

JONES, TOM ELLIS (1900-1975), Baptist minister and college Principal

Name: Tom Ellis Jones
Date of birth: 1900
Date of death: 1975
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister and college Principal
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: D. Hugh Matthews

Tom Ellis Jones was born in Princess Road, Rhosllannerchrugog on 4 August 1900, the son of Benjamin Jones and his wife. His father, a photographer by profession until he went blind, was a deacon in Penuel Welsh Baptist church in the village and the whole life of the home revolved around the chapel. Tom Ellis Jones went directly from the local school to work as a clerk in an accountant's office in Wrexham, before joining the Army toward the end of the First World War, serving in Germany and Ireland and completing his service in 1919. By then, under the ministry of the **Reverend D. Wyre Lewis**, he had started to preach. He entered the local Preparatory School for ministers, conducted by the **Reverend J. Powell Griffiths** in the English Baptist church in Ponciau, and in 1920 he matriculated and gained entry into the Baptist College in Bangor and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. He graduated in the Arts in 1923 and in Theology in 1926. That year he accepted a call to pastor the Welsh Baptist church in Ebenezer, Mold, and he was ordained to serve there and in its mission in Maes-y-dre. In April 1928 he married Edith Gwendoline Jones from Penuel, Bangor. They had one daughter, Luned.

Tom Ellis Jones moved to be minister of the Welsh Baptist church in Soar, Llwynhendy, in 1929, and soon after settling there he gained a University of Wales Master of Arts degree for a thesis tracing doctrinal trends in Wales, with special reference to Fullerism. In 1936 he delivered a lecture to the Welsh Baptist Historical Society based on his research and this was published in the 'Transactions of the Welsh Baptist Historical Society' (*Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru*) 1936. In 1929 he was elected tutor in Holy Scripture in his old theological and University College, becoming Principal of the Baptist College from 1959 to 1967. During his term as Principal, the Baptist College celebrated the centenary of its foundation in Llangollen in 1862.

Tom Ellis Jones contributed extensively to the literature of his denomination. He served for many years as editor of the Welsh Baptist weekly, *Seren Cymru*, and assisted the aged Reverend E. Cefni Jones when he was editing the Welsh Baptist hymnbook, *Llawlyfr Moliant Newydd*, which was published in 1956. Five of his own hymns and a vesper were included in the hymn book. Essays from his pen appeared in *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (1959) and in several numbers of *Seren Gomer* and *Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru*. In the 1960s he chaired a commission on the Ministry set up by the Baptist Union of Wales and was largely responsible for the report it published, *Adroddiad Comisiwn y Weinidogaeth*. To help young believers he wrote two short books - *Credo Cristion* ('The Christian's Belief') and *Paham?* ('Why?'), *Y Portread*, a volume of meditations on the Sermon on the Mount, and *Sgroliau'r Môr Marw*, a study of the documents discovered in caves surrounding the Dead Sea.

Tom Ellis Jones was an able communicator and his services as a preacher were in demand throughout Wales. His contributions to Welsh religious life were recognised in several areas. He served as President of the Welsh Baptist Association of Caernarfon (1954-55) and President of the Baptist Union of Wales (1965-66); following a term as President of the North Wales Free Church Federal Council he was elected the first President of the National body when that was formed.

He died in Bangor on Sunday, 16 November 1975.

Author

D. Hugh Matthews, (1936 - 2020)

Sources

The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary (1977)

Baptist Handbook (1976-7)

Y Cymro 2 December 1975

Seren Cymru (with a photograph) 1976, 106-7

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