

EVANS, RICHARD THOMAS (1892 - 1962), Baptist minister and administrator

Name: Richard Thomas Evans
Date of birth: 1892
Date of death: 1962
Spouse: Maria Myfanwy Evans (née Thomas)
Parent: Mary Evans
Parent: David Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister and administrator
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born 8 October 1892 at Penygraig, Rhondda Valley, Glamorganshire, son of David and Mary Evans (his father was killed in an accident in Abercynon colliery in 1924). His father was a prominent Baptist in the locality, especially so after moving to Abercynon, where he was a deacon at Calfaria chapel. In the second decade of the century he was a keen supporter of the campaign to establish a Support Fund for the denomination. R.T.E.'s mother was a member of the Wesleyan church, a sister of a minister in that denomination, John Edward Thomas (1875 - 1959). R.T.E. was baptised at a young age in Bethlehem, Trealaw, but it was in Calfaria, Abercynon that he was prepared for the ministry. He received his early education at Trealaw, and thereafter at secondary schools at Porth and Mountain Ash; he was a pupil-teacher and a teacher at Abercynon for a period before being accepted as a student in the University College and the Baptist College, Bangor. Because he never enjoyed the best of health throughout his life, it is unlikely that he would have been called up to undertake any type of military service during World War I. However, his pacifist stance was so strong that he chose to leave Bangor, to be ordained on 23 May 1917 at Aion and Tabernacl chapels, Bodedern. He returned to the college in the year 1919-20 to complete his B.A. degree and he was subsequently installed as minister at Porthmadog on 23 June 1920, at Newport, Pembrokeshire on 14 June 1922 and at Ammanford on 26 May 1927. Within seven years he was chosen as the secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales and he was installed in that office during the annual conference held at Bethesda, Swansea, on 3 Sep. 1934. He retired on Easter Monday, 7 April 1958 and in appreciation of his service he was elevated to be president of both the Welsh and English sections of the Baptist Union of Wales for the year 1958-59 (but without being required to deliver an address). He was given a generous testimonial in a public meeting in Swansea on 5 December 1958. He continued to live in Swansea and it was at his home, 11 Gower Road, Sketty, that he died on 13 June 1962. In accordance with his own wishes, he was buried privately. In spite of perpetual bouts of ill health, he succeeded in leading safely the Baptists of Wales through a period of much change and re-organisation. It is considered that his prime achievement was to centralise all the activities of the denomination under one roof in the new office, Tŷ Iliston, that was opened in Swansea in 1940.

He married 28 March 1921 at Seion, Glanconwy, Maria Myfanwy (born 27 June 1893), the daughter of William Wallace Thomas (1832 - 1904), a native of Pentrefoelas and an Independent minister at Maes-glas, Holywell from 1873 until his retirement to Glanconwy in 1885. Her principal benefaction was to persuade the Baptist Women's Movement to establish the denomination's home for the elderly at Glyn Nest, Newcastle Emlyn. It was appropriate that she was invited to open it officially on 26 September 1970 and that it was there that she spent the last eighteen months of her life, from September 1978 until her death at Glangwili hospital on Monday 4 February 1980. She was cremated at Parc Gwyn, Narberth, on 11 February 1980. There was one son of the marriage, born 16 May 1934.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

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APA Citation



Owens, B. G., (2001). EVANS, RICHARD THOMAS (1892 - 1962), Baptist minister and administrator. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 11 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s2-EVAN-THO-1892>

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