

Leading Evangelical Theologian J. I. Packer to Receive 2011 Leslie K. Tarr Award for Outstanding Career Achievement

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO - Dr. J. I. Packer, 84, of Vancouver, British Columbia, prolific author and professor of theology at Vancouver's Regent College, will receive the twenty-third annual Leslie K. Tarr Award for outstanding career achievement.

Named in honour of its first recipient, the late Leslie K. Tarr, a Toronto journalist, editor, and teacher, the [Tarr Award](#) celebrates a major career contribution to Christian writing and publishing in Canada. Previous recipients include award-winning children's author Jean Little, two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner Rudy Wiebe, and Janette Oke, whose inspirational novels have sold more than 28 million copies.



J. I. Packer is the author of numerous books, articles, and papers. He is known for his cool head and warm heart. Timothy George, editor of the book *J. I. Packer and the Evangelical Future*, says Packer's "...mastery of ideas and the most fitting words in which to express them is peerless....his saintly character and spirituality run deep. I love to hear him pray."

Donald J. Payne, associate dean and professor of theology at Denver Seminary, refers to Packer as "...among the most influential English-speaking theologians in shaping the character of late-twentieth-century North American evangelical thought."

Packer's most famous book is *Knowing God*. Others include *Grounded in the Gospel*, *Growing in Christ*, *Concise Theology*, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty Of God*, *Praying the Lord's Prayer*, *Praying: Finding Our Way Through Duty to Delight*, and *A Quest For Godliness: The Puritan Vision Of The Christian Life*. Among his many articles and papers are: "Regeneration," "Mortality - Christians Need Not Fear Death," "Facing Pluralism Today," and "Should The Average Christian Care About Theology?" Some of his shorter writings have been collected in several volumes.

Author and Christian apologist C. S. Lewis has been a major influence on Packer's life and thinking, as has John Owen, a Puritan theologian of the 1600s. Packer and Welsh preacher David Martyn Lloyd-Jones have worked to encourage a revival of interest in the writings of the Puritans. Among Packer's articles about them are "Puritan Evangelism" and "The Puritan Approach to Worship."

Packer's articles have often appeared in the periodical *Christianity Today*, of which he is a senior editor. He served as general editor for *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Published in 2001, it is an evangelical revision of the Revised Standard Version.

Born in England in 1926, the son of a railway clerk, Packer grew up in a Church of England (Anglican) family. Educated at Oxford University, he was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1953. He served first as an assistant curate in England, then as a lecturer and librarian. During the 1960s and 1970s he worked as the principal of several colleges. In 1979 he emigrated to Canada to take up a position at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. There he eventually became the first Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology.

Packer's actions have sometimes been controversial. In 2002 the Anglican diocese of New Westminster authorized its bishop to prepare a service for the purpose of blessing same-sex unions. Packer was among synod members who indicated their protest by walking out. His article, "Why I Walked," explains his reasons.

His participation in the movement Evangelicals and Catholics Together drew censure from some conservative evangelicals who believe this initiative goes too far in the direction of ecumenism.

The Leslie K. Tarr Award is administered by The Word Guild. It will be presented on Wednesday, June 15th, during [The Word Guild awards gala](#) at the World Vision headquarters, 1 World Drive in Mississauga, Ontario. Due to unavoidable circumstances, Dr. Packer regrets that he is unable to accept the award in person.

During the gala The Word Guild will also present some 35 awards in a variety of categories, including fiction and non-fiction, poetry, articles and song lyrics. The event, open to the public, starts at 7:30 p.m.

Go online at www.canadianchristianwritingawards.com for more information.

ABOUT THE WORD GUILD

[The Word Guild](#) is a growing team of nearly 400 Canadian writers, editors, speakers, publishers, booksellers, librarians and other interested individuals who are Christian. From all parts of Canada and many denominational and cultural backgrounds, they are united in their common passion to positively influence individuals - and ultimately the Canadian culture - through life-changing words that bring God's message of hope.

The Word Guild encourages the exploration of God-given gifts and talents; provides opportunities for people to work together; and fosters excellence in the art, craft, practice and ministry of writing, editing and speaking.

In addition to [Write! Canada](#), its annual flagship event, The Word Guild sponsors a number of awards programs for published and unpublished writers, including Canada's largest literary prize for writers who are Christian, the \$5,000 Grace Irwin Award. It also holds an annual black-tie writing awards gala in Toronto and regional Write! events in locations such as Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, and London, Ontario.

Three categories of membership, renewed yearly, are available: professional writers and editors; associate members, who are beginning to put together a body of published work; and affiliates working in publishing, bookselling, libraries, etc. Membership benefits include discounted rates for Write! Canada.

More information at www.thewordguild.com.

Media: For photos or more information, email Judy Bingley, The Word Guild Administrative Assistant, at [info \[at\] thewordguild \[dot\] com](mailto:info[at]thewordguild[dot]com).