

**Tribute by Rev Dr Robert Aboagye-Mensah  
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It is with deep appreciation that I accept the invitation to bring tribute on behalf of the church in Africa at this Memorial and Thanksgiving Service for the Rev. Dr. John Stott, whom we affectionately called “Uncle John”. Today, we in Africa join thousands of people around the world to celebrate the extraordinary life, work and visionary leadership of Uncle John, who throughout his long life of 90 years sought to promote the Kingdom of God globally, including Africa.

John Stott’s commitment to the church in Africa was born out of his obedience to the word of God. As a younger man John Stott spent much of his time studying the Pastoral Letters. As he put it, “so that I found no problem in sitting beside Timothy and Titus, listening through their ears to the elderly apostle’s admonitions”. But when Uncle John himself grew older in his own ministry and looked toward the future of the church, like Paul, he developed great “concern for the future of the gospel and for the younger generation whose responsibility it is to guard it and pass it on” (*John Stott, The Message of Timothy & Titus*, p.9).

So his concern for the future growth of the church led him prayerfully to look out for younger church leaders. And then he would challenge them to commit themselves to offering sound biblical and theological teaching in the churches, seminaries and universities of Africa. To help them do this, he provided scholarships through Langham Trust for them to do their PhD studies so that they would be “qualified to teach others also” (as Paul put it) . He went further to furnish the libraries of these younger scholars with excellent evangelical literature relevant for the contemporary world in which they live, work and teach.

Today there are many African Langham Scholars who are serving not only in the churches, seminaries and universities of Africa, but are also making great impact on the worldwide church outside the continent. Some are in leadership roles in national churches and international denominations. Some are world-recognized authorities in their academic field. Some are established writers, contributing to the *Africa Bible Commentary* and other books written by African scholars, produced by African publishers, for African pastors and church members. Some are leading national training initiatives in biblical preaching. All these things are happening in the church in Africa due greatly to the visionary leadership of John Stott.

Africa will also continue to remember Uncle John for his willingness to accept invitations to speak at evangelistic and mission conferences all over the continent. Indeed through him people in Africa heard God speak in the authority and power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that human lives and institutions were transformed. For instance, at the Memorial Service held recently in Ghana some university professors shared testimonies about how they had come to

know and accept Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour when several years ago, for the first time, they heard the gospel clearly, relevantly and powerfully preached by John Stott.

Finally, all of us African Langham Scholars and our families testify that the most remarkable thing about Uncle John was his warm friendship. He personally and powerfully demonstrated the love and humility of Christ. He treated each person with dignity and respect, to the extent that each person was made to feel that he or she was the most loved and respected person of all his many friends. My family certainly felt like that during several opportunities that we had to spend with time with him, particularly at the Hookses – his cottage in Wales.

Uncle John has indeed fought the good fight, has finished the race, kept the faith. Now there is in store for him the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to him on that day – and not only to him, but also to all who are longing for Christ's appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8). And among them, there will be multitudes from Africa whose lives were touched and changed by the life and ministry of this faithful servant of God. The African church thanks God for John Stott.

**Robert Aboagye-Mensah**