



**John Stott 1921-2011**

John Robert Stott was an English Christian leader and Anglican cleric. He was noted worldwide for his writings and influence in the Evangelical movement. Jacob Sweeney related Stott's influence by stating, "If you want to know about Evangelicalism as a movement you have to become familiar with John Stott. I was first introduced to him years ago through his magnificent work *The Cross of Christ*. Few books are mind-altering or paradigm-shifting. This one still is."

Stott was born in London to Sir Arnold and Emily Stott. He was a young man of privilege, coming from a wealthy family. His father was agnostic; his mother, Lutheran. From an early age, Stott attended boarding schools, one of which was Rugby School. At Rugby, Stott heard the Reverend Eric Nash's sermon "What Then Shall I Do with Jesus, Who is Called the Christ?" Nash became somewhat of a mentor to Stott, referring him to Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Moved by Nash's sermon and Scripture, Stott committed his life more completely to Christ. He later shared the impact that Revelation 3:20 had on his life:

"Here, then, is the crucial question which we have been leading up to. Have we ever invited Him in? This was exactly the question which I needed to have put to me. For intellectually speaking, I had believed in Jesus all my life, on the other side of the door. I had regularly struggled to say my prayers through the key-hole. I had even pushed pennies under the door in a vain attempt to pacify Him. I had been baptized, yes and confirmed as well. I went to church, read my Bible, had high ideals, and tried to be good and do good. But all the time, often without realizing it, I was holding Christ at arm's length, and keeping Him outside. I knew that to open the door might have momentous consequences. I am profoundly grateful to Him for enabling me to open the door. Looking back now over more than fifty years, I realize that that simple step has changed the entire direction, course and quality of my life."

Stott was ordained in 1945, becoming a rector at All Souls' Church, Langham Place, where he attended with his mother as a child and most of his adulthood. He increasingly spent more and more of his time outside the All Souls'

congregation, writing and speaking for Christ and His Church worldwide. He remained in All Souls' Church all of his life, serving as "rector emeritus" as his international ministry increased. In 1974, he founded the Langham Partnership International (known as John Stott Ministries in the U.S. until 1912). In 1982, Stott founded the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity; he remained the honorary president until his death. He brought together influential Evangelical Christian leaders to strategize on how best to communicate the Christian faith in a secular society. He spoke to large audiences throughout the world on "Matters of Life and Death."

Stott wrote over 50 books. One such writing, which has been instrumental in the lives of millions seeking Christ, has become a classic: *Basic Christianity*. Its pages retell the central message of Christianity and argue its truth and relevance for the individual believer. *Basic Christianity* and many of his other books have been published in Chinese, Korean, and Spanish.

John Stott's ministry was not without controversy. Stott led the evangelical movement within the Church of England. He did not favor leaving the Anglican Church for established Evangelical denominations. He persuaded evangelicals to actively influence the teachings within the Anglican Church. Stott's view led to disagreement among worldwide evangelical leaders, who argued that Evangelicals needed to unite and no longer remain within their "mixed" denominations. To this day there is division in the two positions.

Stott was appointed as Chaplain to Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom in 1959. He was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2006. He received a number of honorary doctorates.

John Stott died July 27, 2011. His life was memorialized by the secular media, including the BBC and the New York Times. He was described as "An architect of 20<sup>th</sup> century evangelicalism [who] shaped the faith of a generation." His funeral was held at All Souls' Church. Memorial services were held at St Paul's Cathedral, London; Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland, New Zealand; St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia; College Church, Wheaton, Illinois; Anglican Network Church of the Good Shepherd, Vancouver, Canada; as well as in cities across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Leaders worldwide wrote memorial tributes to him, including Billy Graham, who wrote, "The evangelical world has lost one of its greatest spokesmen, and I have lost one of my close personal friends and advisors. I look forward to seeing him again when I go to Heaven."

Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury," stated,

"The death of John Stott will be mourned by countless Christians throughout the world. During a long life of unsparing service and witness, John won a unique place in the hearts of all who encountered him, whether in person or through his many books. He was a man of rare graciousness and deep personal kindness, a superb communicator and a sensitive and skilled counselor. Without ever compromising his firm evangelical faith, he showed himself willing to challenge some of the ways in which that faith had become conventional or inward-looking. It is not too much to say that he helped to change the face of evangelicalism internationally, arguing for the necessity of 'holistic' mission that applied the Gospel of Jesus to every area of life, including social and political questions. But he will be remembered most warmly as an expositor of Scripture and a teacher of the faith, whose depth and simplicity brought doctrine alive in all sorts of new ways."