. He completed the second year of the B.D. in the summer of 1907 but by then the young enthusiastic church at Bethesda, Tumble, had, since February, called him to be their minister. He was ordained there July 3, 1907 and he remained there for the rest of his life, and became known as 'Lewis Tymb'l'.

He soon became a much loved figure in the Welsh pulpit, his magnetic personality almost greater in appeal than his sermons. These always covered a single topic and reached a climax to end with unexpected suddenness. He received many invitations to preach from all over Wales. His most famous and best known sermons were 'Do you wish to be made whole?' ('Roll up the mat'), 'Mary breaking the ointment box.' ('She broke the alabaster box'), 'Cast your bread on the surface of the water,' 'They departed into their country another way,' 'In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord.' His lectures were almost as popular as his sermons - 'The art of living,' 'David Livingstone' and 'Shon Gymro.' He preached from notes on postcards; he disliked writing anything in full and he did not like to be restricted to a script. This is why he refused to preach on the radio after one attempt.

He was President of the Union of Welsh Independents for 1945-46 and he delivered his address, 'Bwrw'r draul,' at Ebenezer, Swansea in June 1945. This was published in Ieuan Davies' biography of 'Lewis Tymb'l' and one of his sermons in *Llef y Gwylledydd* (ed. E. Curig Davies, 1927). However, his lively personality could not be conveyed on paper.

He never married and he spent forty years in two lodgings in Tumble. He was taken ill in December 1946 and he underwent surgery in Cardiff. He was not allowed to preach subsequently and he died 10 March 1947 in Morriston hospital. He was interred in Crymych cemetery on Sunday 16 March after the biggest snowstorm within living memory had prevented the funeral taking place the previous day. A memorial booklet was published.

## Author

David Peregrine Jones, (1907 - 1986)

## Sources

Personal information

Ieuan Davies, *Lewis Tymbel o'r Mynydd Bach i'r Mynydd Mawr* (Swansea 1989)(1989)

## Additional Links

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