

CHRISTOPHER CATHERWOOD

A black and white portrait of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a middle-aged man with short hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

HIS LIFE AND RELEVANCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MARTYN
LLOYD-JONES

“This book is a good, quick recounting of the life and ministry of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones from one who knew him personally. Christopher Catherwood, the Doctor’s eldest grandchild, puts the books you’ve enjoyed in the context of Lloyd-Jones’s life and ministry. The author carefully and fairly interprets Lloyd-Jones—even on points where he himself may disagree. He succeeds in faithfully reproducing some of the Doctor’s nuances and ambiguities that others have overlooked. The book’s informal, even casual style makes it easy to read—like you’re having an engaging evening’s conversation with an old friend. I heartily commend the books and sermons of Martyn-Lloyd Jones, and this book as an encouragement and help.”

Mark Dever, Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC; President, 9Marks

“God is raising up a new generation of preachers who aim faithfully to expound the Scriptures in the Reformed heritage, who are passionate about evangelism, who talk up justification and sanctification, who are eager to plant churches in challenging contexts. They want and need models—ideally, not because they want to become thoughtless clones, but because the Bible itself helps us see how much is learned by imitation. One of the crucially important models of the twentieth century is Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whose homegoing in 1981 is just far enough back that a new generation of young preachers does not automatically know him. May this brief, balanced, and personal biography of Lloyd-Jones, written by one of his grandsons, go a long way to providing the incentive to study him afresh, to listen or read his sermons, and thus to increase the circle of those we should emulate in gospel faithfulness.”

D. A. Carson, Research Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“For many people who heard him, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was perhaps the greatest preacher in the English language in the twentieth century. He possessed a rare gift of communicating the truth, wonder, and power of the gospel. His grandson Christopher Catherwood had the privilege of seeing the inner man. In this absorbing book he brings a fresh perspective on the Doctor’s life and the convictions that shaped his long and fruitful ministry. Those who heard him preach will be reminded of the ministry of this prince of preachers. One also hopes that many who never heard him will be encouraged to read his books and listen to his sermons. Those who do so will not be disappointed.”

Lindsay Brown, International Director, the Lausanne Movement

“We hear a great deal today about the need to be relevant. What the Doctor so powerfully demonstrated through his preaching and books is that to be always relevant one must be *biblical*. My hope is that this first-rate book will introduce a new generation of readers to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whose message and methodology is as relevant and needed today as it was in his time.”

Rebecca Manley Pippert, speaker; evangelist; author, *Out of the Salt*

“This excellent introduction to Martyn Lloyd-Jones’s life and ministry will not only introduce many to one of the preaching giants of the last century but also inspire us to apply the convictions he held so passionately to our present day. We may well disagree with him at points, as his own grandson admits to doing, but his radical commitment to the principle of *sola scriptura*, in both doctrine and practice, is urgently needed today.”

Vaughan Roberts, Rector of St Ebbe’s Oxford and Director of The Proclamation Trust

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Martyn Lloyd-Jones: His Life and Relevance for the 21st Century

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To Don and Emilie,
a Reformed pastor and his wife
in the mold of Martyn and Bethan Lloyd-Jones,
and to their friend,
my wife Paulette,
to whom Bethan Lloyd-Jones commented,
“Martyn would have liked you.”

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Martyn Lloyd-Jones

A MAN FOR ALL TIMES

“I thought he was a friend of Spurgeon’s!”

I will never forget that incredible statement by a fellow student in the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union who was astonished to find that Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was not only still alive but preaching for the OICCU later that term. He was, at that time, very much alive.

That is now more than forty years ago. He lived until 1981, and his books have sold in enormous numbers since his death, as they did during his lifetime. But while many of today’s Christians have heard of him, not everyone knows that much about him. Nor have they necessarily read any of his books.

Yet today, there is a huge new interest in Reformed theology, of the same kind that Dr. Lloyd-Jones himself encouraged after the Second World War. Movements like Together for the Gospel and The Gospel Coalition, as well as the growing enthusiasm through evangelical leaders such as John Piper, Mark Dever, Tim Keller, and others for thoughtful, Scripture-centered, rigorous Christianity, all show that something remarkable is happening.

Listen to what Iain Murray has to say, in quoting an Australian

Christian leader who knew Martyn Lloyd-Jones and heard him preach:

In an extraordinary way, the presence of God was in that church. I personally felt as if a hand were pushing me through the pew. At the end of the sermon for some reason or other the organ did not play, the Doctor went off into the vestry [his office around the back] and everyone sat completely still without moving. It must have been almost ten minutes before people seemed to find the strength to get up and, without speaking to one another, quietly leave the church. Never have I witnessed or experienced such preaching with such fantastic reaction on the part of the congregation.¹

As John Piper says about Lloyd-Jones's preaching in general:

The sermon is a word from God, through a man. I am deeply thankful to God that he led me to Lloyd-Jones in 1968. He has been a constant reminder: you don't have to be cool, hip, or clever to be powerful. In fact, the sacred anointing is simply in another world from those communication techniques. His is the world I want to live in when I step into the pulpit.²

Is that a world you would want to live in? If so, this book is for you as it describes not just the life but also the thought of a man whose regular preaching profoundly affected his hearers. As John Piper and others attest, becoming familiar with Dr. Lloyd-Jones could transform your life.

While not everyone is as excited as some of us at the renewed enthusiasm for Reformed theology, even those who are cautious revere and look up to the achievements of Martyn Lloyd-Jones. As we shall see, not everyone agrees with "the Doctor," as he was called, on everything. But all agree that he is as relevant in the early

¹Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Fight of Faith, 1939–1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990), 377.

²John Piper, "A Passion for Christ-Exalting Power: Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the Need for Revival and Baptism with the Holy Spirit" (paper presented at the Bethlehem Fourth Annual Conference for Pastors, January 30, 1991). See also D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, ed. Kevin DeYoung (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 153–55.

twenty-first century as he was when he was alive during most of the twentieth.

One of the hallmarks of this new movement is a renewed interest in the giants of the past. Students are reading John Owen and Jonathan Edwards in ways that would have been unthinkable until recently. No one was more enthusiastic for the works of such illustrious evangelical forebears than Martyn Lloyd-Jones himself. So it is appropriate that people are now rediscovering his works as well.

As we shall see, he always considered himself more an enthusiast for the eighteenth century than the seventeenth, and that is significant. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a brilliant man, but his preaching was not merely cerebral. He called preaching “logic on fire.”³ He despised histrionics, and his sermons were always reasoned and thought through. But they reflected the warmth and inner passions of the man within and were felt with genuine emotion or true fire. The Welsh, his people, have never been scared of true emotion, and neither was he.

This is evident in his preaching style: he spoke with passionate appeal to believers and nonbelievers alike. He was not afraid to raise his voice dramatically when proclaiming the truth. His was not the calm, quiet, dispassionate voice of many an Anglican preacher of the day. But compared with other Welsh Free Church preachers of his time he was mild in his delivery. Download one of his sermons and hear him today!⁴

Indeed, since interest in the life and works of Martyn Lloyd-Jones does seem to be part of the great Reformed renaissance in North America and elsewhere, there is surely a place for a book like this. That is not to say that *he* would of necessity have been a supporter of the current exciting trends—one of the themes of this book is that one cannot say what a man who died in 1981 would or would not have thought of events over three decades after his death. But for those who are now discovering the wonderful truths of the theology that fired great men such as George Whitefield,

³Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 110.

⁴To listen to or to download a sermon visit MLJ Trust at <http://www.mljtrust.org/sermons/>.

John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, and countless Puritans and their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century successors, a study of Martyn Lloyd-Jones is surely necessary.

This therefore is *not* a conventional biography. Others have written such books for different audiences. Serious and objective academic studies on the subject of the Doctor are available, such as *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The Christ-Centred Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones* is a selection of sermons that I and the Doctor's elder daughter Elizabeth chose to give a flavor of the kind of preaching that made him so internationally loved and well known.⁵

My relationship to the Doctor (as his eldest grandchild) is not directly relevant to this book. My goal is to introduce him to a new generation of readers and to help those discovering wonderful biblical truths for the first time learn how to think *scripturally* for themselves as Christians. This book is as much about the kind of evangelical mind that Lloyd-Jones possessed, and the way in which he went about his daily life before God, as what he did and when. He felt that if one was biblical, one was always relevant, and that is as true in the twenty-first century as it was in the twentieth or eighteenth.

He was, of course, a man of his own time, ordained by God to live from 1899 to 1981 and to reach out to people in that time span. But while it might be true to say, as some have in recent days, that no one in the Internet age would listen to a ninety-minute sermon, the *principles* of what Dr. Lloyd-Jones preached are surely as relevant as ever. It is not the length of his preaching that matters but what underlies it.

When he stepped into the pulpit every Sunday morning and evening and every Friday night in Westminster Chapel, there was a hush and sense of expectation. His black Geneva gown hid him as an individual and drew attention to why he was there: to give his

⁵ Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, eds., *Engaging with Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The Life and Legacy of "The Doctor"* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2011); Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Christ-Centered Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Classic Sermons for the Church Today*, ed. Elizabeth Catherwood and Christopher Catherwood (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

hearers a real sense of the presence of God through the preaching of God's Word, the Bible.

In the pulpit, he was serious. Outside it, he was often warm and funny, but so important was his message when he preached that he had a serious demeanor that everyone noticed. That was counterintuitive even in his time, when famous preachers were known for their flamboyance, literary allusions, and jokes. But the eternal destiny of the human race left no time for frivolity! And he communicated that to his congregation the moment he donned his black robe and entered the pulpit.

My previous portraits have been designed to show the Doctor's human side. While outwardly reserved (and perhaps slightly shy), the kindness and enthusiasm he always possessed were very much there to see, for the wider world as well as for his family and close inner circle. He had what is often called a gift for friendship. He also had an infectious sense of humor that, while not present in his sermons, was evident in all his dealings with others. But my intent here is to present him as a preacher in whom one could sense the presence of the Holy Spirit—what the Puritans called *unction*—and to show how the Doctor's message is as relevant today as it was then.

While this is more an objective rather than a personal study, some of the insights gained through my family relationship with him are nonetheless relevant. He was someone who loved debate and discussion. When it came to spiritual issues, he always emphasized to his descendants that what we believe, if we are Christians, must be *Bible-based* and viable from Scripture. He always preferred us to hold to our beliefs *for ourselves*, not because we were his grandchildren.

Obviously on nonnegotiable doctrines like the cross and resurrection, true Christians are and must be in unanimity. In one sense, if one has a different interpretation of what Lloyd-Jones and Luther called *secondary issues*, it does not matter. Lloyd-Jones recognized as fellow evangelicals people with different views from himself

on many issues, such as the one that provides the context for our book: Reformed theology. He himself zealously held to the way that John Calvin, the Puritans, and eighteenth-century heroes such as Edwards and Whitefield interpreted many key scriptural passages. But so long as those who disagreed, including giants of the faith such as John Wesley, did so on biblical grounds, that was fine with him. Arminians could be evangelicals too.

Not everyone might agree, for instance, with his views on music in church—he scrapped the choir in the churches in which he was the pastor. But while music is often a source of much argument within a church, it is, compared to issues of salvation and the authority of Scripture, a decidedly secondary issue. (We will look at this issue in chap. 5.)

In other words, I am putting him forward as a role model but not as an icon. As an evangelical Protestant, he did not believe in the pope or in papal infallibility. He was horrified when people tried to put him on a platform or pedestal, because he was very aware, as any real Christian should be, of his own fallibility and human frailty. He did of course hold his beliefs very zealously indeed. But I can say that he never saw himself as six feet above contradiction.

What, therefore, can the Doctor teach us today? What is his permanent relevance to a new group of people discovering biblical truths for themselves for the first time? Even if the renaissance in Reformed thought is short, at least one generation will benefit from being grounded in the kind of theology upon which Martyn Lloyd-Jones based his own ministry, as did Owen, Whitefield, and Spurgeon in their own times.

Such figures never go away. Some of us are fortunate to be part of the Francis Schaeffer/L'Abri age group. But while that movement is not as eminent now as it was back in the 1960s and '70s, what Francis Schaeffer wrote and taught halfway up a Swiss mountain is often rediscovered today. It is interesting that many current L'Abri staff workers never met the man himself, yet find him as relevant as he was in his own lifetime.

One prays that it will be the same for the life and works of Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The truths he expounded so faithfully from the pulpit and in his books are eternal. The principles upon which he based everything were from the Bible and so remain forever. May he inspire new generations of Christians to become as excited and enthusiastic for the great things of God as he was.

So the next two chapters will provide an overview of his life, for those who are unfamiliar with such details. With a life so full, I had to be selective. The goal of these chapters is to tie in to the main themes that we will explore in more depth later in the book, and to provide the biographical framework for an analysis of his thought, writing, and twenty-first century relevance.

With many eminent people, such as Winston Churchill, biographies often begin with the subject as the hero. Then he or she becomes the villain. And then with the passing of time more objective works are written, as the great seventeenth-century British leader Oliver Cromwell put it, “warts and all,” with the heroics and faults balanced to provide an even picture.

My aim, however, is to show how profoundly relevant his life and thinking are to us as evangelicals in the twenty-first century. As the saying goes, if one is biblical, one is always relevant. Of few people is that more true than with Dr. Lloyd-Jones.

There is one difference between this work and *The Christ-Centered Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones*. That book avoided the two areas of the Doctor’s life that have been controversial: his views on the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and his call in 1966 for evangelicals in denominations that were theologically mixed doctrinally to separate and make their prime association with other evangelicals in fellowships of like-minded churches.

In both cases the Doctor’s views have been misunderstood and perhaps even misrepresented, however sincerely, by both those who agreed with him and those who believed his stance was a major mistake.

My own position is that I agree with him on one of these areas

and disagree on the other. But this book will aim to present an objective view. It does not try to convince readers that one view is right, or that Dr. Lloyd-Jones was right (or wrong) on these two issues. Rather, it demonstrates how he thought, how he came to his conclusions, and how *that* is an example to twenty-first-century evangelicals in aiding us in our own interpretation of what Scripture teaches and how central Scripture should be to all that we think, say, or do. In that sense my own views are secondary, and the reader's interpretation might be different.

Lastly, what kind of man was the Doctor? What was at the heart of his ministry? A discussion on whether he was primarily an expositor or a doctor brings out some interesting sides to his character that are worth revisiting.

At the Doctor's memorial service in 1981 an amicable dispute broke out between two of the speakers on what had influenced their late friend's preaching the most. His old friend Omri Jenkins insisted that Dr. Lloyd-Jones was an expositor first and last. Dr. Gaius Davies, a leading London psychiatrist and family friend, was surely right to say that God used the Doctor's *medical* training to make Martyn Lloyd-Jones into the kind of preacher that he later became. Medicine influenced his preaching. Sin was diagnosed as the disease, and Christ was the only remedy.

When one thinks of Lloyd-Jones's great definition of preaching—*logic on fire; theology coming through a man who is on fire*—one can clearly see that the diagnostic method he learned as a medical student at Bart's led him to the logic with which he would dissect sin and expound doctrines as so clearly laid out in Scripture. His logical and passionate preaching is what made him so unique and persuasive; one can easily see why God sent him to medical school first before he contemplated the ministry.

Doctors hope to acquire a good bedside manner of actually listening to patients in order to help come to a correct diagnosis. This is also superb training for the pastoral ministry. The Doctor was someone who *listened* and did so patiently and caringly. How often

do we rush to false conclusions without hearing the other person! The Doctor did not make that mistake. People felt heard, and those who know that they have been understood are far more likely to take the wise pastoral advice given to them than those who are made to feel rushed or that they are a time-wasting nuisance.

The Doctor listened to a far wider range of people during his ministry than simply his flocks in Aberavon and London. He had a major role in the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, being its crucial founder-chairman and then its president. People from what we now call two-thirds world countries did not always feel heard by white men, but they certainly did by the Doctor (who, as a Welshman, rather empathized with them about English colonialism).

Similarly, when he became the pastor's pastor of the wider Westminster Fellowship, his medically trained ability to listen played a crucial role in assisting the dozens of pastors who looked to him for guidance and support. This often had to be done over the telephone, but it was medical bedside-manner pastoral concern nonetheless.

Doctors often have to cut to the chase if they are to save a patient's life. Getting straight to the main point after a careful diagnosis is part of their medical training. Those of us with humanities degrees can often waffle around a subject, but not a medical doctor. This was true of Dr. Lloyd-Jones: his sermons are models of crystal clarity, without the histrionics and woolly literary allusions that were so popular with famous "pulpiteers" of his time.

Mark Dever, in his chapter commending preaching and preachers, quotes from an interview that the Doctor gave which summarizes neatly both his Welsh background and his medical training:

I am not and have never been a typical Welsh preacher. I felt that in preaching the first thing that you had to do was to demonstrate to the people that what you were going to do was very relevant and urgently important. The Welsh style of preaching started with a verse and the preacher then told you the connection and analysed the words, but the man of the world did

not know what he was talking about and was not interested. I started with the man whom I wanted to listen, the patient. It was a medical approach really—here is a patient, a person in trouble, an ignorant man who has been to quacks, and so I deal with all that in the introduction. I wanted to get the listener and *then* come to my exposition. They started with their exposition and ended with a bit of application.⁶

Dever makes clear that he himself follows such an expository pattern in his preaching, now nearly four decades since the Doctor spoke these words. It is what makes the Doctor timeless, as of course does all Bible-based exposition, since the fallen condition of humankind never changes.

⁶Mark Dever, “What I’ve Learned about Preaching from Martyn Lloyd-Jones,” in Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 256.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones impacted countless Christians in his own day with his passionate preaching and a resolute commitment to the Bible as God's Word. But the principles upon which he built his life and teaching remain as relevant today as they were during his lifetime. Written by his eldest grandson, this biography reveals the heart of Lloyd-Jones's ministry and explores how the physician-turned-preacher integrated belief with practice—in the hope that his legacy will inspire a new generation of believers to boldly cherish and declare the great things of God.

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REBECCA MANLEY PIPPERT, speaker; evangelist; author, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World*

CHRISTOPHER CATHERWOOD (PhD, University of East Anglia) is a fellow of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a by-fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. He has written or edited more than twenty-five books, including *Five Evangelical Leaders*; *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: A Family Portrait*; and *Christians, Muslims, and Islamic Rage*. He holds degrees from Cambridge and Oxford in modern history, and resides near Cambridge with his wife, Paulette.

BIOGRAPHY

