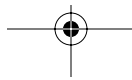


## Foreword to the Second Edition



When John Stott in 1972 presented the lecture that became this book, the target in his sights was Christian anti-intellectualism. His message was aimed especially at ritualists who exalted church performance over thought, ecumenical activists who treated social reform as a substitute for doctrine, and Pentecostal evangelicals who absolutized experience at the expense of reflection. As an antidote, Stott pled for balance—for hard thinking to come alongside ritual, activism and experience. And he developed his plea by drawing on the main

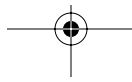




themes of Scripture. God as creator, God as revealer, God as redeemer, God as judge—this biblical portrait provided a foundational rationale for using the mind as a gift from God in faithful service to God.

On that basis, Stott then explored the manifold ways in which diligent thinking could function as a fully contributing part of Christian life—in worship, belief, holiness, guidance, evangelism and ministry. Stott brought his appeal to a close by once again drawing on Scripture to show how the *Christian* use of the mind confirmed the validity of intellectual labor, but also insured that intellectual activity would function for the general good, for others and for God—instead of as an arid thing unto itself.

In the early twenty-first century, this biblically based message is every bit as relevant to the circumstances of church and society as it was a generation ago. If anything, the pressures against using the mind carefully, honestly and faithfully as an essential aspect of the Christian's calling are stronger now than ever before. Most Christian communities, even those that once prided themselves on separation from the world, now participate eagerly in different



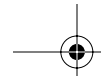


forms of popular culture. The gains in that move have been to end the artificial segregation of the sacred from the secular and to give Christian values a chance at baptizing television, radio, cinema, contemporary music, the Internet and the iPod. The danger has been capitulation to the sentimentalism, the raw emotionalism, the reliance on cliché and the impatience with sustained reasoning that prevails so powerfully in the world of pop.

In addition, at least in the United States, increased Christian participation in political life has brought the same sort of good news mingled with bad. As more and more examples attest, responsible political service by conscientious believers can be a fruitful means of service to the kingdom of God. But as other examples demonstrate, all-or-nothing political partisanship and crassly self-serving political action can overwhelm Christian participants as well as their secular counterparts. Among the first casualties in such political excess is careful use of the mind.

In a world where pop culture and political strife have joined residual religious reasons for turning aside from responsible intellectual effort, the biblical





message that “your mind matters” is more relevant today than when it was first presented. As John Stott underscores in what follows, God’s Word explains clearly what is at stake: “every thought is our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5 JB). As this altogether helpful book shows, the Bible is full of such admonitions. Stott would have us consider how much this rich vein of scriptural teaching, even as it focuses on the character and work of God, also says about the faithful use of our minds.



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