

John Drayton Williams Watts 1921- 2013

John Drayton Williams Watts (b. August 9, 1921) passed away July 21, 2013, in Penney Farms, Florida. A native of Laurens, South Carolina, he spent his childhood in Palestine with his missionary parents and his youth in New Orleans where his father, J. Wash Watts, served on the faculty of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

John earned a B.A. from Mississippi College and B.D. and Th.D. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy from 1944-1946. In 1946, he married Winifred Lee Williams. Together they served with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board from 1948-1970 and 1972-75. John was Professor of Old Testament at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüsclikon, Switzerland, where he also served as President from 1963 to 1969. He then served on the faculty of Serampore College in Serampore, India (1972-75), Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (1976-1981), and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky (1981-95).

He was the Old Testament Editor of the Word Biblical Commentary. His books included *Vision and Prophecy in Amos* (1958; revised 1996), *Studying the Book of Amos* (1966), *Basic Patterns in Old Testament Religion* (1971), *How We Got the Bible* (2011), contributions to the Broadman Bible Commentary (1970-72), and commentaries on Obadiah (1969), Joel-Obadiah-Jonah-Nahum-Habbakuk-Zephaniah (1975), and Isaiah (2 volumes in the Word Biblical Commentary series: 1985, 1987; revised 2005). He is particularly well known for interpreting the books of Isaiah and the minor prophets as unified dramas, with speeches assigned to different characters. He was honored with two festschrift collections of essays by colleagues and students, *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve* (ed. J. W. Watts and P. R. House, 1996) and a special issue of *Perspectives in Religious Studies* (ed. P. J. Scalise, 2008).

In 1995, he retired to Penney Farms, Florida, where he lived with Lee until her death in February, 2011. He is survived by his sister, Betty Jane West, and his children, Cheryl, Reid, Clare and Jim, as well as seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A memorial service will take place at Penney Farms Retirement Community in September, date to be determined. The family requests donations to Heifer International in lieu of flowers.