

Lessons from Church History (Part 2)

WEEK 13: Lessons from Modern Evangelicalism

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

- Born into a family of modest means in Cardiff, Wales in 1899, Martyn Lloyd-Jones was raised in Llangeitho, a tiny village that was the center of the Welsh Methodist revival in the 1700s.
- Martyn was an accomplished student. In 1921 he worked as an assistant to the Royal Physician for King George V. He earned a medical degree from the University of London and was one of the brightest young physicians in the nation. He was converted to Christ in his mid-twenties.
- In 1927, Martyn recognized his work to bring society's elite back to full health only returned them to their lives of sin. His calling was to minister to souls instead of the physical body, so he returned to Wales to pastor a church in Aberavon. He had no theological or biblical training, yet his commitment to preach the Word in Aberavon brought vibrant life to their dying church.
- In 1939 he returned to London where he had received an appointment as associate pastor of Westminster Chapel. He was known for preaching through the sirens during the German air raids of WWII. He became the sole Pastor of Westminster Chapel in 1943.
- His style of preaching was passionate yet logical. Expository yet compelling. "Logic on fire! Eloquent reason!...theology on fire ...theology coming through a man who is on fire," he described it, owed in part to his fiery Welsh ancestry combined with the calm bedside manner of a doctor.
- His exposition of Romans required 366 Friday night sermons over twelve years and is one of his better-known collections. There are over 1,600 recorded sermons found at mljtrust.org.
- He was a student of the Puritans. He devoured the writings of Richard Baxter and John Owen and used them in his preaching. His lack of formal training was overcome by his reading of Reformed theologians. He brought about a renewed interest in the Puritan figures of church history along with his other heroes such as Whitefield, Johnathan Edwards, Spurgeon, B.B. Warfield, and J.C. Ryle.
- Controversy occurred in 1966 at the National Association of Evangelicals. Lloyd-Jones was invited to speak and he encouraged evangelicals to unite as fellow believers but questioned uniting with church members who did not hold to essential doctrines of salvation. Anglican Minister and Chairman of the meeting, John Stott, took to the stage and rebuked Lloyd-Jones before the assembly. Stott would later apologize, but the damage was done.
- The following year the Anglicans held their own conference and committed fully to the Church of England, completely rejecting the separatist approach of Martyn Lloyd-Jones. To this day, the interpretation of Lloyd-Jones' words varies depending on which side of the aisle the writer is sitting.
- ML-J retired from his ministry at Westminster Chapel in 1968, then spent the remainder of his life editing his sermons to be published, counselling other ministers, and speaking at conferences.
- He preached for the last time on June 8, 1980 and died in his sleep on March 1, 1981. Just a few days before, unable to speak, he wrote "Do not pray for healing. Do not hold me back from the glory."

J. I. Packer (1926-2020)

- Born near Gloucestershire, England into a lower-class family, J. I. Packer knew from an early age his only opportunity for advanced education was to be awarded scholarships. His family faithfully attended the nearby Anglican church, but never spoke of God nor prayed outside those walls.
- At the age of seven he was hit by a passing van in the street and suffered a severe head injury. Thus, he was forbidden from playing sports and driven further into reading and writing. He entered the Crypt School, a prestigious institution dating to 1539.
- At the age of 18 he was awarded a scholarship to Oxford. 3 weeks later he attended a service at St. Aldate's church and was converted, not far from where George Whitefield was converted in 1735.

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- Packer soon was introduced to the writings of 17th century Puritan John Owen, of whom he later said, "I owe more, I think, to John Owen than any other theologian, ancient or modern".
- In 1948, he taught at Oak Hill Theological College in London and sat under the preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones. They co-founded the Puritan Conference and hosted it for the next 20 years.
- He studied at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, was ordained as a priest in 1953, and earned his MA and DPhil in 1954. Also in 1954, he married a Welsh woman, Kit Mullett. They adopted three children.
- Over the next 24 years Packer wrote essays, published books, and became the editor of *Evangelical Quarterly*. In 1973 he published *Knowing God*. He wrote, "The conviction behind the book is that ignorance of God lies at the root of much of the church's weakness today."
- Packer sided with John Stott during the 1966 NAE controversy, causing a rift with ML-J who separated from Packer, canceling the Puritan Conference.
- In 1977, Packer met with R.C. Sproul & other leading evangelicals to form the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy, which produced the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy.
- In 1979, Packer began teaching at Regent College in Vancouver until his retirement in 1996.
- In March of 1994, his ecumenical views led him to sign Evangelicals and Catholics together. In 2002 he walked out in protest after the Diocese in Vancouver authorized same-sex marriages.
- Packer was the general editor of The English Standard Version Bible in 2001. "I find myself suspecting very strongly that this was the most important thing that I have ever done for the Kingdom."

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

- Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland. He grew up in an Anglican church but recalls nothing he was taught. His mother died of cancer. His father was strict causing tension with he & his brother Warnie.
- Lewis said 'Joy' was the defining word to describe his life. It meant a special intense longing for something better that he could not put his finger on. It was a feeling that was rare, fleeting, and mysterious. He later came to understand it was a longing for heaven. He said, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."
- Atheism gripped him from age 14 to 30. However, he had these nagging doubts about materialism.
- In his teenage years, Lewis studied Norse mythology that began to shape his writer's imagination.
- He served in the frontline trenches in WWI for about a year, interrupting his plans to study at Oxford. He went on to become the top student at Oxford in three areas of study.
- Lewis eventually became one of the world's foremost experts on Medieval and Renaissance English literature as a professor of English literature at Magdalen College at Oxford (1924-54 at age 26) and then Magdalene College at Cambridge (1954-63).
- His conversion was heavily influenced by his discussions with a group of authors and literary critics known as the 'Inklings' which included J. R. R. Tolkien, the author of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. This group met in a pub called The Eagle and Child starting in the early 1930's into the late 1940's.
- He married Joy Davidman in 1956. She died of cancer in 1960. Lewis died of a heart attack the same day JFK was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963. He was 64 years old.
- His most important books include *Mere Christianity* (1952), *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-56), *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), *The Problem of Pain* (1940), and *Miracles* (1947, 1960).
- Lewis' 'mere Christianity' focuses on the core things uniting all who identify with historic Christianity.
- Lewis was not a theological liberal. He strongly believed in absolute objective truth claims of the Christian faith. Nonetheless, Lewis denied the inerrancy of Scripture. He thought the Reformation was unnecessary. Other religions dimly mirror Christ. He believed Christ died to eradicate our sins but was ambivalent about substitutionary atonement.