

WILLIAMS, DANIEL POWELL ('Pastor Dan'; 1882 - 1947), founder and first president of the Apostolic Church

Name: Daniel Powell Williams
Pseudonym: Pastor Dan
Date of birth: 1882
Date of death: 1947
Spouse: Mabel Williams (née Thomas)
Spouse: Elizabeth Williams (née Harries)
Parent: Esther Williams
Parent: William Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: founder and first president of the Apostolic Church
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Evan David Jones

The only Welshman to establish a world-wide church; born 5 May 1882 at Garn-foel, a smallholding near Pen-y-groes in the Amman valley, Carmarthenshire, one of twelve children of William and Esther Williams. As the father lost his sight when Daniel was only ten years old, he had to leave school a few months later in order to increase the family's income in some way, but the lad's weekly wage as a doorman underground was small. When one considers the enormous work which he achieved in his life, his educational preparation was extremely limited, and as far as is known, his attendance at the village's elementary school was irregular. Of more importance than the school in his upbringing was the home and the church (Congl.) at Pen-y-groes under the able ministry of William Bowen who was inducted as pastor there; and at its sister-church at Milo, on 4 February 1880. During the winter of 1904-05 the influence of [Evan Roberts](#)' 'Revival' spread vigorously from Loughor to the Amman valley, leaving more of its effect there than on any other district in Wales. The family of Garn-foel came heavily under the influence of the revival. Daniel and a deacon from the Baptist church began to hold revival meetings at Calfaria chapel, and on Christmas Day 1904 Daniel, his brother [William](#) and some friends went to Loughor, and it was there that Daniel experienced his conversion and blessing at the hands of the revivalist himself. The brothers and their friends, with William Bowen's ready support, held meetings in houses and in the halls erected in the surrounding districts following the revival. In 1906, Daniel, whilst at work underground, received a call to become a preacher, and in order to prove the genuineness of the call he set a fortnight to pass to await an invitation from his minister which came before the end of the period. He preached his first sermon on 1 February and visited the churches of the district in turn; he was duly admitted as a regular preacher with the Independents.

Though two churches invited him to become their pastor, due to his lack of confidence at the time, he declined but continued to apply himself to the work. He did not experience strongly the passion of the second phase of the revival which broke out in the district in 1907-08, but in August 1909, whilst on holiday in Aberaeron in the company of friends who had received the baptism of the Spirit, he too submitted on the hillside above the sea and he began to 'speak in tongues'. He hesitated for a while before leaving his denomination but resigned in 1910 when a rift developed in the church at Pen-y-groes between the more traditional members and the ones who had come under the influence of the revival. Those broke away with the minister to form the congregation for which Mynydd Seion chapel was erected in 1913, but Daniel did not cast his lot with them. Instead he joined a more extreme faction who had built 'the stone Hall' in Pen-y-groes in 1910 a non-denominational meeting place for the use of the revival's converts and where they could invite leaders of their own choice. These adherents attended pentecostal conferences, and it was in one of these at Belle Vue, Swansea, that Daniel began preaching in English, though his command of the language at the time was somewhat unsure. From these conferences came reports of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of its signs, such as speaking in tongues and faith healing, and the idea of the imperfection of the church lacking an apostle or prophet in its ministry. In February 1911 it was revealed to Daniel Powell through prophecy that a prophet would be called to cooperate with him, and the same night his brother, [William Jones](#), was similarly convinced. It was he in due course who became the promised prophet. Contention arose amongst members of the hall, but for the sake of peace it was decided that those who cherished the vision of an 'apostolic church' should break away from the others. According to Rees Evans, *Precious Jewels*, the door of the hall was closed before them on the morning of 5 March, and after meeting in various buildings they erected for themselves a zinc building which they called Pabell or Pabell y Cyfarfod ('the tabernacle of the congregation'). The two brothers were the leaders. Contact was made with the Apostolic Faith Church in Winton, Bournemouth, where Daniel preached when he was on vacation there after a breakdown brought about through pressure of work. According to Rees Evans, William O. Hutchinson and three others from Bournemouth, including Mrs. Kenny, a lady who had the gift of interpreting prophecy, came to Pen-y-groes to lay their hands on the two brothers, one to be an Apostle and the other to be a prophet, though T.N. Turnbull says that it was at a conference in London in 1913 that Daniel Powell was called to the apostleship. Many calls were received by him

from congregations in south Wales, and a small office had to be set up in Llwynhendy and afterwards in Pen-y-groes. They separated from the church in Bournemouth in 1915 because of a difference of opinion concerning ecclesiastical organisation. In 1916 the first part of the Apostolic Church's journal under Daniel Powell's editorship was published. The title of the first parts was *Cyfoeth y Gras: Riches of Grace*, but after two parts it was changed to *Cyfoeth Gras*. For years it was a bilingual journal, and the editor wrote much in prose and poetry in both languages for the journal, and also translated his brother's prophecies. The order of the languages in the title was changed in 1932 and soon the Welsh subtitle was dropped, but the articles in Welsh had become infrequent before then.

In 1916 the official constitution of the Apostolic Church was drawn up. Many of the Welsh pentecostal congregations were drawn in and the enormous work which this entailed fell on Daniel's shoulders. The two brothers visited Glasgow in 1918 and 1919, with the result that the Burning Bush Assembly there came into the Apostolic Church. The following year a congregation established in Hereford by Frank Hodges joined, and from there the movement spread to mid and south-west England. In 1922 The Apostolic Churches of God centred on Bradford joined; a missionary wing was established there, and through its activity the movement spread over the five continents.

In 1937 the various parts were united, the headquarters in Pen-y-groes, the missionary centre in Bradford, and the financial centre in Glasgow; Daniel Powell Williams was president of the church and chairman of the Council of Apostles and Prophets and the Executive Committee, with his home in Pen-y-groes. A constitution for the united church was agreed upon, and signed by the president before being presented to the High Court in London. From 1917 onwards an annual convention has been held in Pen-y-groes every August; in 1933 the Apostolic Temple holding fifteen thousand was opened there. Daniel Powell Williams also played an important role in establishing the Biblical School of the Apostolic Church in Pen-y-groes in 1934. From 1922 to 1945 he travelled extensively a number of times to North America, Denmark, Norway, Estonia, France, Italy, Nigeria, Australia, New Zealand and India.

He married (1) Elizabeth Harries of Llandeilo, and they had seven children; she died 23 May 1918; (2) Mabel Thomas of Porthcawl. He died on 13 February 1947.

He published *The prophetic ministry* (1931); *The work of an evangelist*; and *The sanctuary of the Christian life*; and composed a number of hymns in Welsh and English.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Thomas Napier Turnbull, *Brothers in Arms* (1963)

Thomas Napier Turnbull, *What God hath wrought A short history of the Apostolic Church* (1959)

Rees Evans, *Precious jewels from the 1904 revival in Wales*

Tom H. Williams, *Mining to ministering*

Riches of Grace

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Published date: 2001

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