CHARLES, JOHN ALWYN (1924-1977), minister (Cong.) and college lecturer

Name: John Alwyn Charles
Date of birth: 1924
Date of death: 1977
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (Cong.) and college lecturer
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: Ioan Wyn Gruffydd

Alwyn Charles was born at Colombia Row, Llanelli, 18 December 1924, the son of David John Charles and his wife. He received his elementary education at St. Paul and Lakefield, Llanelli, prior to entering Woodend Secretarial College. From that college he went to serve as a clerk at the solicitors' office of Jennings and Williams. He began to preach at Capel Als, Llanelli, where the Reverend D. J. Davies was minister. After following the preparatory course at Coleg Myrddin, he was accepted, in October 1943, to the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen. In 1948, he gained his B.A. with honours in Philosophy from the University College, Cardiff, and his B.D., in 1951, from Carmarthen College, with honours in the Philosophy of Religion.

He accepted a call to be minister of the church at Ebeneser, Tylorstown, where he was ordained on 18 and 19 July 1951, and where he remained until 1959. Afterwards, he served as minister in Allt-wen (1959-63), and in Harrow (1965–66). He served as a school teacher in Windsor from 1963 to 1965.

On 18 January 1955, he married Miss. Pegi Rees, the daughter of the late Rev. Harding Rees and his wife. They had one son, Dafydd.

Following the sudden death of Principal Gwilym Bowyer, Alwyn Charles was appointed to the Chair of Christian Doctrine at the Bala-Bangor Theological College, Bangor, in October 1966, a post that he held until his death. Among his publications is his address to the Undeb meeting in Cardigan, 'Dylanwad y Brifysgol ar ddiwinyddiaeth Cymru' (1974) and an article in *Efrydiau Athronyddol*.

He was a powerful convincing preacher who was much sought after. During the seven last years of his life, however, he was forced on account of heart disease to curtail his travelling, and it was arranged for him during that period to serve on a regular basis in the pulpit of the church at Bethesda, Bethesda. Principal R. Tudur Jones stated that Alwyn Charles possessed 'a clear and bright mind and since the light of the Bible was as a lamp to his feet, he became a doctrinarian powerful in his contribution.' The Principal added that the field in which he became an expert was the theology of John Calvin and that 'a part of the sadness of his early death was that he had died prior to the completion of that important work in which he was involved.'

Alwyn Charles was a man of great energy, an eloquent preacher, a brilliant scholar, an interesting person whose wholesome laugh gladdened every company, and a man held in high esteem by his students and these to whom he ministered.

On 31 March, 1977, he suffered a heart attack, and was taken to the Caernarfonshire and Anglesey Hospital, Bangor. It was there that he died on April 1. His funeral service was held on Tuesday, 5 April, with a public service at Pen-dref Chapel, Bangor, and a private service at the city's crematorium.

Author

Ioan Wyn Gruffydd

Sources

Personal research

Y Tyst 21 April 1977

Blwyddiadur yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg (Welsh Congregationalists Year Book), 1978

Additional Links

Wikidata: Q20748845

Published date: 2011-01-07

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Gruffydd, I. W., (2011). CHARLES, JOHN ALWYN (1924-1977), minister (Cong.) and college lecturer. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 10 Oct 2024, from https://biography.wales/article/s7-CHAR-ALW-1924

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