

LLOYD-JONES, DAVID MARTYN (1899 - 1981), minister and theologian

Name: David Martyn Lloyd-jones
Date of birth: 1899
Date of death: 1981
Spouse: Bethan Lloyd-Jones (née Phillips)
Child: Elizabeth Catherwood (née Lloyd-Jones)
Child: Ann Beatt (née Lloyd-Jones)
Parent: Magdalene Lloyd-Jones (née Evans)
Parent: Henry Lloyd-Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister and theologian
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Dafydd Ifans

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was born in Cardiff, the second of three sons born to Henry Lloyd-Jones and Magdalene or 'Maggie' Lloyd-Jones (née Evans), on 20 December 1899. The family home was in Donald Street, Cathays, and the father was a grocer by trade. Because of the father's health, the family moved from Cardiff to Llangeitho during the spring of 1906, to keep a general store, which included the sale of farm implements, near the village square. Both parents had been born in Cardiganshire, the mother from LlwynCadfor farm near Newcastle Emlyn, and the father from the Rhyd Lewis area. Although they spoke Welsh to each other, they had spoken English to their sons in Cardiff, which made it necessary for the boys to learn Welsh in their new surroundings. After a year at Llangeitho Martyn told one of his friends: 'Speak Welsh to me - I'm a Welshman now!'

Martyn was educated at Llangeitho Primary School and Tregaron County School. He and his brothers lodged at Tregaron from Monday evening until Friday morning because the school was almost five miles from their home. He recalls in his reminiscences that he was very homesick at this time, adding that 'Tregaron, for me still today, is the coldest place on the face of the earth', and his predisposition to chilblains was sorely aggravated during his stay there.

On 20 January 1910, the ten-year-old Martyn, his father, and his brother Vincent were rescued from the fire when the family home burnt to the ground - Martyn having been thrown from an upstairs window into the arms of neighbours below. Although the house was rebuilt, things were never the same in Llangeitho after the fire, and he was conscious of the scriptural maxim 'for here have we no abiding city' for the rest of his life.

1913 was a notable year for the young Martyn, one which was to prove especially influential on his future callings. It was during that year that he decided to be a physician. The second influence was the Calvinistic Methodist Summer Association which met at Llangeitho to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of [Daniel Rowland](#)'s birth. The Association meetings had a great effect upon him and he was 'enchanted' by listening to the eloquent preaching of the denominational 'big guns'.

By January 1914 the family business was failing and in financial straits because of over-expansion and under-funding. The father sailed to Canada to search for employment, but nothing came of the venture and he returned to Britain. Martyn travelled to London to meet his father and help him search for a business and a home, at the outbreak of the Great War. They saw [Lloyd George](#), Asquith and Kitchener during their stay and those days proved particularly frightening for the young Martyn.

By the end of September 1914, Henry Lloyd-Jones had bought a dairy business at 7 Regency Street, Westminster. Martyn was expected to help by delivering milk if any members of staff failed to turn up for duty, which meant getting up at 5.30am for the round before going on to Marylebone Grammar School, where he excelled at his studies. He chose to study medicine at St Bartholomew's (Barts) Hospital, London, and he was accepted there at sixteen years of age.

Martyn gained outstanding successes in the medical world. Within five years he had obtained his MBBS (with distinction in Medicine), MRCS and LRCP. By 1923 he had been awarded an MD degree for research on subacute bacterial endocarditis, followed in 1925 by the award of MRCP. He was chosen to assist Sir Thomas Horder (later Lord Horder) in the medical unit. Horder was regarded as one of the foremost physicians of his age and he served for a long time as doctor to the royal family. He ran a private clinic in Harley Street and Dr Lloyd-Jones was able to gain experience of private clinics there. In 1926, when Dr Lloyd-Jones was about to abandon his medical career, he was offered the post of Assistant Professor in Medicine at Barts Hospital.

It is believed that it was during his time at Barts Hospital that Dr Lloyd-Jones, while still in his early twenties, experienced an evangelical conversion over a period of time. He had witnessed the moral and spiritual vacuum which existed not only

among his poorer patients in London's East End, but also with the rich patients who attended the Harley Street clinics. At this time also he had enjoyed the ministry of Dr John A. Hutton at Westminster Chapel, a preacher who believed in God's ability to change people's lives by spiritual regeneration.

Many people were surprised by Martyn Lloyd-Jones's decision to leave the medical world in 1926. He was sponsored by the London Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Wales to be a candidate for the ministry in September 1926. On 8 January 1927 he married Dr Bethan Phillips (1898-1991), granddaughter of the [Rev. Evan Phillips](#) (1829-1912), Newcastle Emlyn, at Charing Cross Chapel; and on 1 February he arrived at Sandfields, Aberavon, to be minister at Bethlehem, the Forward Movement's cause there. Dr Lloyd-Jones turned his back on a glowing medical career in London where he could have earned £3,500 per annum, to minister to the people of the Port Talbot steelworks for an annual stipend of £220.

Some in religious circles were very critical that the new minister had not received any theological training and that he did not possess any experience of leading a church. However, the church members were extremely welcoming and he won over a faithful friend and supporter in E. T. Rees, the Secretary of Bethlehem, one who also served as the political agent of Ramsay MacDonald, M.P. for Aberavon and the first Labour prime minister. Mrs Bethan Lloyd-Jones gives an account of this period in her book *Memories of Sandfields 1927-1938* (1983). Many of the members had come under the influence of the 1904-05 Revival and appreciated his ministry from the start. Numerous listeners from rough and irreligious backgrounds came to faith in Christ through the ministry of 'Dr Martyn', as he was referred to in Wales.

His reputation as a preacher spread far and wide and there followed many invitations for him to preach throughout Wales at midweek meetings. During the summer of 1932, he received his first invitation to preach abroad and he spent July and August that year ministering to a church in Toronto, Canada. The leaders of the Methodist Connection back home, however, were not so supportive, labelling him a 'fundamentalist', and when an attempt was made to appoint him Principal of Bala Theological College, the appointment was blocked by the denomination. On another occasion, attempts were made to appoint him leader of the Forward Movement, a position later held by his brother-in-law, the Rev. Ieuan Phillips.

'The Dr', as he was called by his later followers, ministered at Sandfields for eleven years before receiving an invitation in 1938 to be co-pastor with the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan at Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London. This arrangement carried on throughout the Blitz years until Campbell Morgan retired in 1943.

In contrast to his predecessor who preached from an Arminian position, Dr Lloyd-Jones was a Calvinist and belonged to the reformed wing of the theological spectrum. He began to preach several series of sermons on New Testament books, twice on Sunday and also at a meeting held on Friday evenings. He would preach verse by verse, sometimes just taking part of a verse per sermon. He spent two years preaching on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and the series was published in two volumes: *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (1959 and 1966); he preached 384 sermons on Paul's Letter to the Romans and they appeared in 14 volumes: *Romans* (between 1970 and 2003); while eight volumes on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, based on a series of 260 sermons appeared as *Ephesians* (between 1974 and 1982).

By the end of the Second World War, Westminster Chapel would be full to capacity with about two thousand worshippers every Sunday. All sorts of listeners flocked to hear the ministry: students, professional people, the London-Welsh, doctors and nurses, people of all ages and denominations, and some with no church or chapel affiliation. He had a gift for teaching basic doctrines of the Christian faith by reasoning and persuading his listeners, with very little use of illustration. As one contemporary member of the congregation explained: 'he touched the mind, the soul and the life' of his hearers. Following both Sunday services, Dr Lloyd-Jones would welcome individuals to his room at the chapel to discuss problems and receive pastoral advice.

This fruitful ministry continued until his retirement in 1968, partly because of illness, but primarily in order to edit his sermons for publication. Close on a hundred books and pamphlets have appeared in print to date, of which many have been translated into foreign languages from Korean in the east to Brazilian Portuguese in the west. His sermons are available online on the [MLJ Trust](#) website, and this accounts for the fact that people worldwide are still able to appreciate his ministry.

Dr Lloyd-Jones became the foremost leader of Nonconformist evangelicalism in the British Isles and ministers and individuals would turn to him for counsel. In addition to his duties at Westminster Chapel, he was involved with a number of bodies which furthered the same reformed position as he held, and he served on many of their committees. Among these were: the body which served evangelical students, the IVF; IFES, the international evangelical student body of which he served as president; the Evangelical Library which had been established in London; the Medical Christian Movement, in fact his interest in medical matters was lifelong and he read medical journals regularly; the Puritan/Westminster Conference; the Banner of Truth publishing house; and the London Theological Seminary.

Between 1948 and his last illness in 1980, Dr Lloyd-Jones played a prominent part with the Evangelical Movement of Wales. He was acknowledged as its leader in Welsh-language circles as well as the English-language side of its work. An annual ministers' conference was held at Bryn-y-groes, Y Bala, one of the residential centres owned by the Movement, and 'the Dr'

was always the main speaker at the end of each conference.

His greatest Welsh heroes were [Howel Harris](#), [Daniel Rowland](#) and [William Williams](#) Pantycelyn. For him, Williams's hymns were a powerful combination of biblical theology and the lived experience of the believer. His English hero was George Whitefield, while he acknowledged Jonathan Edwards as the interpreter of the eighteenth-century revival in America. He was extremely interested in the phenomenon of 'revival' and he managed to transfer the longing for seeing God returning in a mighty way to many of his followers. He preached in America more than once and the fruit of one such visit is his influential volume *Preaching and Preachers* (1971).

Although he remained on the books of the Presbyterian Church of Wales as a preacher until his death, he came to believe that the true biblical church was a group of believers who chose to have fellowship with each other within an independent congregation. During his address to the Evangelical Alliance in October 1966, he appealed to evangelical Christians to come together in churches where God's Word would be venerated and would be preached under the blessing of the Holy Spirit. This address caused great agitation within evangelical circles at the time. The Chairman of the meeting, the eminent Anglican John Stott, intervened by criticizing Dr Lloyd-Jones's position, and much discussion and disagreement ensued for many years, with a split developing between those who chose to leave their denominations and those who chose to remain within them.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones died on St David's Day 1981. His funeral was held at Bethel Chapel (CM), Newcastle Emlyn and it was estimated that there were 900 people present. His body was laid to rest in Gelli Cemetery on the outskirts of the town. He was survived by his widow and two daughters, Lady Elizabeth Catherwood (b. 1927) and Mrs Ann Beatt (b. 1937). During his lifetime he refused to receive honorary doctorates; he also refused a CBE in 1977.

One of his many biographers says of him: 'His strength as a debater was fearful at times'. Although he was renowned for preaching with authority, he could be very gentle when advising individuals. Several people have argued that he made use of his medical diagnostic skills when dealing with the souls of troubled men and women in a wise, insightful way. One of his most influential books in this field was *Spiritual Depression : its causes and cures* (1964).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones is regarded as one of the greatest preachers of the twentieth century. His sermons, preserved in books and recordings, have an abiding influence today. As a result, this warm-hearted Welshman is held in high esteem among Christians in countries all over the world.

Author

Dafydd Ifans

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Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones Papers](#)

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