

JONES, EDGAR (1912-1991), minister, pastor, scholar

Name: Edgar Jones
Date of birth: 1912
Date of death: 1991
Spouse: Eirlys Jones (née Overton)
Child: Valerie Jones
Child: Gareth Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister, pastor, scholar
Area of activity: Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Ivor Richards

Edgar Jones, a miner's son, was born in Ynys-hir, Rhondda 11 March 1912. He was educated in the village school and the Rhondda Boys' County School, Porth. He was obliged to leave school to work in the local colliery but he continued to study with the aim of entering the ministry. He was accepted to University College Cardiff where he graduated B.A. with honours in Hebrew, and then proceeded to the Congregational Memorial College Brecon where he gained his B.D. degree (Wales). He later gained his M.A. and PhD from Manchester University.

He was ordained in 1940. He served the English Congregational Church in Flint (1940-45), Union Street, Bradford (1945-52) and Walter Road, Swansea (1952-56). In 1956 he was appointed Professor of Biblical Studies in the Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford, and when the college was amalgamated with the Northern Congregational College, Manchester, in 1958 he accepted the post of Professor of Hebrew and New Testament. He served as principal of the Congregational College Manchester from 1968 to 1977. In all these posts he influenced generations of ministers in English and Welsh Congregationalism, among them leaders of the Congregational Federation and the United Reformed Church. As principal he succeeded in ensuring that his fellow professors worked as a team to offer prospective ministers training that was soundly based on Scripture and that was interdisciplinary, innovative, society-centred and ecumenical.

The only title Edgar Jones sought was 'Servant of the Word' but he was a servant to other 'servants of the Word', a sensitive pastor and a lively preacher. He published a number of short books on the Old Testament, e.g. *The triumph of Job* (1966), *Profiles of the prophets* (1968), *God, man and community* (1974), and several on the psalms, *Testimony from the Temple* (c.1976), *Songs of the Sanctuary* (c.1977), *Statutes and songs* (1984), *Psalms for pilgrims*. He has been compared to William Barclay for his gift of presenting the Old Testament in the simple language of his childhood but with clarity and enthusiasm. He continued to preach and to write after his retirement to Swansea where he also held a number of Old Testament classes for church members of his denomination.

In November 1940, a few months after his ordination, he married Eirlys, the daughter of David Overton, his beloved minister in Ynys-hir, and they were the parents of a son, Gareth, and daughter, Valerie. Eirlys, his life partner who shared in all his work – she knew all his students and shared in his pastoral care for them – died in February 2006. Edgar Jones will be remembered for his enthusiasm in interpreting the scriptures for the ordinary members of his churches, his humanity and love for his family, his care for his students, his ready friendship for all and especially his fellow ministers, his humour and his delight in cricket.

He died at Swansea 31 May, 1991.

Author

Ivor Richards

Sources

Personal research

Additional Links

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