

ROBERTS, EDWARD (1886-1975), minister (Bapt.) and college principal

Name: Edward Roberts
Date of birth: 1886
Date of death: 1975
Spouse: Margaret Roberts (née Edwards)
Spouse: Gwladys Roberts (née Taylor)
Child: John Roberts
Child: David Roberts
Parent: Jane Roberts (née Davies)
Parent: David Roberts
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (Bapt.) and college principal
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: D. Hugh Matthews

Edward Roberts was born in Llanelli on 20 March 1886, the son of David and Jane Roberts (née Davies). He was one of nine children with four brothers (John, Thomas, William and Henry) and four sisters (Ann, Mary, Elizabeth-Jane and Gertrude). His parents were members of the Baptist church that met in Seion, Llanelli. The minister there was the renowned preacher, [E.T. Jones](#), and it was he who baptised Edward on profession of his faith in 1901. His father was an engine worker in the tin works and Edward became an apprentice metal moulder in a local works. However, under the influence of his minister and touched by the 1904-05 Revival in Wales, he began preaching.

His home church commended him for the Christian Ministry and in 1905 he attended a preparatory college in Carmarthen as preparation for the ministry. He was accepted in the University College, Cardiff, to begin a degree course in 1906 and a year later was registered as a ministerial student by Cardiff Baptist College. He graduated from the University in November 1909 with an honours degree in Philosophy and three years later added a post-graduate B.D. to his B.A. He then moved on to Mansfield College, Oxford, where he gained another degree in theology. He was ordained in 1915 as minister of Bethel English-language Baptist church in Whitchurch, Cardiff. Drs [William Edwards](#) (Cardiff) and W. B. Selbie (Mansfield) officiating.

In 1918, while he was the minister of the church in Whitchurch, he married Gwladys Taylor, a member and the organist of the church. The wedding took place in Castle Street Welsh Baptist church in London. Two sons were born to them, David and John. The death of Mrs Roberts at the age of 42 in 1929 was a bitter blow for the minister and his young family. By then, the family had moved to Newbridge, Gwent, where Edward Roberts had been inducted as minister of Tabernacle Baptist church in 1924. He spent twelve happy years in the church before accepting the post of professor of Christian Doctrine and the Philosophy of Religion in the Baptist College in Cardiff and moved to Cardiff in 1937. He married his second wife, Margaret Edwards, who was a member in the Newbridge church, in 1947. The wedding took place in Albany Road Baptist church in Cardiff, and the same year he was appointed Principal of the Baptist College, a post he held for ten years until his retirement in December 1957. The post of Principal at that time meant that he alone was responsible for taking the 'sermon class' and pastoral studies.

During his time as Principal, the College site was developed and a residential block was added. The College, founded in 1807, had been a residential College in its early years in Abergavenny and Pontypool, but had ceased to offer rooms to students when it moved to Cardiff in 1893. However, it was felt that the new residential block was needed to house the increasing number of ministerial students offering themselves for Baptist ministry in the years following the end of the Second World War. The task had been completed in January 1953 and the responsibility for overseeing the transformation had been placed on Edward Roberts' shoulders. He retired in 1957, at the end of a year of celebrations marking the third jubilee of the College's foundation.

After his retirement, he lived for a time in Cardiff, travelling on Sundays to serve the churches in the South Wales valleys. When his wife died in 1968 he moved to live with one of his doctor sons, first in Worcester and later in Birkenhead. His last years were spent in Glyn Nest, the retirement home opened by the Baptists in Newcastle Emlyn. He died after a short illness in Glangwili Hospital in Carmarthen on Sunday, 20 July 1975.

Edward Roberts lived a secluded life and he did not seek any prominence within the Baptist denomination, although he was once persuaded to accept the Presidency of East Glamorgan Baptist Association. Within the College, he concentrated on his lecturing and his administrative and pastoral responsibilities, publishing nothing but the occasional paper or an address.

Author

D. Hugh Matthews, (1936 - 2020)

Sources

South Wales Baptist College Records

The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary, 1976

The Baptist Union directory, 1977

The Baptist College has a portrait of him painted by David Griffiths


Further Reading

Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru: [Roberts – Edward \(1886-1985\)](#)

Additional Links

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