

Tributes To William 'Doc' (Bill) Davies

1932-2024



ASHLEY COOPER

The recent funeral service for Revd Dr Bill Davies, a former Principal of Cliff College, reminded us of a life dedicated to ministry and education, leaving a legacy far beyond the College's walls.

As I sit and reflect on the life and ministry of 'Doc' from the very chair and office he inhabited for so long, I am reminded of sacrifice and service that was unwavering and dedicated to the glory of God.

After his tenure as Superintendent Minister at Bradford Methodist Mission, in 1983, Bill took on the role of Principal at Cliff College, where his leadership brought significant developments, including the construction of new facilities and the introduction of the Celebration Weekend. Known affectionately as "Doc," he was a versatile educator, with a focus on the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit. His influence extended through his writing, including the widely circulated magazine *Dunamis* and several books.

Bill's impact continued well into his retirement, as he remained a beloved preacher and teacher. He maintained his relationship with College attending his final Festival in 2023 where he met with many and encouraged all those he spoke to. We honour his memory, confident that his legacy will continue to inspire. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Rev Ashley Cooper, Principal, Cliff College

TIM WOOLLEY

It is hard to think of any one more influential on charismatic Methodism than Bill Davies. As Principal of Cliff College 1983-1994 and President of the Conference in 1987 Bill expressed his deep love for the Lord

through irenic leadership, powerful preaching and sound scholarship: his book *Spirit without Measure* (1996), along with his many contributions to *Dunamis* magazine were so influential on me and many other charismatic Methodists seeking sound theology to make sense of our experiences. Importantly Bill was also able to gain a hearing in wider charismatic circles for the faithful spirit-filled Wesleyan theology from which Pentecostalism emerged, which British Methodism seems still sadly parched of today.

My very first encounter with Bill was at the beginning of Celebration weekend where every year he would lead with gusto the opening hymn, 'Come, we that love the Lord' by Issac Watts: "We're marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion; We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God".

God bless you Bill, you've arrived there now.

Rev Dr Tim Woolley is Tutor and Module Lead for Church Army in the Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership.

BRIAN HOARE

The charismatic movement in the 1960s and the growth of new 'house churches' had considerable influence in Methodism, and it was Bill Davies who emerged as a stabilising influence and advocate, establishing with others in 1972 a new movement called *Dunamis* offering fellowship and support for charismatic Methodists. Bill worked closely with fellow Methodist ministers John Trevena and Ross Peart in the leadership of *Dunamis*, together editing and distributing the magazine and organising its conferences.

At this time Bill was a sector minister at Padgate College of Higher Education, but subsequent appointments as

Superintendent of the Bradford Mission and Principal of Cliff College brought greater prominence in Methodism and widened his influence throughout the denomination.

Bill's scholarship and wisdom is evidenced by some of his publications: *Rocking the boat: the challenge of the house church*; *Spirit without measure: Charismatic faith and practice*; and *the Charismatic movement and Methodism*. All are still worth reading.

Rev Brian Hoare is a retired Methodist minister. He was been a former New Testament tutor at Cliff College.

RON ABBOTT

We mourn the loss of Bill from his place as Principal of Cliff College, former President of Conference and a leading light in the charismatic movement. He came to the college in 1983 to replace Rev Dr Arthur Skevington Wood who had built up the resources of the college in many ways.

Bill arrived from a successful ministry at Eastbrook Hall, Bradford and several years teaching at Padgate College of Education. He was ideally placed to move the college forward in its calling with the motto 'Christ for all; all for Christ'.

He brought to the college dynamic preaching as well as pastoral care. With more resources and additional tutorial staff, outreach from the college was able to expand to cover more ground in spreading the gospel message to more Methodist chapels around the country. Large numbers came to the anniversary weekend in May and the Bible teaching week in July, camping facilities were expanded to cope with numbers. They were golden years for the college. Each year the college was full of students. What mattered at an applicant's interview was not their academic standards but their experience of Christ.

Bill was always an encourager inspiring us to preach, teach and care for the students. For those years I want to apply those words for such a time as this, the college was blessed.

Ron Abbott is a former secretary of the Methodist Revival Fellowship and former Cliff College Tutor.

MARTIN WELLINGS

Rev Dr William R. Davies, who died on 23 June, was a distinguished evangelical scholar and church leader. Born in Blackpool in 1932, Bill Davies was converted at a beach mission and trained for the Methodist ministry at Hartley Victoria College, Manchester. After eleven

years in circuit work, he moved into the education sector, lecturing in Religious Studies at Padgate College of Higher Education, Warrington, before taking up the superintendency of the Bradford Mission (Eastbrook Hall) in 1979. He was Principal of Cliff College, 1983-94, and was President of the Methodist Conference in 1987-88. From 1972 Bill was co-editor of *Dunamis* magazine, and he wrote widely on charismatic renewal and spiritual gifts. In a profile for Bill's Presidential year, Donald English ascribed the positive reception of the renewal movement in Methodism in large measure to Bill's spiritual wisdom, pastoral sensitivity, and trusted leadership. We give thanks to God for a fine scholar, a fervent evangelist, and a faithful exponent of the best traditions of evangelical Methodism.

Rev Dr Martin Wellings is Superintendent of the Barnet & Queensbury Circuit, and editor of the online Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland.



Bill with his first wife, Barbara