

## JONES, JOHN ITHEL (1911-1980), minister (Baptist) and college principal

**Name:** John Ithel Jones  
**Date of birth:** 1911  
**Date of death:** 1980  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** minister (Baptist) and college principal  
**Area of activity:** Education; Religion  
**Author:** D. Hugh Matthews

John Ithel Jones was born in Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, on 1 January 1911. He was educated at the local primary school and at Cyfarthfa grammar school, Merthyr Tydfil. He was baptised at Moreia, Dowlais. Reverend R.B. Jones, the well known evangelical preacher was his uncle. Ithel Jones was already a student in the University College of Cardiff when he was accepted in 1930 by the South Wales Baptist College as a ministerial student. He graduated in Welsh (2nd class) in 1932 and in philosophy (first-class) in 1933 before going on to gain his B.D.; he graduated M.A. in 1946 with a theological dissertation. The two great influences on him during his college days were the professor of Hebrew, **Dr Theodore H. Robinson**, and **Dr Thomas Phillips**, Principal of the Baptist College. **Thomas Phillips** was renowned as a preacher and communicator, and such was his influence on his students that two of them, Ithel Jones and **Walter P. John**, were invited to preach in the Annual Meetings of the Baptist Union of Wales held in Swansea in 1934. Thereafter Ithel Jones was himself regarded as one of the finest communicators of the gospel in both English and Welsh. After completing his college course, he was ordained minister of Gilgal, Porthcawl in 1936, moving to Horfield, Bristol in 1940 and Haven Green, Ealing, London in 1950.

He married Hannah Mary Rees ('Nana'), the daughter of the Reverend Thomas Lloyd Rees who was minister of Calfaria, Morriston, but who had been raised to the ministry in Moreia, Dowlais. They had no children.

Ithel Jones returned from London to Wales in January 1958, having been appointed Principal of the South Wales Baptist College and lecturer in Christian Doctrine and Philosophy of Religion in the Cardiff School of Theology. During his time in Cardiff, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology both of the University College and the University of Wales. He served also as Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council of England and Wales and as President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (1967-68). The Independent Television Authority appointed him as a member of its Religious Advisory Panel, while the Baptists of England recognised his musical talent by making him a member of the Music Advisory Panel and of the Editorial Board of *The Baptist Hymn Book*, published in 1962.

He was recognised as an effective lecturer and preacher, and was invited to speak in meetings across Europe and North America. In 1965 he was invited to preach in the meetings of the Baptist World Alliance in Miami Beach, Florida, and travelled from there to speak in various centres in America. Having delivered a series of lectures in Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa, and Baylor University, Texas, later awarded him a Doctor of Laws degree.

In 1968 Ithel Jones was invited to preach in the 125th Anniversary of Collins Street Baptist Church in Melbourne, Australia. As a result of those meetings, he accepted the invitation to return to the pastoral ministry. He resigned his post in Cardiff and was inducted as minister of Collins Street on 17 September 1970. He died in Melbourne, Australia on 30 December 1980 - two days before his 70th birthday.

In November 1980, a short time before his death, he accepted an invitation to be appointed Principal Emeritus of the Baptist College in Cardiff on his retirement but died before the intention could be realised. Among his publications are: *Temple and Town and Other Sermons* (1961), *Ein Capel Ni*, in a series to mark the centenary of the Baptist Union of Wales, 1966 (an English version, *Our Chapel*, was also published); *The Holy Spirit and Preaching* (1967) and *Facing the New World and other Semons* (1968).

### Author

**D. Hugh Matthews**, (1936 - 2020)

### Sources

*South Wales Baptist College Records*

*The Baptist Union directory* 1981-2, pp. 292-3

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

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**Published date:** 2010-01-20

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