

TWO EVANGELICAL APPROACHES TO EVANGELISM AND MISSION: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES AND JOHN R.W. STOTT

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Probably the two most influential pastors of 20th century British Evangelicalism were D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel and John R.W. Stott of All Souls' Anglican church. Both of them ministered in churches situated in central London and preached to crowded audiences for decades. Both of them were strong advocates of expository preaching and wrote prolifically. Both of them fulfilled presidential tasks in IFES for several years and were role models for large numbers of Evangelicals. The lives of both men have been written in two-volume authoritative biographies¹ during their lifetime² and their roles and achievements in the twentieth century are of ever growing academic interest.

But most importantly, both Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott were *evangelists* in their hearts. Bethan Lloyd-Jones wrote of the minister of Westminster Chapel: "No one will ever understand my husband until they realise that he is first of all a man of prayer then *an evangelist*"³. At least half of Lloyd-Jones' preaching in Westminster Chapel was directly evangelistic, and he also spent two or three days a week preaching evangelistic sermons in other churches throughout Britain. "The actual percentage of time given to evangelistic preaching was thus almost the opposite of the impression gained by anyone restricted to reading his published works currently available."⁴

John Stott gained his early reputation from being a successful evangelistic pastor, a popular evangelist among students, and a supporter of the Billy Graham campaigns. In a conflict with his parents over pacifism, the young Stott defended his decisions by writing to them about his calling:

Whatever you may think of it, I have had a definite and irresistible call from God... During the last three years I have become increasingly conscious of this call, and my life now could be summed up in the words 'separated unto the gospel of God'. There is no higher service; I ask no other. (...) Were I to do any service, good or bad, which is not directed towards the one object of 'preaching the gospel' in days to come I should be laying aside the authority of God.⁵

¹ Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn-Lloyd-Jones* Vol. 1-2. (Banner of Truth Trust, 1982,1990); Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott* Vol. 1-2 (IVP, 1999, 2001).

² Iain Murray received much direct help from ML-J in the preparation and writing of the two-volume biography. The first volume was published the year after ML-J died. John Stott is still alive and working when the second volume of his biography by T. Dudley-Smith appears.

³ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 322. (emphasis mine)

⁴ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 323.

⁵ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1, p. 165.

He did not lay aside the authority of God but would preach the gospel to the people in the pews of his church, to the non-church-goers of the City of London, to the students of the British universities, and to hundreds and thousands of diverse people around the globe. Just as Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Stott was an evangelist in his heart.

The two men knew and respected each other. Martyn Lloyd-Jones saw John Stott as a possible successor to him in Westminster Chapel⁶. John Stott, though not accepting the offer and soon having a serious open conflict with the 'Doctor'⁷, yet wrote about him later: "I always had a strong affection and admiration for him. In an era of theological flux he stood firm for historic, biblical Christianity."⁸

However, the two pastor-evangelists differed from each other in many respects. In this paper I attempt to point at some of the dissimilarities in the two evangelists' approaches to mission and evangelism. The differences could not be more obvious than during the Billy Graham campaigns in 1954. John Stott wholeheartedly supported the young American evangelist during his entire stay in the British Isles. Lloyd-Jones, however, was cool and sceptical about the successes of the Graham campaigns, and did not give them his support. Several years later Billy Graham visited Lloyd-Jones in London. He sought Lloyd-Jones' support for the forthcoming 'World Congress on Evangelism' in Berlin, and asked him to be the chairman of the Congress. Lloyd-Jones' reply has been recorded as follows:

I said I'd make a bargain: if he would stop the general sponsorship of his campaigns — stop having liberals and Roman Catholics on the platform — and drop the invitation system, I would wholeheartedly support him and chair the Congress. We talked for about three hours, but he didn't accept these conditions.⁹

As we will see, Lloyd-Jones was held by his theology and was not interested in pragmatic arguments when he thought fundamental issues of the gospel were affected. John Stott, on the other hand, did not have any problems with Graham's methods and accepted the appeal to give the three major Bible studies of the Congress on the Great Commission¹⁰.

The differences were substantial, but not essential. In 1978, when John Stott visited Lloyd-Jones in his home, they had a friendly conversation, at the end of which Lloyd-Jones told Stott, "I wish we could be together, you and I. We belong together.", to which Stott replied, "But, Dr Lloyd-Jones, we are together — theologically, though not structurally."¹¹ Both Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott were self-conscious evangelicals, and shared an essentially

⁶ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 464.

⁷ Both Murray and Dudley-Smith give an account of the public breach between the two ministers at the Second National Assembly of Evangelicals in 1966. (Murray, Vol. 2., pp. 517-528.; Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., pp. 65-71.)

⁸ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 68.

⁹ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 440.

¹⁰ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 122.

¹¹ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 174. (See also Murray, Vol. 2., p. 768.)

Reformed theological heritage. Yet, the dissimilarities seem to be substantial, in many respects. In the following I will show some of the differences in the two evangelists' backgrounds and evangelistic methods.

DIFFERENT INFLUENCES: NATIONALITY AND THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

To understand what caused the divergent approaches to evangelism and mission in the ministry of Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott, we should, first of all, attempt to understand the different backgrounds of the two men. They were influenced by their nationalities, church traditions, and theological heritages.

Nationality

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a Welshman. "The great controlling principles by which ML-J lived were not Welsh but in a thousand secondary things he was a Welsh through and through and proud to be so."¹² Lloyd-Jones admitted that, though regeneration is a divine work that changes our main principles and direction, national identity always affects our religious outlook. He believed that "the English character is simple compared with the Welshman, whose make-up involves 'a number of different levels which are not organically connected together'"¹³. In Murray's opinion, Lloyd-Jones' dislike of organisation, for example, was part of his national constitution that influenced his ministry in a large manner¹⁴.

One of the most obvious dissimilarities between Stott and Lloyd-Jones was their different attitudes towards committees and evangelistic methods. It is likely that their differences were partly due to their different nationalities. As Lloyd-Jones said on one occasion:

The Welshmen tends to laugh at the excitement of the activist and the man who rushes to form organisations. The South Walian's laziness, plus his genius, makes him despise committees... The North Walian is much more interested in committees, in organisation and doing things. But... it is still true to say of the Welsh, Northmen included, that they are less subject to these things than the Englishmen is...¹⁵

Murray, who writes with great respect, nevertheless lists this national characteristic on the debit side of Lloyd-Jones' ministry. "It is an interesting fact", writes Murray,

that what he did for the wider work of the gospel was generally due to arrangements made by others into which he entered. Near the end of his life he went as far as saying

¹² Murray, Vol. 2., p. 201.

¹³ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 757.

¹⁴ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 757.

¹⁵ Quoted by Murray in Vol. 2., p. 757.

that the Ministers' Fellowship meeting at Sandfields was the only new thing which he had ever begun!¹⁶

Murray qualifies his criticism by noting that the Welsh preacher's antipathy towards organisation was just partly constitutional: it had also to do with his *spirituality* that was suspicious of human ambitions and love of power¹⁷. Murray also balances his assessment by saying that Lloyd-Jones was not against *all* organisation and definitely advocated hard work. But

he feared that in evangelical priorities *our* activities and plans rated far too highly and this increased his constitutional caution. His position is well summarized in a conversation with Dr Gaius Davies, 'What I have always said is that we should have the minimum of organisation — the absolute minimum'." Murray adds, "His view of 'minimum'... was sometimes at fault."¹⁸

When we observe the life and achievements of John Stott, we are appalled by the difference. John Stott, an Englishman and an activist, was a strong advocate of the use of plans, organisations, committees, reports, and conferences. It would be interesting to make statistics about how much time he actually spent in direct evangelism and how much time he spent in dialogues and conferences, discussions and reports *on* evangelism. He was true to the reputation of Englishmen being born diplomats. John Stott believed in consultations and agreements to a degree people with the veins of Lloyd-Jones would have considered a sheer waste of time and diversion from the real task of evangelism.

It would be unfair to say that John Stott was not involved in direct evangelism. He was an evangelist, and an active one, before anything else. But it is also unbelievable how many organisations and committees had John Stott as their chairman or president throughout his life! When we try to list these organisations and consultations, we have the strong impression that these had a prestigious role among Stott's priorities¹⁹. One wonders if Stott's fascination with the calm and pragmatic methods of diplomatic consultations and organisations, and a lack of the impulsive but engaging imbalances so characteristic of Lloyd-Jones is not due to his English nationality. As he himself confessed, he was descended "from hard Norsemen and blunt

¹⁶ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 757.

¹⁷ Murray, Vol. 2., p. 772.

¹⁸ Murray, Vol. 2., pp. 758-9.

¹⁹ John Stott had an active role in at least the following: Christian Action for Reconciliation and Evangelism; Church of England liturgical revision; Church of England Evangelical Council; Consultation on Gospel and Culture (Willowbank); Consultation on World Evangelization; Eclectic Society; Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion; Evangelical Literature Trust; Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission; International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne I and II); International Fellowship of Evangelical Students; Islington Clerical Conference; John Stott Ministries; Keswick Convention; Langham Ministries; London Institute for Contemporary Christianity; National Evangelical Anglican Congress; Tear Fund; World Council of Churches.

Anglo-Saxons, with no spark of Celtic or Latin fire in my blood”, and as “one of those cold fish called an Englishman”²⁰.

Nationality played an important role in their ecclesiastical views, too. When John Stott experienced the new birth, and received a call from God to be a minister of the gospel, it was natural for him to join the Church of England. Interestingly, he was to become the Rector of the same church where he would go with his parents as a child. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, being a Welshman, was a nonconformist, by default. Of course, his views of the church cannot be explained simply by national preference, but the fact that he could never understand Stott’s attachment to a national church was probably also due to his being a Welshman. This difference remained a significant factor in the two men’s attitude to ecumenism as a means of evangelism.

Theological Heritage

The other formative influence on the two evangelists was the theological heritage they received. The two men were representative figures of post-war British (and Western) evangelicalism. Stott had probably more in common theologically with Lloyd-Jones than an average evangelical Christian would have today. Stott’s theology, just as Lloyd-Jones’ theology, was basically Calvinistic²¹, though he did not use the label himself²². And yet, the differences in their evangelistic methods were substantial. And they cannot be explained merely by pointing at the two men’s national temperaments. These differences were about theological nuances within the evangelical consensus, but only partly doctrinal. They are those powerful influences of church traditions and examples of godly ancestors in the faith that are less easy to discern.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a member of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, and later the minister of the Congregational Westminster Chapel. He was naturally inclined to the free church tradition and had sympathy with the moderately separatist views of radical Puritanism, though he rejected what he considered to be schism and did not regard the Church of England as altogether wrong²³. His theology was influenced by the ‘experimental Calvinism’ of the English and American Puritans. When once asked what made his preaching so different from the preaching of others, his reply was that he had read *different books*. What he meant, of course, was that he had deliberately immersed himself in the writings of the Puritans. In a lecture given at Westminster Theological Seminary, he confessed that his “whole

²⁰ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1., p. 22.

²¹ “A decision is involved in the process of becoming a Christian, but it is God’s decision before it can be ours. This is not to deny that we ‘decided for Christ’, and freely, but to affirm that we did so only because he had first ‘decided for us’.” (John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, IVP, USA, 1994, p. 249)

²² Following the example of Charles Simeon of Cambridge (Stott, *Romans*, p. 278).

²³ M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: their Origins and Successors* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p. 152)

ministry has been governed by” the works of the Puritans²⁴. Although John Stott also had a great respect for the Puritans²⁵, his Reformed understanding of evangelical soteriology has never been nearly as much influenced by them as Lloyd-Jones’ evangelicalism.

But even more important than that was Lloyd-Jones’ indebtedness to the Evangelical Revival of the 18th century. Martyn Lloyd-Jones considered himself to be an ‘18th century man’.

I draw a great distinction between the preaching of the Puritans and the preaching of the eighteenth-century men. I myself am an eighteenth-century man, not seventeenth-century; but I believe in using the seventeenth-century men as the eighteenth-century men used them.²⁶

From this it follows that we make a mistake if we try to explain Lloyd-Jones’ evangelistic methods only by making a comparison with the Puritans. He liked the Puritans mainly through the eyes of the men of the Evangelical Revival.

The examples of George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Daniel Rowlands, and Howell Harris were much more significant for Lloyd-Jones than the Puritans themselves²⁷. He was born in an area where Welsh Methodism had had a powerful influence during the Evangelical Revival. The village of Llangeitho, where Martyn Lloyd-Jones grew up, had a statue of Daniel Rowlands near the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. Later, when he was the minister of the Calvinistic Methodist church in Aberavon, he organised excursions for the men of his church to visit this statue and other spots of the Welsh Methodist awakening.

He was still a teenager when his history teacher thrust a booklet into his pocket. It was a book about the ministry of Howell Harris, the other great Welsh evangelist of the 18th century. This book contributed to his conversion, but even beyond that, it impressed a strong vision into his heart about what an evangelical ministry should look like. Throughout his life, the evangelistic methods of these early Calvinistic Methodists remained for him the standard and desirable ways of evangelism. He considered the introduction of the ‘New Measures’ of Charles Finney in the 19th century a serious departure from what he considered to be the biblical methods. Lloyd-Jones often aired his conviction that the 19th century was a decline, not a progress, in the history of evangelism.

John Stott was not born (again) into a spiritual vacuum, either. His evangelistic methods, as we will see, were deeply influenced by another

²⁴ Ibid, p. 238.

²⁵ He often quoted them in his books. His indebtedness to the Puritans is seen especially in his *I Believe in Preaching* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1982).

²⁶ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Zondervan, 1972), p. 120.

²⁷ A large percentage of his lectures on the yearly Puritan and Westminster Conferences were not directly on the Puritans but on 18th century men who had been influenced by the Puritans (e.g. George Whitefield, Howell Harris, William Williams). See M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: their Origins and Successors* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1987).

evangelical climate, significantly different from that which surrounded Lloyd-Jones. It is important, of course, that John Stott was an Anglican. But it is not the most significant influence on his outlook. The single most important figure shaping Stott's views of evangelism, at least at the beginning, was E.J.H. Nash, or, as he was usually called, 'Bash'. Stott became a Christian through Bash, and his early Christian life was utterly determined by the godly example and ministry of this wonderful bachelor²⁸. It is true that he later went through spiritual changes that distanced himself from the heritage he had received from Bash, but he always remained grateful to his mentor and could never fully free himself from his influence²⁹.

The theological heritage that John Stott received from Bash was more typical of the general climate of evangelicalism than the theological heritage that influenced Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Bash represented the typical evangelical leader of the first half of the 20th century. He was characterised by a fundamentalist theological background, dispensational eschatology³⁰, pietistic spirituality³¹, a 'Keswick' view of holiness³², and an uncritical use of the evangelistic methods of Charles Finney and Dwight L. Moody. John Stott had a love-hate relationship with this heritage throughout his whole life. Some of his views on evangelism were clearly influenced by this heritage, others were reactions to it.

It is obvious that Stott was influenced by the 'decisionist' approach to evangelism favoured by evangelicals from the 19th century, and accepted the 'alter call' method widely used by Billy Graham and other American revivalists of earlier generations. Although Stott rejected the two-stage view of sanctification advocated by Keswick, and refuted Bash's typical interpretation of Romans 6, his method of urging a decision from his hearers (with the possibility and necessity of an immediate assurance) could be seen as a reminiscent of the view that conversion is in our will-power. Evangelicals of the 18th century would have considered it to be suspect of 'believism', 'sandemanianism'³³, or even 'Arminianism'. Contemporary evangelicals of the Reformed tradition criticised Stott's methods as being

²⁸ On the relationship of John Stott to Eric Nash, see Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1.

²⁹ "'Bash' was... John Stott's mentor and pastor at the time of his conversion and (with increasing detachment but unswerving friendship) until Bash's last years." (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 409)

³⁰ Bash had given John Stott the copy of the Scofield Reference Bible, on the basis of which the young Stott gave an address on the Rapture in a Cambridge parish in the 1940s. He soon changed his mind on this issue through the influence of John Wenham. (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1. p. 133)

³¹ According to O. Barclay, Bash regarded the IVF as too intellectual. Although following Bash, rather than D. Johnson of the IVF, at the time, Stott became more and more critical of this kind of pietism as time went by. (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1., p.186)

³² "It was part of my upbringing to revere the Keswick Convention.", wrote John Stott. According to Dudley Smith, "Bash (E.J.H. Nash) had valued Keswick and encouraged his leaders to attend." (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 34)

³³ See for example, M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: their Origins and Successors* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), pp. 170-190.

inconsistent with the sovereignty of God in salvation³⁴. He himself did not see any inconsistencies between his methods and theology.

On the other hand, Stott became more and more conscious of the weaknesses of his early fundamentalist and pietistic background, and went through significant changes in his understanding of the mission of the church. Some of the results of his reactions to his early views proved to be remarkably new forces within the whole evangelical realm. John Stott's views of mission changed from a more or less pietistic and revivalist emphasis to a more holistic and socially engaged understanding. This change had a significant impact on the social and global consciousness of the evangelical movement.

METHODS OF EVANGELISM AND MISSION

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

For Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the two foci of evangelism and mission was *preaching* and *the power of the Spirit*. The evangelists' task is to preach the good news to all kinds of people, success can only be the result of the work of the Spirit of God. Major success, that has a social dimension, too, can only be reached through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which Lloyd-Jones called 'revival'. "The Bible teaches plainly and clearly that God's own method is always through the Spirit and His authority and power."³⁵

Lloyd-Jones thought that, though the 20th century was sceptical of preaching, it was, nonetheless, a divine method of communicating the truth. In 1969 he gave a lecture series on preaching to the students at Westminster Theological Seminary. In the opening lecture he told them,

my reason for being very ready to give these lectures is that to me the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called. If you want something in addition to that I would say without hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the greatest need in the world also.³⁶

The only "method" of evangelism that Martyn Lloyd-Jones would really advocate was preaching the gospel from the pulpit. In his view, the pulpit was not the only place for evangelism, but definitely a central place. He believed in the efficiency of preaching. Every week he preached the gospel in his own church and two or three times in other churches around Britain. In Westminster Chapel, he would preach an evangelistic sermon every Sunday evening. He announced that on those evenings he would preach to the audience assuming that they were *non-Christians*. He saw converts under his preaching every week, though he would never announce or register the

³⁴ See for example, Iain H. Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided* (Banner of Truth Trust, 2000).

³⁵ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Authority* (IVP, 1958, 1973), p. 71.

³⁶ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Zondervan, 1971), p. 9.

“results”. He saw many conversions during his preaching tours around Britain, and even on occasions when he had been invited to preach in other countries like Norway, Canada, or the United States.

He was ready to preach the gospel among university students, too. On rare occasions he accepted invitations to preach through the television or the radio, but he did not like those occasions nearly as much as he liked the times when he could preach in more natural environments. Lloyd-Jones was convinced that all kinds of people needed to hear the *same* essential message. His message consisted of the bad news of our sinfulness and the wrath of God, and the good news of God’s offering grace in Christ crucified. He would not change his message just because he was confronted by a different audience. He would try to connect to their life situations, but he did not believe in the commonly accepted view that in order to be able to convey the message we should become the same type of people than the ones we are preaching to. The illustration he would often use to prove this was that we obviously do not need to become *prostitutes* in order to be able to witness to them.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was sceptical of the necessity of apologetics and adaptation to popular culture. He believed that all that was absolutely useless without the power of the Holy Spirit. But when the power is there, conversions often happen without those things. Referring to the success of the early church, he asked,

What was the secret of their power? That they were able to argue scientifically that resurrection is possible? That they were able to reconcile the miraculous with the scientific? No! It was the authority and power of the Holy Ghost turning these men into living witnesses who were irresistible.³⁷

Lloyd-Jones rebuked his contemporary evangelicals who, as he perceived, were trying to influence the world by all means but forgot about the power of the Spirit in simple preaching.

The Church today... is aware of the fact that she is more or less impotent, that she is not making the impact which she should upon the world. She is conscious that what she lacks is real authority. But in her search for it, she seems to do everything except turn to the authority of the Holy Spirit.³⁸

He believed in a certain type of preaching. He believed in the effectiveness of *authoritative* preaching (or *anointed* preaching). His views on this sound “charismatic”, but they had virtually nothing to do with the Charismatic movement. Lloyd-Jones’ estimation of powerful preaching came from his appreciation of powerful *preachers* throughout *all* ages. He saw the fruits of this kind of evangelism in the ministry of Jesus, the apostle Paul, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, and the men of the Evangelical

³⁷ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Authority*, p. 84.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 66.

Revival. He had personal experiences of this when as a child he was an eye-witness of the last Welsh Revival in 1904-5.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones often used the following illustration to show what he meant by authoritative preaching:

Am I an *advocate* of these things or am I a *witness*? You can be an advocate of Christianity without being a Christian. You can be an advocate of these things without experiencing them. If you have intelligence, if you have been rightly trained, you can understand the Scriptures in a sense, and you can lay them out before others. You can present all the arguments, you can put the case for a kind of Christian philosophy. And it may sound wonderful. But you may be standing outside the true experience of it the whole time. You may be talking about something you do not really know, about Someone you have never met. You are an advocate, perhaps even a brilliant advocate. But note what the Lord said to the apostles: 'Ye shall be my *witnesses*.' (...) What the Holy Ghost does with His authority is to make us witnesses. (...) Knowledge of the facts is not enough. Before you can witness effectively there must be this power of the Holy Spirit.³⁹

"You can have knowledge," told Lloyd-Jones to his audience of theological students at Westminster Seminary, "and you can be meticulous in your preparation; but without the unction of the Holy Spirit you will have no power, and your preaching will not be effective."⁴⁰

Martyn Lloyd-Jones did not believe in the efficiency of any evangelistic methods for another reason, too. He saw the work of the Holy Spirit as essential not just in the presentation of the gospel but also in its *reception*. In his opinion, the main problem with people was not a communicational problem but a moral problem. It was not that people did not *know* what they had to do but that they did not *want* to do it. Also, he perceived the problem to be much deeper than his contemporary evangelicals of a more or less Arminian persuasion saw it. Lloyd-Jones believed that without supernatural aid people were incapable to repent and believe in Christ. His Calvinistic understanding of the Bible taught him that regeneration always precedes real conversions. A "decision for Christ" might or might not be a sign of true conversion. There is such a thing as psychological conversion⁴¹. For a real conversion, however, a substantial work of the Holy Spirit is needed, and this work is not in our will-power!

Lloyd-Jones emphasised that the true condition of natural man is such that

he cannot desire to love God, he cannot desire to obey him. He cannot choose to do so, he is totally incapable of any spiritual effort... The popular teaching which says that we have to preach the gospel to the natural man as he is, and that he, as he is, decides to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and that then, because he has believed, he is given new life, is regenerated — this, I say, is a complete denial of what the Apostle teaches here.⁴²

As Murray explains,

³⁹ Ibid, p. 82-3.

⁴⁰ Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, p. 319.

⁴¹ See his booklet, *Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual* (IVP, 1959).

⁴² Quoted by Murray, Vol. 2., p. 326.

The time of regeneration is, therefore, not in man's control. What Scripture does make clear is that God first humbles through the truth those to whom he is pleased to impart life and a new nature. The only proof that believing is genuine is that the *life* is changed. These simple facts he saw as having immense bearings on evangelism. For one thing, it means that an evangelist must exercise care lest by a mere appeal to self-interest he induces a 'decision' which, far from being saving, is perfectly consistent with a person remaining in an unregenerate condition.⁴³

It is an interesting fact, that though John Stott agreed with the theological premise⁴⁴, he would nevertheless give less care to the above concerns. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

viewed with sadness the type of evangelism which supposes that the ethical and moral change associated with sanctification is something which Christians can receive at some point later than their conversion and justification. Rather, the most decisive influence for holiness comes from the rebirth itself.⁴⁵

"By obscuring the meaning of regeneration," Lloyd-Jones would say, "modern evangelism had separated two things which Scripture always puts together, namely forgiveness and a new life of fellowship with God."⁴⁶ It is possible that Stott's indifference to these dangers in his ministry, in contrast to Lloyd-Jones, was due to his unconscious absorption of both Finney's methods and the Keswick tendency of separating conversion from sanctification, which latter thing he would definitely not affirm.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was afraid that the evangelistic methods used by his contemporaries produced many false converts, which he considered extremely harmful in the long run. This was the reason why he did not support Billy Graham's campaigns in London. This was also why he practically stopped all the evangelistic programs in his first church in Aberavon shortly after his arrival. He did not believe methods could produce real converts. He believed, though, that powerful preaching *could*, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Lloyd-Jones believed in the Holy Spirit, and he thought that the evangelistic methods of his day, on the contrary, demonstrated a distrust in His power.

The social aspect of Lloyd-Jones understanding of mission is easy to summarise. He believed that the only solution for societies was a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit that he called 'revival'. He did not believe that a society could be changed through laws from the top. He believed that societies change when their members are grasped by God and are changed from inside out. Lloyd-Jones was serious when he said that the most urgent need of the world was *preaching*⁴⁷. In a revival, preaching with the power of

⁴³ Ibid, p. 327.

⁴⁴ See for example, Stott, *Authentic Christianity* (IVP, 1995), pp. 191-7.

⁴⁵ Murray, Vol. 2., pp. 327-8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, p. 9.

the Spirit changes large numbers of people, who, as a result, start behaving differently. Social change is an inevitable consequence of this.

Surely no one should need to be convinced, today, that nothing short of a mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God is adequate to deal with our situation in this mid-twentieth century... But we shall not be interested in revival until we realise... the futility of all our own efforts and endeavours and the utter absolute need of prayer, and seeking the power of God alone.⁴⁸

It is a fact that Lloyd-Jones' ministry in Aberavon was unbelievably successful. After stopping all other evangelistic ministries and giving absolute preeminence to preaching, his church started to grow fast⁴⁹. His ministry in central London also drew many people to listen to his message. But it can still be a valid question if Martyn Lloyd-Jones really gave justice to the communicational issues in evangelism. He seems to be an easy target for those who want to criticise him for a lack of the incarnational understanding of mission so beautifully exemplified in the life of Jesus. On the other hand, evangelicals today do not seem to understand, even less to pay attention to, the 'Doctor's major passion in evangelism. It was simply the glory of God.

John R.W. Stott

John Stott had a global evangelistic ministry with a fascinating travelling record⁵⁰. His approach to evangelism and mission has been characterised by a *belief in strategies and methods, an incarnational understanding, and a growing social consciousness.*

The tenth chapter of the first volume of Dudley-Smith's biography of John Stott has the telling title: Rector of All Souls: A Strategy for Evangelism. The biographer presents the young minister of this central London parish as a *strategic evangelist*. And indeed, contrary to Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Stott believed in strategising and methods in evangelism. He followed the example of his mentor, Eric Nash.

After his conversion, it was natural for John Stott to begin to help Bash in his camp ministry among public school boys⁵¹. Bash noticed from the beginning that the youngman was a natural leader and a goal-oriented organiser. The pattern that Bash gave to Stott was that of professional organisation and single-minded loyalty to the work. The camp "was a highly specialised operation whose success could be jeopardised by attempting to do too many things at once. Bash believed in concentrating on the spiritual objectives with a single-mindedness that not everyone could always understand."⁵² As John Stott remembered,

⁴⁸ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Revival* (Crossway Books, 1987), p. 20.

⁴⁹ Murray, Vol. 1.

⁵⁰ See Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Vol. 2. of the biography).

⁵¹ "John Stott became Bash's right hand man in the administration of the camp work." (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1., p. 138.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 139.

The camps themselves were meticulously organised ...Bash insisted on a ratio of officers to boys, so that every activity could be properly organised and every boy given suitable pastoral care. The officers were carefully recruited and thoroughly trained. ...Those who did not reach his high standards or were not prepared to make Iwerne Minster their top priority were advised to use their talents elsewhere. Every part of the camp operation was finely tuned to achieve its purpose of attracting boys and winning them for Christ.⁵³

John Stott was a perfect help to Bash. John Eddison, a camper, wrote about the young Stott,

There is no doubt that John Stott was God's answer to the movement at this time, and to a host of problems. But his immaculate efficiency, his eyes for detail and his almost workaholic perfectionism never diluted his cheerful courtesy, a mischievous sense of humour, and above all the tone of his spiritual leadership.⁵⁴

These were memorable experiences for Stott. As he remembered:

Undoubtably the most formative influence on my faith during the five years at Cambridge was my involvement with the ...'Bash camps'... No Christian organisation is perfect, of course; and it would be easy to find fault with a group as powerful and effective as this one. But if God has given me a useful ministry today, the roots of it were almost certainly planted during those remarkable five years in the camps. It was the best possible training I could have received.⁵⁵

It is no surprise that the same meticulousness could be seen later in the pastoral ministry of John Stott. All Souls was a place of conscious and strategic efforts to reach the whole diocese for Christ. John Stott developed a strategy for evangelism that became a pattern for many other churches in the Church of England⁵⁶. "He bent his mind to find ways in which (the) vision of lay evangelism might become a reality: and so devised a detailed initiative combining evangelism, nurture and training."⁵⁷ The three pillars of this strategy were: the 'Guest Service', an evangelistic service with a call for decision at the end (of the Finney-Moody tradition); the 'At Homes', a follow-up course for those who made a Christian profession; and the 'Traning School' where Stott motivated the laity of his church for evangelism. The latter was a six months' course in the Theory and Practise of Evangelism.

This strategic and method-oriented approach to evangelism was characteristic of Stott's entire ministry. He believed in setting up committees and making strategies. He believed that disciplined efforts were better than scattered attempts. He believed in evangelical initiatives that had clear goals and purposes, and equally clear means and methods to achieve those purposes. He believed in efficiency. The weakness of this approach might be,

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 140-1.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 146-7.

⁵⁶ "It was a many-sided vision, at that time unparalleled elsewhere, though later adopted eagerly by many churches." (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 1., p. 279.)

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 280.

as his critics would say, that the supernatural and spiritual aspect of evangelism could easily be forgotten and the power of our human efforts be overestimated. To which criticism John Stott would simply reply, "Our dynamic must be the Spirit of God, not the power of human personality, organisation or eloquence."⁵⁸

An even more important characteristic of John Stott's evangelistic approach was his emphasis on an incarnational understanding of mission. As he explained,

The Son of God did not stay in the safe immunity of his heaven, remote from human sin and tragedy. He actually entered our world. (...) Now he sends us into the world, as the Father sent him into the world. In other words, our mission is to be modelled on his. Indeed, all authentic mission is incarnational mission. It demands identification without loss of identity. It means entering other people's worlds, as he entered ours, though without compromising our Christian convictions, values or standards.⁵⁹

Of this incarnational emphasis was born the notable term of 'double listening'.

We are called to double listening, listening both to the Word and to the world. It is a truism to say that we need to listen to the Word of God, except perhaps that we need to listen to him more expectantly and humbly... It is less welcome to be told that we must also listen to the world. For the voices of our contemporaries may take the form of shrill and strident protest. They are now querulous, now appealing, now aggressive in tone. There are also the anger, alienation and even despair of those who are estranged from God. I am not suggesting that we should listen to God and to our fellow human beings in the same way or with the same degree of deference. We listen to the Word with humble reverence, anxious to understand it, and resolved to believe and obey what we come to understand. We listen to the world with critical alertness, anxious to understand it too, and resolved not necessarily to believe and obey it, but to sympathise with it and to seek grace to discover how the gospel relates to it. (...) Double listening is indispensable to Christian discipleship and Christian mission. It is only through double listening that it is possible to become a 'contemporary Christian'.⁶⁰

The third, but probably *the* most influential, emphasis in Stott's understanding of evangelism and mission is his idea that Christian mission includes *both* evangelism *and* social responsibility. Evangelicals of earlier generations were extremely suspicious of anything that would remind them of the liberal 'social gospel'. Stott broke up a new ground when he reminded his contemporary evangelicals of their social responsibilities again. The force of his warnings was, however, the theological grounding he gave them.

Stott was not always convinced that mission included social responsibility. At the beginning of his ministry he was still mildly pietistic in his evangelistic views. Though he never liked the concept of "a passion for souls"⁶¹, his evangelistic efforts aimed the *eternal* salvation of the lost, not

⁵⁸ John Stott, *Authentic Christianity* (IVP, 1995), p. 324.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁶⁰ John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian* (IVP, 1992), pp. 27-9.

⁶¹ "I have never had a love or passion for souls; I can't envisage a soul as a being an adequate object of my love, affection or passion. What God has done is create human beings, and

their temporary good. When giving his three lectures on the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, he declared that the commission of the church is “not to reform society, but to preach the gospel”⁶². Thirty years later, however, he confessed,

I now consider that I was unbalanced to assert that the risen Lord’s commission was entirely evangelistic, not social... I later argued that at least the Johannine version of the Commission (with its words ‘as the Father sent me, so I send you’) implies in us as in Christ a ministry of compassionate service that is wider than evangelism.⁶³

Also referring to his Berlin lectures, Stott on another occasion said, “I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.”⁶⁴

This change of mind can be clearly seen in Stott’s leading role in the wording of the text of the Lausanne Covenant. After many serious discussions over the exact wording of the relationship of evangelism to social responsibility, two important sentences were born, both of them reflect John Stott’s new vision: 1. “Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty.”; 2. “In the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary.”⁶⁵

John Stott was ready to defend this vision even against some of the reservations of Billy Graham. He stated that

social action is a *partner of evangelism*. As partners the two belong to each other and yet are independent of each other. Each stand on its own feet in its own right alongside the other. Neither is a means to the other, or even a manifestation of the other. For each is an end in itself. Both are expressions of unfeigned love.⁶⁶

He also maintained that evangelism is primary and eternal life is always more important than political or economic liberation⁶⁷. Fifteen years later he led the drafting committee of the second International Congress on World Evangelization, too. The result was the Manila Manifesto, in which they further declared both the church’s social responsibility and the primacy of evangelism. When walking on the streets of Manila and seeing the poverty

human beings are more than a soul; they are body-souls and they are body-souls-in-a-community. Therefore, if I truly love my neighbour, the second commandment obliges me to serve my neighbour in his or her physical, social and spiritual dimensions.” (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 437)

⁶² Ibid, p. 122.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 123.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 242.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Rene Padilla (ed.), *The New Face of Evangelicalism* (IVP, 1976), pp. 87, 103.

⁶⁶ Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, p. 341.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 322.

and overcrowded homes, Stott thought in his heart, "I'm glad the Manila Manifesto includes the sentence: 'We are outraged by the inhuman conditions in which millions live, who bear God's image as we do.'"⁶⁸

As a main method of incarnational mission (which includes social responsibility), John Stott advocated an honest way of dealing with contemporary problems and giving thoughtful Christian answers on the basis of both understanding the questions and the teaching of the Scriptures. He attempted to show the path to fellow evangelicals by his personal example. He was not alone in this attempt⁶⁹, but his role as an evangelical leader made his contribution especially powerful and having a wide effect. Two of his major efforts were the founding of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity⁷⁰, and the writing of the book *Issues Facing Christians Today*⁷¹. The latter one was especially dear to his heart⁷² and demanded extraordinary work from him. He revised the book more than once.

The motto of the Manila Manifesto to call "the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world" could be the motto of John Stott's evangelistic passion, too.

CONCLUSION

The differences between the two evangelical leaders' approaches to evangelism and mission were differences of emphases, not of essence. Both approaches were genuinely evangelical, and even coming from a shared Reformed theology. But both approaches were limited by the personal experiences and spiritual history of the two men.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones saw the glory of God as the single most important factor in evangelism, and viewed the sinfulness and weakness of human nature with high seriousness. He was convinced of the inability of all human efforts without the power of the Holy Spirit. John Stott, though convinced of these theological truths, gave less importance to them. His main passion was the responsibility of Christians to preach the gospel to the whole world through purposeful action. He was convinced of the rightfulness of a holistic approach to mission.

Lloyd-Jones' weakness was probably the lack of an incarnational view of mission and a downplaying of communicational problems in evangelism. Stott's weakness was probably his overemphasis on human organising and methods. It would be too much to say that Lloyd-Jones saw a powerful God

⁶⁸ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 305.

⁶⁹ At least two similar, though in many respects different, attempts were made for an incarnational communication of Christian theology: L'Abri Fellowship founded by Francis Schaeffer and Regent College started by James Houston.

⁷⁰ Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2.

⁷¹ Marshalls Pickering, London, 1984.

⁷² "...more of my heart and mind went into that book than into writing any other, so that it is in some sense a personal apologia" (Dudley-Smith, Vol. 2., p. 342)

whereas Stott saw a responsible Christian. But we can at least say that for Lloyd-Jones the bigger danger was an overconfident Christian, and Stott was more afraid of an ineffective believer.

We do not need to choose, however. On the nature and practise of evangelism we can learn from both spiritual giants, and we can also accept their limitations. And we can be sure they would both agree with this statement.