

**Tribute by The Most Revd John Chew
Archbishop of South East Asia
Langham Scholar**

It is indeed a great privilege and honour to take part in this Thanksgiving Service for a most faithful and strategic servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. I personally bring tribute on behalf of my dear wife Christina, and son Ernie, as well as all the Langham Scholars in Southeast Asia, and the Anglican churches of our region.

I first met John Stott in October 1978 when he visited Singapore. Along with Dr Choong Chee Pang, who was then Dean of Studies at Trinity Theological College, Singapore, I spoke with Uncle John about the strategic opportunity for a biblical studies lecturer very shortly at TTC. But only a candidate with a good doctoral degree would be considered. At that time I had only been ordained the year before, following my undergraduate studies at Trinity College, Bristol. In less than 5 minutes of conversation, Uncle John there and then committed the Langham Scholarship Programme to provide funding for my studies. But Uncle John did not stop there. He wrote personally to the Faculty of Sheffield University to recommend my application and he also linked me up with Christ Church, Fulwood, Sheffield for Christian fellowship while undergoing the lonely rigour of doctoral research in a foreign environment. That was an integration of spiritual and academic which I always remembered.

On one occasion John came to TTC Singapore to give a day of addresses to the students and faculty. After insisting on a very light lunch, Uncle John gently said that he would appreciate a place to be quiet and rest in the heat of the day. I gladly showed him into my small study office, (maybe he would be encouraged by my readings!). When it was about time for the afternoon session, I quietly knocked and opened the door, but I retreated at once. Uncle John was lying on the hard concrete floor taking a short nap, without a pillow. He was so thoughtful not to bother others by asking even for a pillow to lay his head. I have never forgotten that sight of an Englishman and a senior church statesman lying on my office floor.

Uncle John visited most countries of the majority world for teaching, preaching and encouragement. But only in his later years did he seize a strategic opportunity to visit the largest of them all - CHINA! It was in October 1996, as a result of a suggestion by Rev Dr Lee Chee Kong and contacts made by him, that John Stott (aged 75) finally stepped onto mainland Chinese soil for the first time, accompanied by Revd Stephen Tsui and myself. Uncle John was very excited by this strategic opportunity, and he was most warmly welcomed as the global evangelical statesman and theologian by Bishop KH Ting, the then President of the China Christian Council, and Dr Han Wen Chao, the Gen-Sec. He lectured and preached in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou. As a result of that visit, volumes of the Bible Speaks Today commentary series were translated and distributed and many books by John Stott are now published and available in China. Ten years later, in January 2006, John Stott visited China once more (then aged 85!), with a delegation from the Langham Partnership, to introduce Chris Wright to the senior Chinese Church leaders. It turned out to be the last international trip he ever made. John Stott's name still commands enormous respect and affection in China.

By 1999 I had been at TTC for 18 years, including 9 years as Principal. In that year, I shared with Uncle John that I had been nominated for consideration for appointment as the next Bishop of Singapore. Initially Uncle John was very cautious, not fully convinced that I should leave theological education for the ambiguous setting of the traditional church hierarchy. But eventually he agreed, committed as he was to the central importance of the church, where theological education finds its true home. Since 2003 when the crisis in the Anglican Communion came to a head, Uncle John was always very encouraging and supportive of the faithful stance of the Global South and the Anglican Communion Covenant. I sensed that in his later years, when the centre of gravity of Christianity has clearly shifted to the majority world, Uncle John was quietly encouraged that the Global South Primates and Provinces were ready to stand up and shoulder the crucial burden for Anglican orthodoxy. John Stott was indeed a friend, pastoral mentor, humble servant of the Lord, staunchly faithful to the gospel, but willing to adjust his perspective to the global contexts of the church. The church in Asia honours him and thanks God for his memory.

John Chew