

# langham foundation news



## Live *like Jesus*

This interview with Langham Partnership's Dr Chris Wright by *Christian Today* is posted at its web site on March 26, 2008. (For the following, CT and CW stand for *Christian Today* and Chris Wright respectively.)

CW: There are aspects of world evangelicalism which are not very attractive at all. My personal hope is that Lausanne 2010 will be the launch pad of a kind of 21st century reformation within the evangelical movement, because there are many abuses and corruptions and all kinds of things that are really not of the true Gospel and certainly not either like Christ or glorifying Christ. I would love to see us having the courage to identify them, and where necessary to renounce them and certainly have the courage to repent of such things and come back to the foot of the cross and to say 'this is where we need to find our unity and our identity'. That is what I am hoping for from Lausanne 2010.

CT: There are many areas that are still unchurched and have still not heard the word of God. Where do we stand in terms of the gospel being planted around the world?

CW: Certainly there are those within Lausanne who are quite rightly drawing our attention to the fact that there are still millions of people in our world who have not heard of the word of Jesus and that is a scandal and we cannot but be ashamed of that and say 'what should we be doing to bring the good news of Jesus to those who have never had the opportunity to hear it?' That has to remain one of our key motivations in mission. We can't just say 'yup, that's it!'

The second thing I would say is that there are those who have a particular kind of interpretation of the great commission at the end of Matthew; that somehow all we need to do is to try to get every people group on the planet to have heard the Gospel in some way and then Jesus can come back. But I don't read the great commission that way at all.

It doesn't say evangelise the nations in the sense of simply make them hear the Gospel. Jesus quite specifically says, "Go and disciple the nations, baptising them and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you."

So the task is not just one of evangelisation but it is one of discipling, and discipling is not a task that is ever finished. Britain is evangelised but it certainly isn't disciplined. And every generation needs the fresh call to discipling and obedience and to live like Jesus lived. So I see the great commission not so much as a kind of ticking clock, that we can eventually say 'oh we are nearly there, the job's nearly finished, let's get the task finished'.

There are an awful lot of people who talk like that. 'What would it take to finish the job?' is some of the language we hear. Whoever said it was a job we were just going to get finished? It's not so much a ticking clock as a self-replicating mandate to go and make disciples and the making of disciples is like painting the Forth Bridge - it goes on and on and on because we are constantly needing to be disciplers and to be discipling.

A friend said at the Lausanne Theology working group, we need to remember that the New Testament was written by disciples for disciples about making disciples. And we have rather twisted it as if we only think in terms of how many people have had the opportunity to literally hear the name Jesus and respond in some sense to the Gospel.

So, I want to affirm the importance of the unreached need and that huge task. I don't want to in any sense minimise it or to say that we shouldn't be concerned about it because of course we should, but I don't want it to turn into the timetable for the second coming because I don't think that is the way it was intended to be in the New Testament. We are still called to live as Christians and to be faithful and to be disciples as well as making disciples.

Having said all that, there is no doubt that we live in a most remarkable age in the sense of the multinational nature of the people of God. There are more Christians now in the south, or the east, Africa, Asia, all over the West. These are wonderful days, the church is truly global and we should rejoice in God keeping His promise to Abraham because that is what He promised He was going to do, to bless all nations through his people and He is and He has and will continue to do so right up until people of every nation, and language, and tribe and tongue gather before the Lord.

CT: So it's about quality not quantity?

CW: Yes, that's right.

CT: Some evangelical leaders feel the church in the West has lost its mission focus.

CW: I think the nature of the mission of the church in the West has changed. It traditionally saw itself as the missionary-sending part of the world. Everywhere else was a mission field except us. Thankfully we've grown out of that now and the mission field is everywhere. Mission is from everywhere to everywhere.

In some churches in Britain there is a very strong commitment to mission. It's not so much channelled into sending British missionaries but in supporting indigenous mission movements in India or Africa, in channelling support to ministries which are often fairly holistic in the way in which they seek to address human needs, whether medical, literacy, engineering, which is, in my part, all part of what Christians are meant to do. That's what I meant earlier by saying that we are called to live the gospel – becoming the whole of the answer that God has given to the whole of human need.

We can be involved in all kinds of ways in blessing the nations and blessing people around the world, including the sharing of the message of the gospel, also including doing good and being in places, being involved in issues of human rights and human welfare and human need. Those are areas that LP is not directly involved with as a programme but many of those whom we support are involved with such things. They are the ones to do it. They are the ones in their local context and far better at it than we could ever be.

CT: So the form of mission has changed?

CW: Yes, on the whole. But that's not to say that there isn't a proper place for cross-cultural church planting ministries or people who feel genuinely called by God to cross the boundaries, to go to other cultures, to be involved with first-level church planting and pioneering. That is always going to be the call of God on the church. If that had never happened in our history there wouldn't be Christians in Britain today, so we always have to recognise that that's there and that is important.

But in many parts of the majority world the church is already there, it has been there for generations, they are already involved in their own forms of cross-cultural evangelism. They are far better at it than we are so we don't have to go and teach them how to preach the Gospel.

CT: Christian leaders are trying to make sense of the shift to the Global South and many of these countries are sending their missionaries to the likes of the UK and US. Do you see that trend continuing?

CW: Yes. We are now into the era of reverse migration in the great scheme of our world history. In 500 years, the populations of Europe decided to go to other places, so we had mass emigration out of Europe to the world. We didn't ask permission. We just went and planted ourselves there and did stuff, whether they wanted it or not, sometimes disastrously.

Now that tide has turned and the world is coming to Europe, so we have huge populations of migrants. When you are into an era of reverse migration, it is not surprising that that includes Christians because many of these are coming from cultures where there is now a strong and vibrant Christian church, whether Hispanic cultures, or African, or from some parts of Asia. As people from those cultures come to the West they come as Christians and whether they are coming explicitly as missionaries or not, they come here and witness. So one is as likely to hear the Gospel from a black neighbour in Tottenham as from any white Anglo-Saxon. So be it, that's the way God has organised His history!

It is true that many of the churches in Africa and Asia see Europe as a missionary-needy continent – as we are, and so there are definitely mission movements seeking to bring evangelistic church planting movements back to Britain. My only thought on that is that we would hope that they would learn from some of the mistakes that Europeans and Americans made when we went out to other cultures in missionary work and we thought that our own culture was best and we simply did everything our own way. There are forms of missionary work from Africa and Asia, Latin America that are doing the same thing.

We need to all have a sense of humility, of cultural sensitivity, of trying to learn a new culture before you witness in it. We hope that the folks who do feel called by God will be willing to experience some degree of training and cross-cultural inculturation, as much as we need it when we go somewhere else.

*Part 2 of the interview will appear in the next issue of our newsletter.*



## Stott Papers Available at Archives

The Billy Graham Center (BGC) Archives of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, USA is pleased to announce the opening to the public of a set of copies of a small but significant portion of the papers of a major Christian leader.

Rev. John R. W. Stott, an English priest of the Anglican church, is, with others such as Billy Graham of the United States and Festo

Kivengere of Uganda, one of the most influential members of Evangelical Protestant movement worldwide. As a theologian, pastor, evangelist, preacher, speaker, author, leader, and mentor, Stott has left an enduring mark during his more than six decades of ministry, particularly in shaping church leaders and thinkers.

One small part of his leadership has been through the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE). Stott was deeply involved in the planning of the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization and served as chairman of the drafting committee that developed the Lausanne Covenant (Billy Graham Center Archives : [www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/Lausanne/704/704.htm](http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/Lausanne/704/704.htm)). When LCWE was formed, he was a prominent member from the beginning and for many years that followed. In 1988, in recognition of his contribution, he was elected honorary lifetime member of the committee.

Rev. Stott has, at the request of the Lambeth Palace Library of the Church of England, donated his personal papers to the Library. However he loaned the four boxes of his Lausanne files to the BGC Archives. (The Archives is the official repository of the records of LCWE and also has numerous other collections of people and organizations with which Stott was closely associated, such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.) The Archives staff, in cooperation with John Stott Ministries, processed and described this material and then arranged for it to be microfilmed and digitized. The originals were then returned to Rev. Stott and were eventually transferred to the Lambeth Palace Library. The microfilm and digital copies form the BGC Archives Collection 590, Papers of John Robert Walmsley Stott, covering the years 1974 through 2000. This collection can be viewed in the Reading Room of the Archives.

Besides a brief biography of Rev. Stott and a description of the material, the guide also has a chronology of the Lausanne Movement and a list of frequently used abbreviations. The collection contains correspondence, memos, reports, notes, magazine and newspaper clippings, brochures and other materials relating to Stott's involvement in the 1974 Lausanne Congress and the Lausanne Movement that developed out of it. The collection is particularly strong in material relating to Stott's membership in LCWE and its executive committee; his contribution to drafting several of the movements major statements; his chairmanship of the Lausanne Theology and Education Group and the consultations it sponsored, including the 1978 Willowbank Consultation on the Gospel and Culture; and his participation in the preparation of Lausanne books and other publications. The guide to Collection 590 may be found online at: <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/590.htm>

China publishes a new book by John Stott –

## *Understanding the Bible*



*Understanding the Bible* is an all-time favourite in the English-speaking world. It has gone through several editions since first published in 1972. Now for the first time, the China Christian Council is making the book available in simplified script for readers in mainland China. This popular book can be bought in most bookstores run by the registered churches at Renminbi 8 per copy.

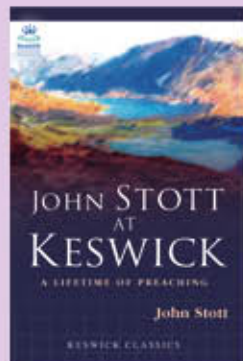
*Understanding the Bible* deals with foundational issues such as: Who wrote the Bible? What is its message? What does it mean to say that the Bible is primarily a book of salvation? Why is it thought to be a "holy" book? How does one read and interpret it? Best of all, though, you'll broaden your vision of Jesus Christ, the focal point of Scripture. How? By better understanding the geographical, religious, and historical concerns that shaped the world in which he lived. You'll see Jesus as never before: both as a man of his times and culture, and as the culmination of a divine providence that prepared the way for the ministry of the Messiah.

Rev John Stott is well-known among Chinese Christians. The China Christian Council has already published 6 of his commentaries under the BST series as well as *Christian Basics – a Handbook of Beginnings, Beliefs and Behaviour*.

### *New Books on John Stott*

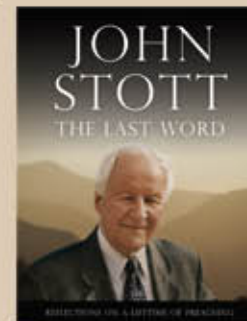
#### *John Stott at Keswick - a lifetime of preaching*

This is the collection of Bible expositions Rev. John Stott has given at Keswick over the past 40 years, and they include some classic series, such as Romans 5-8, 2 Timothy, the Sermon on the Mount, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians chapters 1 to 4. Many of these expositions were re-crafted as BST commentaries or other books, but it is a special benefit to have them in original preached form, and all in one volume.



#### *The Last Word*

This is a small hardback which is something of a tribute to Rev. John Stott. It includes his final public address on 'Becoming like Christ'. Then there is a foreword giving a brief overview of his life and ministry, an interview with Rev John Stott by London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, an exposition of Romans chapter 5, and also an end-piece on the work of Langham Partnership International, London Institute of Contemporary Christianity and Keswick.



Both these books are available from [www.authenticmedia.co.hk](http://www.authenticmedia.co.hk) if you wish to order the books directly from the publisher.

# Interview of a Langham scholar serving in China today



**Question: Tell us about yourself, your family background and childhood.**

I was born in an intellectual and communist family in China. Both my parents were engineers working for the navy. I have received an atheistic education and anti-religion propaganda since my childhood, while the spiritual world has always fascinated me. During high school, I read some Bible stories by chance and was deeply moved by their beauty and moral strength. However, with no Bible being available and nobody to inform me of Christianity, I did not know who Jesus Christ was and what He had done for me.

**How did you meet Christians and what made you decide to become one yourself?**

I had achieved the dream of every young man by enrolling in university, yet there was no faith or goal to live for. With no sense of direction, my life seemed to be a miserable failure. At that time a school-mate accepted Jesus Christ and was keen to witness to others. I had borrowed a Bible from him and asked him to take me to church. There I found for the first time people of sincere love and friendship, and I sensed a supernatural atmosphere among them. Realising my own sinfulness, I prayed for forgiveness and accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour. From the following day I joined a Bible study group and attended worship services on Sundays.

**When did you first realise God is calling you into serving Him full-time?**

In April, 1993 I was baptised. During that Summer, I received short-term Bible study training and was sent to the countryside to train a group of 100 church leaders. I was deeply moved by their passion for God and thirst for the truth. I also recognized my lack of knowledge of God and His Word. After leaving the poor region, I could not stop thinking about the experience. Alone in my dormitory, I read the Bible and the biographies of missionaries such as Hudson Taylor. Praying until one in the morning I felt an extraordinary love in my heart with a strong calling to be a faithful worker for the Lord. I then dedicated my life to be used by Him for the brothers and sisters in China. God has also shown me His promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 so that I did not have fear for the future.

**Where did you study for your doctorate? What was your research topic and why is this relevant to the Christians in China?**

I did my doctoral study at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. My major was systematic theology which focused on the doctrine of God. I believe that God has called me to serve Him and His people by teaching correct doctrine and pure Biblical truth. There are other areas which are equally important, such as soteriology, ecclesiology, or eschatology, but as far as I'm concerned, the crucial need for the Chinese church is a sound doctrine of God that will help believers to grow steadily in knowledge and ability to overcome false teachings and heresies in and outside the church. We have witnessed a tremendous revival in China but more and more people are worried about the quality of believers, the standard of teaching in the church, and its ability to stand firm in the face of challenges from all sides. Not only the rapid growth, but also the existence of the church itself may be in great danger if the doctrine of God is weak and incomplete.

**How did you hear about Langham Partnership International and John Stott Ministries?**

I was introduced to Langham Partnership International and John Stott Ministries through my seminary professors, who recommended me for application of scholarship for the doctoral studies.

**When have you returned to China and how are you serving the Lord?**

I came back to China at the end of 2005 serving as the academic dean of a seminary in Beijing as well as a preacher/theological consultant in a local church. Each year we have about 15 – 30 graduates in three programmes: 1-year diploma, Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity.

**How would you like our Langham partners in Hong Kong to pray for you and your work?**

Please pray for God to send more full-time teachers who are diligent and fervent in serving Him. Please also pray for the academic competence of our faculty; genuine love and joy in the student body. Finally, please remember me and my wife Ruth as we continue to adjust and grow in our marriage. (The Langham scholar and his wife were married less than a year ago!)

## New project launches in South East Asia



# Chiangmai Seminars on Biblical Preaching

In many parts of Asia the church is growing rapidly. But there are also countries where the challenges to Christian witness and to church growth are substantial. Countries of the 'Mekong' – such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam – have small Christian communities, often facing the challenges of religious pluralism and even hostility from their governments. Add to that the turbulence associated with natural disasters (the cyclone in Myanmar, the tsunami in Thailand, the earthquake in neighbouring China), along with the limited resources available to the Christian community, and this part of Asia represents one of the major challenges for Christian witness.

OMF and Langham Preaching have together launched the **Chiangmai Seminar on Biblical Preaching** (CSBP), with the first event held in the first week of July this year. Gathering 30 pastors from Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, this is the first of a series of four events seeking to establish indigenous preaching movements in these countries.

The **Thai church** is slowly growing, but is still very small. In central and south Thailand there has only been sustained Christian activity for the past 50 years. Yet despite its youthfulness, the church is planting new congregations in different regions and there is a strong desire for discipleship and leadership training. Several of the Thai participants in the CSBP are working in village communities and amongst tribal groups, and the Chiangmai project is designed to resource Christian workers in these demanding locations.

The **Kingdom of Cambodia** (formerly Kampuchea) emerged from the intense suffering of the 1970s with a shattered economy and a vulnerable church. But for the past 20 years there has been growing receptivity to the gospel, and in the last 10 years there has been remarkable church growth – there are now over 250,000 believers. But in a population of

14 million, many of whom have never heard of Christ, there is much to be done both in mission and in training. Sophea was one of several pastors who travelled from Cambodia to the CSBP. He now aims to launch a preachers' club for the 8 leaders in the church in Phnom Penh. In due course, we hope to work in fellowship with these and other churches to develop a Cambodian Preaching programme.

A small team from **Myanmar** also reported on the ongoing development of preaching clubs, following the work of the School of Bible Teaching run by Crosslinks over the past two or three years and in which Langham Preaching has been involved. One pastor reported on the development of a preachers' fellowship which attracted some 25 participants month by month, with the opportunity to work on their sermons linked to the allocated Bible passages in the lectionary. Many church buildings have been damaged by the cyclone, and much effort is being given to caring for the many thousands of people impacted by the disaster. But despite the many challenges in the country, these are small but positive signs of the steady indigenisation of the preaching movements.

The next CSBP event will be at the end of October 2008, with a week-long programme encouraging participants to preach from the Old Testament, supported through Thai and English books, and continuing the emphasis on the nurturing of small preachers' fellowships in each country. Please pray for the development of the 2009 programme, and our hopes for the subsequent extension of training in neighbouring countries.

Jonathan Lamb

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GROWING A NEW GENERATION OF PREACHERS AND TEACHERS

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