

BOWEN, DAVID GLYN (1933-2000), minister and multifaith theologian

Name: David Glyn Bowen
Date of birth: 1933
Date of death: 2000
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister and multifaith theologian
Area of activity: Religion
Author: G. Len Jones

David Bowen was born in Swansea 29 November 1933 where his parents, Henry and Violet (née Beynon) Bowen kept a grocer's shop. He received his early education at Swansea Grammar School (1945-1952) before proceeding to University College, Cardiff, in 1952, where he graduated in 1955 with an honours degree in Hebrew. For the next three years he studied at the Memorial College, Brecon. In Brecon he came under the influence of the Principal, **Dr. Pennar Davies**, and he began to learn Welsh. He gained the degree of BD in 1958; then with the help of a grant from the World Council of Churches he went as a research student to the University of Princeton, U.S.A. where he was awarded the degree of MTh. in 1959 for his thesis on the Church of South India. Whilst in the USA he visited the offices of the W.C.C. in New York for an interview; whilst waiting his turn, he began conversing with another young man of Far Eastern appearance; after the interview David Bowen discovered that this young man was the Dalai Lama who had recently fled from Tibet. In 1960 David Bowen was ordained minister of Castle Street Congregational Church, Tredegar, Monmouthshire, where he remained for the next three years. During this period he met a young German girl, Gerda Hofmaier, from the city of Ulm, West Germany, at a summer work camp which he organised in Swansea. They were married in 1963 and in the same year they went under the patronage of the London Missionary Society, to Western Samoa where David had been appointed Principal of Malua Theological College. He spent five years there. On his return to Britain in 1968 he was appointed to a teaching post in Stepney, East London, in a multi-racial community and also acted as part-time minister in Debden, near Chigwell. During these years two sons were born to Gerda and David, Steffan (1979) and Ceri (1972). In 1973 he was appointed lecturer in Religious Studies at Bradford Training College and he remained there until his retirement as Senior Lecturer in 1999.

David Bowen was particularly interested in the relationship between Christianity and other religions both on an academic and on a practical level. He was very much involved in the efforts to mediate between the various religions at a difficult time in the history of Bradford. In 1981 he edited the volume *Hinduism in England*, which was published by Bradford College, and also contributed a chapter in it to 'The Hindu Community in Bradford'. In 1985 he gained the degree of PhD (Leeds) for his thesis on 'The Sathya Sai Baba Hindu Community in Bradford' which subsequently appeared in book form in 1988. During the same year David Bowen acted as official commentator on the first Hindu service to be televised in Britain. In April 1999 a poem by him was published in *Coracle*, the official publication of the Iona Community (Scotland), bearing the title, 'Who's Jesus Anyway?'. He wrote a second version of it entitled 'Gentle Jesus, the Controversialist' which appeared in a Welsh translation by G. L. Jones as 'Iesu Tirion, Y Profociwr' in the interdenominational magazine, *Cristion*, in July/August 2000, but without any explanation of the background. Unfortunately, David Bowen died of cancer 15 May 2000, a few weeks before the translation appeared.

His funeral on May 22, 2000, at Little Lane Church, Bradford, reflected in an impressive manner his lifelong commitment to Christian tolerance. Representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu and Sikh communities all took part. The Blessing was pronounced in Welsh by the Reverend Dewi Lloyd Lewis, Cardiff, who had been a fellow student of David's in Brecon. His remains were cremated in Bradford on the day of his funeral. In his obituary which appeared in the *Evening Post* on the 15 July and in the *Methodist Recorder* and *Y Tyst* on the 22 July the Reverend Ivor Thomas Rees, Swansea, described David Bowen as a 'great Christian' and 'a peace-loving mediator'. David (or Dave as he liked to be called) was a most unassuming person, a convinced Christian who sought throughout his life to walk humbly with his God.

Author

G. Len Jones

Sources

Personal knowledge

information from David Bowen's sister, Mrs Averil Lewis Swansea

Ivor T. Rees

The Evening Post 16 June 2000

Methodist Recorder 22 June 2000

Y Tyst 22 June 2000

Bradford Telegraph and Argus 27 May 2000

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David Glyn Bowen](#)

Additional Links

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