

DAVIES, DAFYDD GWILYM (1922 - 2017), minister, lecturer and Baptist College Principal

Name: Dafydd Gwilym Davies

Date of birth: 1922

Date of death: 2017

Spouse: Kate Davies (née Jones)

Child: Gwilym Dafydd

Child: Megan Mandizha (née Davies)

Child: Gwen Thomas (née Davies)

Parent: John Clement Davies

Parent: Gwen Ellen Davies (née Griffith)

Gender: Male

Occupation: minister, lecturer and Baptist College Principal

Area of activity: Religion; Education

Author: D. Hugh Matthews

Dafydd G. Davies was born on 1 July 1922 at Pryscol, Four Crosses, Pwllheli, the only child of John Clement Davies (1896-1982), a Baptist minister, and his wife Gwen Ellen (née Griffith, 1894-1970), a Welsh teacher. The family moved in 1922 when his father became minister of Graig Baptist Church in Newcastle Emlyn, and Dafydd was brought up there.

He was educated at Adpar Primary School, Newcastle Emlyn, and Cardigan County School. At the age of seventeen he felt a calling to the Baptist ministry, and he spent the years between 1941 and 1952 preparing for the ministry, at Bangor Baptist College and the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and Mansfield College in Oxford. He gained B.A. degrees in Economics and Classical Greek before graduating B.D. - a higher degree at the time - in 1950. He then spent the next two years in research on the New Testament at Mansfield College having been selected as one of the Scholars of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1952, before completing his degree, he was ordained minister of Seion, Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf, and Moriah, Pentraeth, in Anglesey. In the same month, he married Kate ('Kitty') Jones (1919-2005), whom he first met at college in Bangor. They had three children: a son, Gwilym Dafydd, who followed his father into the ministry, and twin daughters, Megan and Gwen. He accepted an invitation in 1955 to join the staff of the South Wales Baptist College in Cardiff as tutor in New Testament Greek and lecturer in the Theology Faculty of University College Cardiff. He became Principal of the Baptist College in 1970, and remained there until his retirement in 1985.

In his role as Principal he sought to create links between the Baptist College and other theological institutions, and frequently visited colleges in Europe and America. He organised a tripartite agreement between Campbell University, North Carolina, Cardiff University and the Baptist College. Campbell University awarded him an honorary D.Litt. in recognition of his work in establishing the relationship between the colleges. He became a member of the international body for the study of the New Testament, Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas in 1972.

Although not numerous, his publications included a copious commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, *Dod a Bod yn Gristion* ('Becoming and Being a Christian', 1984). After he gave the Pantyfedwen Lecture in Aberystwyth, the work was published as a book: *Canon y Testament Newydd, Ei Ffurfiad a'i Genadwri* ('The Canon of the New Testament, its Formation and its Message', 1986). He was a member of the panel of translators of *Y Testament Newydd* (1975), the precursor of *Y Beibl Cymraeg Newydd* (1988).

He demonstrated early in his life that he was a natural leader. He was head pupil of Cardigan County School and captain of school sports teams, and took a keen interest in sport throughout his life. At university he was captain of the football team, and also captained the University of Wales colleges team. In 1945-46 he was president of the Bangor University Student Council and of the Debating Society. He was one of the founders of the Cambrensis Choir in Cardiff, and the annual 'Festival of Word and Song' of the Welsh Baptists. A strong believer in the influence of the sermon, he was himself a powerful preacher who ministered in some 900 chapels throughout Britain and America. He was President of the Welsh Baptist Union in 1986 and played a leading role in the British Baptist movement. His abilities and gifts are best evidenced by the influence which he had on congregations during his ministry, and on generations of students over a period of thirty years.

Dafydd G. Davies died at his home in Cardiff on 13 December 2017. His funeral service was held on 2 January 2018 at Tonyfelin Chapel, Caerphilly, and at Thornhill Crematorium.

Author

D. Hugh Matthews, (1936 - 2020)

Sources

Gwilym Dafydd, 'Y Prifathro Emeritws Dafydd G. Davies 1922-2017', *Y Dinesydd*, February 2018. An English version 'The Revd Dr Dafydd G Davies: 1922-2017', together with a tribute by Denzil Ieuan John, is on the website of the Baptist Union of Great Britain

D. Densil Morgan, 'Dafydd G.Davies (1922-2017)', *The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary* (2019)

D. Densil Morgan, *Davies - G. Dafydd (1922-2017)*, Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru website

D. Hugh Matthews, *From Abergavenny to Cardiff History of the South Wales Baptist College (1806-2006)* (Swansea 2007)

Family information from Mrs Gwen Thomas

Personal acquaintance

A portrait of him is in the South Wales Baptist College, 54 Richmond Road, Cardiff

Additional Links

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Published date: 2021-12-08

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APA Citation



Matthews, D. H., (2021). DAVIES, DAFYDD GWILYM (1922 - 2017), minister, lecturer and Baptist College Principal. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 9 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s12-DAVI-GWI-1922>

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