



## PROFILES IN FAITH

### Helen Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis) 1915-1960: A Portrait

by Lyle W. Dorsett  
*Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism,  
Beeson Divinity School, Samford University*



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After C.S. Lewis went public with his conversion and commitment to Jesus Christ, controversy hounded him until his death. Fashionable agnostics dubbed him "Heavy Lewis," liberal Christians reviled him for his lack of theological sophistication, and fundamentalists attacked his interpretation of scripture and his ecumenical charity towards most Christian traditions. But neither these issues nor a host of other contentions stirred up anything like the furor that surrounded his marriage to Helen Joy Davidman. In the minds of many of C.S. Lewis's friends it was bad enough that a bachelor nearly sixty years old married a woman of forty. But to make matters worse, she was an American divorcee who also happened to be Jewish and the mother of two boys.

The brilliant and attractive woman Mr. Lewis married in 1956 possessed a well-deserved literary reputation in her own right years before she met the celebrated Oxford don. Born in New York City to well-educated Jewish parents in 1915, Joy Davidman attended public schools and then went on to earn a B.A. at

Hunter College and an M.A. from Columbia University. From childhood Joy exhibited marked intellectual prowess. She broke the scale on an IQ test in elementary school and as a youngster she loved books and typically read numerous volumes each week. Obviously a prodigy, Joy manifested unusual critical and analytical skills, as well as musical talent. Raised in a middle class Bronx neighborhood, Joy Davidman amazed even her brilliant and demanding father by being able to read a score of Chopin and then play it on the piano without another glance at the score. Similarly she would take her part in a Shakespeare play and memorize her lines after the first reading. Howard Davidman, Joy's brother and her junior by four years, recalled that her striking intellectual powers and aggressive personality elicited his devoted admiration but at the same time inhibited him. To be sure, Howard was no intellectual slouch. Indeed, he excelled at the University of Virginia, be-

came a medical doctor who practiced psychiatry in Manhattan after serving in World War II. Nevertheless, he confessed that he

*The brilliant and attractive woman Mr. Lewis married in 1956 possessed a well-deserved literary reputation in her own right years before she met the celebrated Oxford don.*

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**Editor's Note**



It was a golden summer afternoon when we walked from the charming village of Leighlinbridge, Ireland, across the bridge over the River Barrow to the large stone home of Douglas and Merrie Gresham. Douglas, son of Helen Joy Davidman Lewis and stepson of C.S. Lewis, had invited our Oxford-bound group to his living room to hear some of his reminiscences of his mother and step-father. One of the many subjects discussed was the 1993 film, *Shadowlands*, directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Anthony Hopkins as C.S. "Jack" Lewis and Deborah Winger as Joy. Douglas related that the film had a number of factual inaccuracies, e.g., although shown driving in the film, C.S. Lewis never learned to drive a car. However, he went on to say that "emotionally, the film was spot on."

Joy was, as Lyle Dorsett's portrait of her in this issue indicates, an extraordinarily brilliant person. Douglas shared that he believed his mother to have been one of the few people who was on an intellectual par with – if not beyond – the enormously gifted Lewis, and therefore someone with whom he could fully engage in an unfettered exchange of ideas.

What was missing from the film? "Laughter," he told us. The most common memory he had of Jack's talks with friends and colleagues was the presence and preponderance of laughter. "There was always laughter whenever he met with friends."

I have always remembered that comment and so found it not surprising to read that C.S. Lewis's recommendation to the readers of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was, foremost, to enjoy it. I also think that is sound advice for watching the new *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* film: rather than dissecting it to look for all of its hidden meaning, first, simply enjoy it.

Enjoy this issue of *Knowing & Doing*, too. I pray that it will enrich your heart and mind.

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Requests for changes of address may be made in writing to:  
C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE; 8001 Braddock Road, Suite 300; Springfield, VA 22151-2110  
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## The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

*Lewis's best-loved classic*

by Art Lindsley, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow, C. S. Lewis Institute

Finally, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is coming to the big screen. The anticipation is great. The book has already been at #1 on *The New York Times* bestseller list. Many people, both believers and non-believers, will see the film, and it will be an opportunity to speak to others about the film's meaning as well as about C.S. Lewis. There are already plans for other volumes of the *Narnia* series to be made into movies, so it is possible that all seven might eventually be filmed. Any preparation we do now may prepare us for future opportunities, so it's good to learn more about the *Narnia* series and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (LWW).

### *An Allegory?*

One of the first questions that arises about the series is: Are the books allegories, where each detail of the books has symbolic spiritual meaning? The answer is "No." Lewis stressed that each volume started with pictures in his mind, which he turned into a story. For instance, LWW started with the image in Lewis's mind of a Faun carrying packages, and he had been having dreams about lions. As he wrote, some of his Christian beliefs crept into the story, but it is important not to press every detail of the story as you might do with *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

### *For Children or for Adults?*

In response to the charge that fairy stories such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* were childish, Lewis distinguished between fairy tales and children's stories. He pointed out that many children do not like fairy stories, while many adults do, and that a good story is a good story no matter what the reader's age. "Children's" stories retain their appeal

through the generations. Lewis says:

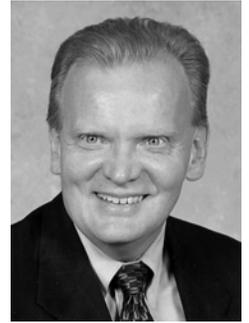
Fashions in literary taste come and go among adults, and every period has its own shibboleths. These, when good, do not corrupt it, for children read only to enjoy. Of course, their limited vocabulary and general ignorance make some books unintelligible to them. But, apart from that, juvenile taste is simply human taste.

Lewis felt that to grow into adulthood without developing your imagination was to be impoverished. One five-year-old boy who visited Lewis's home outside Oxford during the bombing of London in World War II, had never been exposed to fairy tales. Lewis lamented that "his poor imagination has been left without any natural food at all." Lewis felt that it was important (as Jesus taught) for adults to keep a childlike outlook on the world: "Only those adults who have retained, with whatever additions and enrichments, their first childlike responses to poetry unimpaired can be said to have grown up at all." In *Experiment in Criticism*, Lewis writes:

But who in his right mind would not keep if he could that tireless curiosity, that intensity of imagination, that faculty of suspending belief, that unspoiled attitude, that readiness to wonder, to pity, to admire?

Lewis's friend Ruth Pitter said that Lewis had a child's sense of glory and nightmare. Lewis said about himself, "Parts of me are still twelve, and I think parts were already fifty when I was twelve." In any case, the capacity to avoid being hardened by cynicism and suspicion was regarded as essential to human well being.

(continued on page 4)



Dr. Art Lindsley

*Dr. Art Lindsley is a Senior Fellow with the C.S. Lewis Institute where he has served since 1987. Formerly, he was Director of Educational Ministries of the Ligonier Valley Study Center and Staff Specialist with Coalition for Christian Outreach, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He received his B.S. (Chemistry) from Seattle Pacific University, an M.Div. from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. (Religious Studies) from the University of Pittsburgh. He is author of True Truth: Defending Absolute Truth in a Relativistic World (IVP, 2004), C.S. Lewis's Case for Christ (IVP, 2005), and co-author with R.C. Sproul and John Gerstner of Classical Apologetics. Art, his wife, Connie, and their two boys, Trey and Jonathan, make their home in Arlington, Virginia.*

## The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

(continued from page 3)

One of C.S.  
Lewis's  
cousins,  
Claire,  
remembered  
occasions  
when  
various  
cousins  
along with  
"Jack" (C.S.  
Lewis) and  
his brother,  
Warren,  
would  
climb into  
the  
wardrobe  
while  
young Jack  
would tell  
them stories  
he had  
invented.

I have met people of every age, from five to eighty-five, who have enjoyed the *The Chronicles of Narnia*. When I read the series to my sons, I found that I was more excited by rereading the stories myself than the boys were to hear them. As an adult I could better understand the many layers of meaning within the stories.

### *The Plot*

The first thing that needs to be said about LWW is that it is meant to be enjoyed. Before you analyze or pick apart the story, realize that Lewis wrote it so that children (and others) could delight in the story itself. Next, we might ask why the story has had such appeal to so many. Perhaps some of the elements would include a magical entry to Narnia through a wardrobe, an invented world populated with strange creatures, talking animals, sibling rivalry (Lucy vs. Edmund), an aloof professor, a vivid portrayal of evil in the White Witch, a cosmic problem (always winter and never Christmas), its British-ness, temptation (Turkish Delight), places of rest and refreshment (the Beavers' house), adventure, and above all, the lion, Aslan.

The actual wardrobe that prompted the stories was one made by Lewis's grandfather and was in the family home in Belfast. Later, it was moved to Lewis's home at Oxford and now resides at the Wade Center, at Wheaton College.

One of C.S. Lewis's cousins, Claire, remembered occasions when various cousins along with "Jack" (C.S. Lewis) and his brother Warren, would climb into the wardrobe while young Jack would tell them stories he had invented. It is interesting to note that Lewis mentions a few times that "it is foolish to shut oneself into any wardrobe" perhaps because he always kept a crack of light when he told his stories and also because he was warned. When Lewis sent a draft of LWW to friend Owen Barfield, Barfield's wife Maud was concerned lest children read the story and accidentally lock themselves in a wardrobe. So Lewis added five warnings to LWW. The wardrobe is such a vivid image that one Oxford boy, after reading the book, chopped a hole in the back of the family wardrobe trying to get to Narnia.

### *Aslan*

There are many dimensions of the book we could examine, and there are plenty of new books on LWW or *The Chronicles of Narnia* to help you do so; but the central character is the lion, Aslan. Although the children hear about Aslan at the Beavers' house in chapter seven, they don't actually meet him till chapter twelve.

### *Not Safe but Good*

Soon after the children arrive in Narnia, their new friend Mr. Beaver tells them: "They

say Aslan is on the move—perhaps has already landed." When the children first hear the name Aslan, it stirs each of them in a different way:

Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delicious strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of summer.

They find out Aslan is a king and hear about an old rhyme, a kind of prophecy:

Wrong will be right, when  
Aslan comes in sight,  
At the sound of his roar,  
sorrows will be no more,  
When he bares his teeth,  
winter meets its death,  
And when he shakes his  
mane, we will have  
spring again.

Susan asks, "Is he quite safe?" "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver, "...Course he isn't safe, but he's good."

Eventually, Aslan appears and the battle between good and evil begins in earnest. As the story unfolds, Aslan shows up when and where he will. He does not appear often, almost never on demand, and always at his own discretion. And, he does not have to be visible in order for his power to be felt.

Throughout the Narnia

stories we see in Aslan the attributes of Jesus. He is always present, whether or not we are aware of him. He is always working for our good, whether or not we understand (or even like what he does). He transforms us in ways we could never do for ourselves. Greatest of all, he sacrificed his life for us and has risen again to free us from the bondage of sin.

*The Lion Who Sacrifices Himself*  
In LWW there is a confrontation between the White Witch and Aslan. She comes to claim the life of Edmund because he has turned traitor. She appeals to a deep magic from the beginning of time saying that "Every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey" and that "for every treachery I have a right to kill."

Aslan and the White Witch talk privately, and Aslan declares Edmund free from the witch's claim. But the look of joy on the witch's face as she departs, and her allusion to a promise Aslan has made, indicate that something ominous is about to happen. Late that night, Aslan leaves the camp "head hung low" and walking slowly. As Lucy and Susan watch from a distance in horror and disbelief, the witch and all manner of evil creatures bind Aslan to the Stone Table, shave him, and muzzle him. Finally, the witch takes a stone knife and kills Aslan. Exhausted by grief, Lucy and Susan wait for morning. As the sun rises,

they hear a loud crack and see the Stone Table broken in two. But there is no Aslan.

"Who's done it?" cried Susan. "What does it mean? Is it more magic?" "Yes!" said a great voice behind their backs. "It's more magic."

Aslan is alive! He is real, not a ghost. He licks Susan's forehead. The girls are overjoyed and throw themselves on him, kissing him repeatedly. When they calm down, Susan asks: "But what does it all mean?"

"It means," said Aslan, "that though the witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of Time. But if she could have looked a little farther back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards."

Just as Aslan was killed in Edmund's stead and saved his life, so Jesus' death for us not only takes away our guilt for what we have done or left undone, but when we believe in Him, new life begins to transform us from the inside out, from death to life that will go on for all eternity.

This story has the capacity to sneak "past watchful dragons" of our religious upbringing, giving us a new view of an old message. LWW can prepare people to hear the gospel in a new way.

#### *Interesting Notes*

Here are a few interesting tidbits or insights on Narnia in general or LWW in particular, gleaned from my recent reading of C.S. Lewis's books:

- The origin of the name Aslan is from the notes of Lane's *Arabian Nights*. It is Turkish for lion. Lewis pronounced it Ass-lan. He did mean to portray the Lion of Judah (Jesus!).
- LWW was originally planned to be a single, stand alone book, not part of a series.
- It took ten years from 1938 (when Lewis first had the idea of a children's story) till 1948 to actually get down to completing the task.
- After LWW, the rest of the books came quickly – published one per year after 1950.
- Father Christmas, though thought by some (Roger Green and J.R.R. Tolkien) to be an alien intrusion into the story (LWW), serves an important role. First, his arrival shows that the spell "always winter and never Christmas" has begun to be

*(continued on page 6)*

*Just as  
Aslan was  
killed in  
Edmund's  
stead and  
saved his  
life, so Jesus'  
death for us  
not only  
takes away  
our guilt for  
what we  
have done  
or left  
undone, but  
when we  
believe in  
Him, new  
life begins to  
transform  
us from the  
inside out,  
from death  
to life that  
will go on  
for all  
eternity.*

## The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

(continued from page 5)

broken. Second, the gifts he brings serve an important role in LWW (and in other books of the series): Peter—shield and armor; Susan—bow, quiver and ivory horn; Lucy—bottle of cordial and a small dagger.

- The magic in Narnia contrasts with the Harry Potter series. In the *Narnia* books magic is part of the genre of fairy tale and an affirmation that the supernatural is real. Magic exists in LWW and others of the series primarily in the fantasy world, not in our world. Whereas in Harry Potter, magic is the central focus, draws attention to itself, and is located in our world. In LWW, magic is practiced by supernatural agents, whereas in Harry Potter magic is a result of human spellcasting and occult practice. In Narnia the children are not generally permitted to engage in magic, but invited to call on Aslan for help.
- There have been about 85 million sets of *The Chronicles of Narnia* sold since their publication.
- The chronology of the seven Narnia books cover 2,555 Narnian years to only 52 English or earth years.
- Strange mythological creatures present on Aslan's side—dryads, naiads, centaurs, unicorns, a bull with the head of a man, a great dog, animals with symbolic meanings (pelican, eagle, leopards)—indicate a historical continuity, ancient myth coming to its fulfillment in Aslan.

### *Battle Between Good and Evil*

Lewis believed that the battle between good and evil that we see in LWW and in the rest

of the *Narnia* series is a battle in which we all partake. We need to take sides. Lewis wrote:

... there is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.

Although Narnia is an imagined world, it can point us to central truths we need to grasp anew in our own world. LWW also

provides opportunities to talk to others not only about *The Chronicles of Narnia* series but also about what C.S. Lewis believed about other things. [There are many helpful books written to help us grasp this moment of opportunity. See this issue and our

web site for a review of *C.S. Lewis's Case for Christ*.]

To summarize the message of LWW in a nutshell: the Emperor beyond the sea created Narnia through Aslan, it had come under a spell from the White Witch making it "always winter, never Christmas," Aslan came to reverse the curse and to sacrifice himself for Edmund's sin. Though there are more battles to be fought, the time will come when the kids will truly live "happily ever after." They will forever enter the great Adventure, like a book where every chapter is better than the one before. In short, it is the timeless message of creation, fall, redemption, consummation put into a new disarming form. ■



... there is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.



## Feeding the Five Thousand

by Jeff Lindeman

2003 Fellows Class

As an attorney in private practice, I am responsible for bringing in work to support, not just myself, but also those who work with me. There are times when we have more work than we can handle. More often, times are leaner with no sight of needed new work appearing on the horizon. Since attorneys are paid for their time and expertise, being productive means having “billable hours.” When your plate is not full, worry, uncertainty, and discouragement can set in. In spite of your best marketing and networking, the needed and hoped-for work may not appear. You sometimes simply do not know where else to look. It was during one of those lean times that I read the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand in Mark 6. It is a familiar story. I was keenly aware of my need to depend on God, but now the story gave me renewed hope and confidence in God’s provision.

Jesus and his disciples were trying to get away for some rest and time to be alone. The crowd, however, had followed them. Out of compassion Jesus took time and taught the crowd many things—“they were like sheep without a shepherd.” When it was late, the disciples came to Jesus with a problem: the crowd needed to eat. The disciples suggested the crowd be sent away so they could buy food for themselves. No one expected Jesus’ answer, “You give them something to eat.” The disciples could not imagine doing that. It was late in the day. They and the crowd were in a desolate place. There was nothing there. Even if it were possible, it would take much more money than they had.

Everyone has heard that recognizing the problem is the first step to solving it....but not this time. “You give them something to eat” was Jesus’ surprising solution. When our law firm seemed to lack the sustaining work that we needed, it was not hard to state the problem or even to pray about it. Yet, Jesus’ answer: “You give them something to eat” (in our case: “You give them the work they need”), is hardly helpful or encouraging. Of course, I wanted to do that, but how? Sometimes you simply lack the resources. It is late. The place is desolate. You

cannot make new work simply appear. You’ve tried. Trying makes you weary. Discouragement and thoughts of failure can fill your mind.

“You give them something to eat.” Mark tells us what went through the disciples’ minds. “That’s impossible.” “It would take more than eight months wages—200 denarii.” Jesus, however, was not done with the disciples, “How many loaves do you have? Go look!” They did not know what they had. They had to go find out. The answer was, perhaps, more deflating than the problem—five loaves and two fish, next to nothing when attempting to feed five thousand. What could be done now?

Now that the disciples had recognized the problem and knew their resources (their limited resources), Jesus acted. He first brought order to the situation—at His command, the people sat down in groups of hundred and fifties. He took what little the disciples had to offer—five loaves and two fish. Looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and began distributing the food. He looked to God, gave thanks, and acted. All five thousand were fed. And, there was food left over.

To me, new incoming work is God’s provision to do what He called me to do in my vocation. There have been times when the work on hand looked as meager as the five loaves and two small fish. In those times when work seemed to be lacking, I have tried to apply six action steps I learned from Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand: 1) Recognize the problem, 2) Take stock of what you have, 3) Look to God for His provision, 4) Bring order to the situation, 5) Lift what you have to the Lord, and 6) Begin doing what needs to be done.

Lean times can distract me from staying focused on Jesus. Taking action on these steps may not bring work, but it always brings me to the Lord. Bringing every request to God in prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, moves us from self-centered anxiety to peace—peace in our hearts and peace in our minds, peace guarded in Christ Jesus. ■



*Jeff Lindeman is a partner in the law firm Nixon Peabody, LLP where he practices patent law. In addition to his law degree, Jeff has a Ph.D. in chemistry. Jeff recently completed the Year One and Year Two Fellows Program at the C.S. Lewis Institute. He continues in the Fellows Program this year serving as a mentor to first year fellows. Jeff and his wife of 21 years, Mona, have a four year old son Matthew. They live in McLean, Virginia and attend The Falls Church.*



### Jefferson and Wilberforce: Leaders Who Shaped Their Times

by Ray Blunt

*Adjunct Faculty, Federal Executive Institute and the Leadership Development Academy*



Ray Blunt

**Ray Blunt** served 35 years in the Air Force and Department of Veterans Affairs, and is now Adjunct Faculty with the Federal Executive Institute and the Graduate School, Leadership Development Academy. In addition, he serves as Senior Consultant with Federal Consulting Group and with Center for Human Resources Management at the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). He is a frequent speaker and author in the field of leadership and human capital initiatives.

He and his wife, B.J., live in Alexandria, and have two grown children and four grandchildren.

#### *Two Worldviews – Two Legacies*

In contemporary leadership and organizational research, Dr. Peter Senge stands among the most respected scholars in the field seeking to understand why people behave the way they do in large organizations. In a somewhat unique finding, he has framed what he calls the ladder of inference as a way of understanding how people both convey and understand meaning and how they act upon it. Central to his findings is that at the core, an individual's beliefs lie behind the real meaning in all they say or do.<sup>1</sup>

His meaning of belief in this context is defined as what people think is true about how the world works, what their understanding is of why people behave the way that they do, and what their own sense is of what is central to their purposeful actions in all of life. Others might use the term worldview to describe this perspective.

Lurking behind all of what we have been seeing so far in the comparison of what shaped the lives of Wilberforce and Jefferson is the notion of contending worldviews. We have examined two factors that played key roles in both men sustaining the commitments they made early in political life to abolishing slavery. Where we have seen this distinction most clearly is not in what they said or wrote publicly, but in the choices they made to act or not to act. In examining so far two sustaining influences – their early mentors and their choice of colleagues and supporters – we have also seen an emerging and a differing worldview that guided each of these men. We

now turn to look more closely at the third sustaining factor in more detail – their two worldviews – and how they were lived out in their two visions for abolishing slavery.<sup>2</sup>

We will then be in a better position through a summary comparison to understand how and why they chose the course that they did that began to vary so widely. We might also understand how each man shaped the times they lived in long after they were dead. These then are the tasks for this concluding essay.

#### *Saint vs. Hypocrite?*

In the starkest of terms, many would conclude that simply by limiting the inquiry to their actions alone, it would seem that Wilberforce set an unswerving course to abolish slavery to his very deathbed because of his beliefs in the equality of all men and that Jefferson, in contrast, abandoned the field because his beliefs radically changed over time. In short, Jefferson was a hypocrite of the first order.

While a tempting conclusion, this is far too simplistic an answer and masks how a leader's (and politician's) worldview can help us to understand the distinction between verbal affirmations and consequent actions. More than anything, it was the divergence in their worldviews, their beliefs of how history worked, that most deeply divided the two men and determined the course of action each would follow throughout their mature lives regarding how to engage the fractious political and human issue of slavery.

#### *The Optimist*

As we have seen, William Smalls, Jefferson's first and likely most important mentor, helped to expose Jefferson to the exciting

1 Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990)

2 The three-part framework for the discussion in the three papers is drawn from Dr. Steven Garber as set forth in his marvelous book, *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

ideas of the Enlightenment that were emerging on the global scene. Space does not allow for a thorough discussion of the new thinking that was being introduced, but for our purposes there are three key beliefs that Jefferson held that illustrate the impact it had on him.

First, he believed the progress of history should be viewed with optimism owing to the power of man's reason which could only lead to inexorable progress not only materially, but *far more so morally*. Progress toward equality depended upon the subsequent generations' further development of the requisite knowledge and moral insight to complete the task of ending slavery.

Second, the equality of which he spoke was more of a metaphysical equality based upon the notion of individual rights and not revealed moral truths of what it means to be human. He expressed skepticism in his *Notes on Virginia* that black slaves possessed the requisite mental and moral raw material to ever rise to the level of most white Americans.

And, third, the Enlightenment view was that the tyranny most to be feared was not tyranny of one man over another, but rather that of the King, Executive, or the Federal Government over the rights of individual states. Thus, he would argue later in life that slaves were not men but property because that is what was decreed by many of the state laws of the south and that the Federal government could only override the states in regard to the rights of individuals, not the rights of property. Certain rights trumped others in his mind.

This sense of priority can readily be seen in the remarkable correspondence that was carried between Jefferson and John Adams for the last 14 years of their lives. As these two old revolutionary thinkers and leaders looked back on where they had come as a nation, they attempted to explain what each had done and why, and they shared their hopes for the future.

What interests us is that in all the years of their exchange of letters (they never saw each other after 1800) the subject of slavery was raised only one time. In 1821, Jefferson spoke to the Missouri question as an abridgement of

the rights of states to declare slaves free, and tantamount to giving the slaves both freedom and the dagger whereby they might kill their masters. Adams voices his own misgivings, not just about the Missouri issue, but about the "black cloud" of slavery that hung over America for over 50 years. Like Jefferson, he replies, he can only leave it to posterity, but unlike Jefferson, he leaves it to God as well.

#### *The Realist*

There is perhaps no better place to contrast the worldview of Wilberforce with that of Jefferson than to return to Wilberforce's great vision and how he understood his "two great objects:" abolishing slavery and the reformation of manners.

As we have noted, by "manners" he means nothing less than the moral climate of England – the culture embedded in and shaped by the leaders and members of British society at all levels. This is a breathtaking vision that could only be the product of a completely youthful idealist or of someone who actually believed that God, Himself, had cast the vision and would shape the outcome.

Jefferson would most likely have been appalled that an educated political leader, particularly, would make such a proclamation. Jefferson would have viewed such sweeping goals of a political leader as tantamount to a declaration of tyranny of the worst sort – seeking to invoke personal religious beliefs on an entire society and he would have categorically opposed any thought that there even was such a thing as the supernatural direction of God for a human life or a government.

Nevertheless, these two God-inspired goals would be what would animate the rest of Wilberforce's life and sustain his commitments in the face of the most furious opposition, repeated failure, public derision and even the opposition of the crown. What sustained these goals was that Wilberforce held a particular Christian

*(continued on page 18)*

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## Book Review Art Lindsley's *C.S. Lewis's Case for Christ*

by Dr. Jerry Root

*Professor of Evangelism, Wheaton College  
Associate Director, Institute for Strategic Evangelism*



Dr. Jerry Root

*Dr. Jerry Root serves as the Associate Director of the Institute of Strategic Evangelism. Jerry also teaches evangelism courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level.*

*Jerry was born and raised in Southern California. He has pastored three different churches over twenty three years, and nineteen of those years were invested in student ministry. While pastoring he taught courses in Philosophy and on C.S. Lewis for ten years at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, IL. He has served as an Adjunct Faculty Member at Biola University since 1991, teaching courses on Lewis.*

*Jerry has lectured and preached in 14 countries and has traveled to 31 countries and 3 continents. He co-edited *The Quotable C.S. Lewis* with Wayne Martindale and has produced study guides and booklets on *Friendship Evangelism*, and contributed to other books and has presented a number of lectures on C.S. Lewis.*

With the upcoming film adaptation of C.S. Lewis's, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the market has been flooded with books about Lewis and his work. While it is fair to wonder why anyone would read a book about Lewis when he, or she, could actually read Lewis first hand; nevertheless, there is certainly an audience that would benefit from guided tours that explore his life, fiction, and thought more deeply. Out of the sampling of some of the nearly thirty books being published around the time of the movie release one book, and one book alone, addresses Lewis's Apologetic vision, and that is Art Lindsley's *C.S. Lewis's Case for Christ: Insights from Reason, Imagination and Faith* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005. Paperback, 216 pages).

Dr. Lindsley, of the C. S. Lewis Institute, as an apologist and theologian, walks his readers through Lewis's most salient arguments for the Christian faith. Lindsley's breadth of knowledge about Lewis and his grasp of the wide range of Lewis's writing (there are some 72 Lewis titles and hundreds of books about Lewis) allows him to bring together apologetic insights often missed by the more casual reader of Lewis. Consequently, *C.S. Lewis's Case for Christ* makes accessible material that is virtually unavailable in any single source. Furthermore, Lindsley manifests an ability to simplify complexities in Lewis's arguments, placing both Lewis's presuppositions as well as his inferences within the reach of the reader. Lindsley also reveals, in many places, an engaging skill

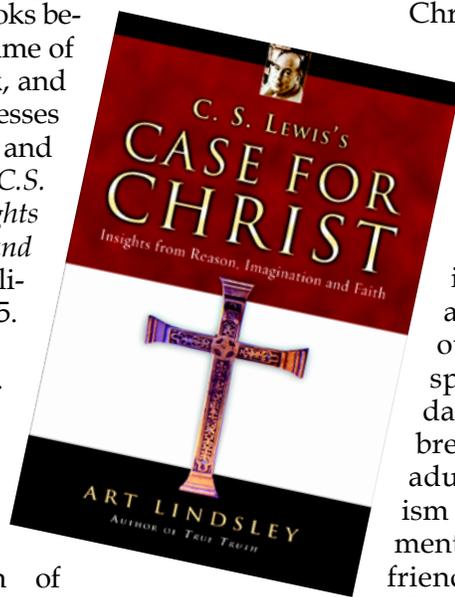
that takes Lewis's arguments further than Lewis himself, thus contemporizing these arguments and applying them to a post-modern context. The book is written as a dialogue, therefore the reader is able to see a modeled application of these arguments and relate them to one's own conversational experience. The book provides a reader with the wide range of Lewis's apologetic thought concerning miracles; the problem of evil; the exclusive claims of

Christ in light of other world religions; moral relativism; the challenges of postmodernism; and brings it together in a useful single volume.

Lindsley begins his study of Lewis's apologetics by making a clear case as to why Lewis, who died over forty years ago, still speaks with authority today. Lewis's genius, his breadth of scholarship, his adult conversion from atheism to Christ, his love of argument in the context of true friendship, his gift as a powerful communicator, all establish

Lewis's methods as an apologetic model second to none. Even with this strong explanation of Lewis's strength as an apologist, Lindsley does not engage in hagiography; he points out that Lewis had his detractors and Lindsley looks openly at their criticisms thus strengthening his [Lindsley's] own critical judgments.

As Lindsley's treatment of Lewis's arguments progresses, he dismantles the obstacles that Lewis himself had to overcome in his own pilgrimage to faith,



developing Lewis's arguments in the process. This removes the arguments from the realm of mere sterile intellectual consideration and places each one in the more vital context of a real spiritual quest. In this section Lindsley discusses Lewis's concept of *Chronological Snobbery*, which rejects a view once held as credible in the past even when it has never been reasonably discredited. Lindsley also develops Lewis's ideas relative to the *Problem of Evil*, reminding readers, if evil exists there must be some transcendent standard by which one can even make the judgment that evil exists; thus raising a caution against the all too easy charge that the existence of evil in a world supposedly created by a good and all-powerful God is enough to doubt God's existence. Lindsley's development of Lewis's argument takes into account a free-will theodicy (that moral evil is the result of the ill-use of free-will); and soul-making theodicy (if a good God allows evil to exist then He knows He will bring greater good out of its existence than might have occurred had it not been allowed—this results in good which potentially comes to God's creatures through suffering). Lindsley also accounts for the emotional stress relative to suffering and admits there may be times when answers may not be forth coming. His argument is not so air tight that he cannot make room for ambiguities and perplexities. Lindsley gives satisfying answers while avoiding that kind of triumphal, and unsatisfying, *last-wordism* one often encounters in less intellectually robust presentations. It is here however that a reader may disagree with one feature of Lindsley's presentation and that is his assessment that "Job never receives an explanation for his suffering" (p. 59). It is refreshing to observe Lindsley's willingness to tackle Lewis's ideas regarding *Myth* and the *Imagination* bringing these often neglected, yet very important, themes into the arena of apologetics. He is right to see the importance of these ideas in Lewis's corpus and reminds those interested in apologetics not to disregard them.

The section of Lindsley's study that a reader is destined to find most helpful concerns the *coherence* of Lewis's apologetic scheme. With skill Lindsley shows how Lewis's arguments do hold together. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, Lindsley takes Lewis's arguments further, giving them application in a postmodern culture. The book is generously footnoted, has a helpful index, and supplies an appendix with ideas for further reading to go along with each chapter.

At the end of the day, one must conclude that the overall effect of Lindsley's investigation of Lewis's apologetics has been a setting forth of a strong cumulative argument for the Christian faith. The book holds value for those looking to buttress their own faith with a vigorous intellectual support. It has value for the Christian wanting to have answers for a friend or co-worker whose questions seem to stand in the way of his or her believing in Christ. It is also a valuable read for the seeker looking for answers. The book is a good read, its argument artfully developed, and, most of all, it is worthy of Lewis. ■



C. S. Lewis's *Case for Christ*  
can be purchased  
through our friends at  
Hearts & Minds Bookstores,  
Dallastown, Pennsylvania.

[www.heartsandmindsbooks.com](http://www.heartsandmindsbooks.com)  
(717) 246-3333

or  
at booksellers everywhere.

“The book  
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Lewis.”



## Passion For Your Name

by J. John  
Author and Speaker



J. John

**J. John** is regarded as one of the most creative Christian speakers and writers in the U.K. He has an appeal that transcends age, gender, culture and occupation. His much-loved art of storytelling helps people to discover spiritual meaning in a way that makes sense of everyday life.

J. John has a Lambeth M.A. and is an Honorary Canon of Coventry Cathedral.

He is Killy's husband and father to Michael, Simeon, and Benjamin.

He enjoys food, films, and fun and lives in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire.

For more information about J. John's ministry, visit the web site [www.philotrust.com](http://www.philotrust.com).

### EZEKIAL 28:12-19

*<sup>12</sup>Son of man, weep for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. <sup>13</sup>You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone – red carnelian, chrysolite, white moonstone, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald – all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. <sup>14</sup>I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.*

*<sup>15</sup>You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you. <sup>16</sup>Your great wealth filled you with violence, and you sinned. So I banished you from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire. <sup>17</sup>Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings. <sup>18</sup>You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade. So I brought fire from within you, and it consumed you. I let it burn you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. <sup>19</sup>All who knew you are appalled at your fate. You have come to a terrible end, and you are no more.*

It really is a mystery. How could such a gifted and trusted being as Lucifer (whose very name means “light bearer” or “son of the morning”) cause the first church split and take a third of the congregation with him? In Ezekiel 28 – thought by many to refer to the fall of Lucifer – the Bible says that he was “the perfection of wisdom and beauty” (v. 12). His clothing was “adorned with every precious stone” (v. 13), and God said, “I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian” (v. 14). So what went wrong? Although we may fear and despise Satan in equal measure, there is much we can learn from the story of his fall from grace that is crucial for us as workers in the kingdom of God.

Lucifer might have been wonderful, but he let it go to his head. He began to believe his own hype, as we might say today. He was amazing, beautiful, and glorious...but he wasn't divine. Twice the Bible says that God created him (vv. 13,15); Lucifer may have been part of God's wondrous creation, but he was not – and never could be – God. He did not exist before all else; he didn't have the power to create incredible things – people, animals, plants, mountains, and seas – from nothing. Lucifer was subject to God's rule and authority, just like anyone else.

### Infamous Downfall

It's too easy for us to dismiss Lucifer either as a cartoon figure, or an icon of evil who has been evil and twisted from the start. Yet if we do so, we create a scapegoat for all the evil in the world. He is so unlike us, we think, that he has no relevance, other than to fight or dismiss him. Yet, like so many people in front-line ministry and worship today, Lucifer had anointing and authority. He found favor with God, and was close to him. He was, by all accounts,

something of a heavenly celebrity. And for those of us who like a little attention and adoration as we go about God's business within the Christian world, Lucifer is a warning to us all.

In this passage, Ezekiel underlines time and again how lovely Lucifer was—he had “perfect beauty” he writes in Chapter 27:3, “perfected beauty” (27:4, 11) and was “perfect in beauty” (28:12). One of God's finest works of art. But it's not always easy being the center of attention. “You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you,” we read in 28:15. “Your great wealth filled you with violence and you sinned. So I banished you from the mountain of God. I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire” (v. 16).

All that stardust went to Lucifer's head. “Your heart was filled with pride,” writes Ezekiel, “because of all your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth” (v. 17).

<sup>7</sup>Then there was war in heaven. Michael and the angels under his command fought the dragon and his angels. <sup>8</sup>And the dragon lost the battle and was forced out of heaven. <sup>9</sup>This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. (Revelation 12: 7-9)

It's a stunning and shocking lesson for us all. Even in the place where you might think no sin could possibly be found—at the epicentre of God's universe, under the shadow of his wing—Lucifer began to nurture a sense of pride and self-centredness. He took a long, hard look at himself in the mirror, and liked what he saw a little too much; with all of his beauty, wisdom, perfection, power and status, he became captivated with his own ego, and he “lifted himself up with pride.”

As the great writer C.S. Lewis once observed, “the surest way to spoil a pleasure is to start examining your satisfaction.” And we must guard against that. Take worship, for example. It can always help us to focus on God, as it captivates our consciousness and we look outward and upward instead of inward. But if we

begin to take our eyes off God, perhaps by enjoying the status that comes with leading others in worship, or overseeing a home group, or disciplining needy people, then it's easy to become introspective and suffer the paralysis of self-analysis. We can only do things in God's strength and Spirit; but if we take our eyes off God and focus on our own gifts, we can become so self-conscious that we end up self-obsessed. And we then we become self-obsessed, we push God to the side and put ourselves on center stage. As we've seen with Lucifer, it's the original sin against God.

Have you stopped to think about sin recently? “Sin” is a three-letter word with “I” in the middle. In eternity past, it was a sin to put yourself over and above God, and it is still a sin today, with the same serious consequences. Nothing has changed. Lucifer's pride perverted him. It can pervert us. And pride, as we know, comes before a fall.

As we see in Ezekiel's account, pride takes us along the path to destruction. It generates violence (v. 16), dishonest trade (v. 18) and a terrible end (v. 20). In today's culture, we “tolerate” so much, as if it is a virtue to do so. Yet God remains a holy God, the same yesterday, today and forever, and he will never tolerate sin. Because of Lucifer's sin of pride, arrogance and violence, God did not allow him to remain in his privileged position near the throne of God. God cast him out.

#### *I Want It All and I Want It Now*

Lucifer's “fall” began with dissatisfaction at his situation, at what he was called to do— what we might call his “anointing.” While there's nothing wrong with unselfish ambition, we have to watch that we don't become so proud of our ministry, our fame, or our talent that we seek an ever-bigger stage *for ourselves*.

Lucifer began to want more. We're not quite sure why, but perhaps he was jealous of the humans God was about to create. His ego was bruised, because someone else was about to be created who would be even closer to God. Whatever his problem, Lucifer harbored secret ambition. He may have been holy, but he was also proud. He may have been awe-inspiring, but he also craved power. Lucifer was

(continued on page 14)

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## Passion For Your Name

(continued from page 13)

a servant of God, but not a child of God.

John Wesley, upon his conversion, observed that "I swapped the faith of a servant for a son." We are children of the living God first and foremost. Who wants to be greater than his father or mother? No one who is in a right relationship with either, for that is what it's all about: relationship. It's only when the relationship is neglected that we think of ourselves before our family.

### *Making A Name For God or Ourselves?*

In Revelation 22.16, we read: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star." "Bright morning star" is the title that Lucifer wanted. Instead, he gained the name Satan, meaning "hater."

The question is, whose name are we most keen to make known? Whose name do we want spoken from the lips of men and women? We live in an X-Factor, Pop-Idol culture, in which so many people seek fame without even expecting to work for it. It's even easier to fall into the trap of thinking that we are really doing something useful if we become famous. But unless it's God's name that we're making known, we are simply setting ourselves up as idols.

A gifted young preacher was asked by the renowned preacher Alexander Whyte to preach at his church in Edinburgh. The young man

approached the pulpit with great expectations from the crowd that had gathered to hear him. But when he walked up to the pulpit, his worst nightmare happened: his mind went blank and he couldn't think of what to say. He was, quite literally, speechless. A hush fell upon the crowd as he retreated down the steps a broken-hearted man.

The dejected young preacher asked Alexander Whyte, "What went wrong?" He replied, "If you had gone up the way you came down, you would have had more chance of getting down the way you went up."

Pride, the idolatrous worship of self, is the national religion of hell. It is so subtle that if we aren't careful, we'll even become proud of our humility. The good that's in us becomes bad. Our virtue becomes our vice.

It's like the Sunday school teacher who, having told the story of the Pharisee and the publican, said, "Children, let's bow our heads and thank God we are not like the Pharisee!" Pride must die in us or nothing of heaven can live in us. So let's root out our pride and prejudice.

Once, I was in a hospital waiting room with my son Michael, who had broken his leg. I was trying to entertain him and found a Bible-story picture book. Flicking through it, I pointed to one drawing and asked if he knew which story the picture referred to. Imagine my delight when he identified first Noah and then

Moses. I could tell that two women were watching us, so, swelling with pride, I pointed to another picture and asked, "Who is this?" With a thoughtful frown, Michael replied, "I don't know who the woman is, but that man is George of the Jungle." So much for my pride!

D.L. Moody once said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."

And we really do need to be filled with Christ's love if we are to remain true to his calling. The apostle Peter wrote, "Be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5.5), which is a fascinating phrase when we consider that our clothes are often the first thing that people see of us. How are you "clothed?" What are you wearing? Humility is knowing and acknowledging that I'm a nobody who has become a somebody in Christ.

The Bible says, "Whoever humbles themselves will be exalted." Humility is to receive praise and then to pass it on to God untouched. We cannot afford to take ourselves too seriously when we are seeking to give God the honor he so richly deserves.

*...if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled.*

### *On Guard*

So, what are we to do? Of course, as the apostle Paul reminds us, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. None of us is perfect, and all of us are tainted by pride. But it's not good enough to take for granted God's grace and forgiveness, wonderful and redeeming though it is. If we are working for the Kingdom of Christ, we must be willing to learn, to grow, to mature on our walk with Jesus. As John the Baptist, one of the greatest messengers the church has ever known, said, "He must become more important, while I become less important." So how do we do it?

First, we must examine ourselves. We might like to pray the words of Psalm 139:23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This psalm is wonderful, as it celebrates the fact that we are all uniquely created in the image of God—"I praise you," writes the psalmist—"for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." And yet, it pleads with God to search and know our hearts, and to lead us along the right path.

Second, we must guard ourselves. Further into Peter's first letter, he goes on to say, "Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour." The devil knows his time is short, so he will do anything to hinder the

plan of God. He wants to kill, steal and destroy everything in our lives.

But God's plan includes the plan of salvation and the plan of protection, and in Ephesians (6:11) we read, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil."

So arrogant and desperate is this fallen angel that he even tried to cause Jesus to sin against God (see Matthew 4:1-11). But the final word in that story is that the Living Word defeated all the temptations Lucifer had to throw at him. And how did he do that? With faith in this one, simple sentence: "Get out of here, Satan!" Jesus told him, "For the Scriptures say, you must worship the Lord your God; serve only Him" (Matthew 4:10). Jesus is the victor. And the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

In the book of Hebrews (2:14-15), we read, "Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying."

We must all be aware of Satan's schemes—to accuse, deceive, plant doubts, tempt us to be proud, to discourage, distract and try anything else to oppose God's purposes. How

good that we have a Savior, Christ the Lord, who intercedes for us! Jesus once prayed, "I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one." As the well-known saying goes, Jesus didn't come to take the church out of the world, but the world out of the church.

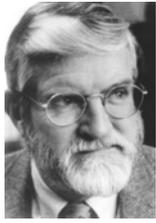
In the book of James (4: 6-7), we read, "He gives us more and more strength to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, 'God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble.' So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." This is not an impossible task. We are not fighting an impossible battle. And as we seek to spread God's name far and wide across this land and across our global village, humility must be our constant companion—especially when we begin to see results.

Have you pushed God aside? Are you guilty? Then now is the time to bow down once more to Jesus and dissolve your guilt in his blood. The one before whom we bow is the greatest being in all the world: Jesus Christ, who, the Bible says, "being found in appearance as a man, humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8). ■

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## Profiles in Faith: Helen Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis)

(continued from page 1)



The Rev. Dr. Lyle Dorsett holds the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham,

Alabama. He is the author of numerous books, among them biographies of Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis), E. M. Bounds, Dwight L. Moody, and Billy Sunday. Keenly interested in the life and writings of C. S. Lewis, he has published a volume of Lewis's Letters to Children and The Essential C. S. Lewis. His most recent book is Seeking the Secret Place: The Spiritual Formation of C.S. Lewis.

Dorsett is ordained in the Anglican Church and is with the Anglican Mission in America (AMIA) under the Province of Rwanda.

Lyle and his wife, Mary, have two children and four grandchildren. The Dorsetts founded and currently serve as directors of Christ for Children International, a mission to the economically and spiritually impoverished in Mexico.

was so intimidated by Joy's writing that he never attempted to publish anything until his sister died.

Joy Davidman graduated from a demanding high school at age fourteen. She read books at home for the next year and matriculated at Hunter College at age fifteen. Clipping through Hunter as an English major and French Literature minor with honors at age nineteen, Joy then became a high school teacher upon graduation. While teaching her first year out of college, she earned a master's degree from Columbia in only three semesters.

In college Joy Davidman exuded a passion for writing. She published some poetry as an undergraduate, and then in January 1936, *Poetry*,

a prestigious magazine out of Chicago and edited by the venerable Harriet Monroe, bought several of her poems. Monroe published a few more of Joy's works and then asked her to serve as a reader and editor for the magazine. Consequently Joy resigned her teaching position after one year, and devoted herself fulltime to writing and editing.

Her choice to write turned out to be a wise one. By age twenty-three her poetry caught the attention of Stephen Vincent Benet. He published a volume of her work, *Letters to a Comrade*, in the Younger Poet Series he edited for Yale University Press. This volume of forty-five poems was celebrated by Benet and it received excellent reviews. Thanks to her initial successes and connection with influential members of the eastern literary establishment, she became a client of Brandt and Brandt, one of New York's finest literary agencies, and Macmillan brought her into their stable of writers. In 1940 *Anyra*, her first novel, was published by Macmillan and well-received. She contributed to and edited *War Poem of the United Nations* which appeared

with Dial in 1943, and then spent four summers at the MacDowell Colony for writers in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. There she wrote articles, poetry, and edited another volume of verse.

Always the radical with somewhat of an obsessive personality, Joy Davidman, like many intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s, proclaimed herself disillusioned with capitalism and the "American system." Joy flirted with Communism during these tumultuous years. And while she never came close to becoming a doctrinaire Marxist, she did advocate socialism over capitalism, especially since the later system, to her mind, had failed and caused the Great Depression. Joy actually joined the Communist Party but found the meetings and most of the members quite boring. If she never advocated or expected the overthrow of capitalism, she did indeed enjoy criticizing both Democrats and Republicans who she believed were less enlightened than the supposedly heroic socialists who led the USSR.

Ultimately Joy Davidman was too intelligent to buy into the romanticized notions of the USSR circulating among the American intelligentsia during the 1930s and early 1940s. Indeed, the only things Joy got out of her brief affair with Communism was part-time employment as a film critic and book reviewer and poetry editor for *New Masses*, a Communist newspaper, plus an acquaintance with another left-wing writer who would become her husband and the father of their two bright and healthy boys.

As early as 1942 twenty-seven year old Joy Davidman observed that the Communist Party in America had only one valid reason for being, "it is a great matchmaker." In August that year, Joy married William Lindsay Gresham, novelist, journalist, Spanish Civil War veteran, charming story teller, and sometime guitar player and vocalist in Greenwich Village drinking establishments. Bill had grown disillusioned with Communists and their lofty speeches during his time in Spain. His dim view of the leftist movement hurried Joy out of the Party especially when she gave birth to David in early 1944, and Douglas less than a year and a half later.

By her own admission, Joy Davidman Gresham had been searching for fulfillment for years. College and graduate school, writing and editing, and socializing with some of New York's most celebrated editors and authors, as well as political activism, were good in their place, but she was empty inside. With highest expectations she entered into family life with her husband. While Bill Gresham wrote and sold novels, including

one (*Nightmare Alley*) that became a motion picture starring Tyrone Power, Joy stayed at home, did some freelance writing, and cared for her little boys, and the house and garden.

The Gresham marriage was in trouble from the outset. Bill had a serious drinking problem. Binges and hangovers cut into his writing—just when the growing family required more time and money. Bill not only wasted time and earned little money, he embarked upon a series of extra-marital affairs that at once broke Joy's heart and drove her to fits of anger and despair. To make matters worse, she had few friends and absolutely no religion to turn to for strength.

C.S. Lewis once remarked that "every story of conversion is a story of blessed defeat." By the end of 1945 large cracks began to appear in her protective armor. Better educated and more intelligent than most people, well published and highly respected for a person only thirty years old, Joy had seldom if ever seriously entertained weakness or failure. But Bill's long absences from home and apparent lack of concern for her and the boys left her devastated. One night in spring 1946 Bill called from Manhattan and announced he was having a nervous breakdown. Whether true or just another cover story for one of his escapades is beside the point. In brief, he was not coming home and could not promise when or if ever he would be back. Bill then rang off and Joy walked into the nursery where her babies slept. In her words, she was all alone with her fears and the quiet. She recalled later that "for the first time my pride was forced to admit that I was not, after all, 'the master of my fate'. . . . All my defenses—all the walls of arrogance and cocksureness and self-love behind which I had hid from God—went down momentarily and God came in." She went on to describe her perception of the mystical encounter this way:

It is infinite, unique; there are no words, there are no comparisons. . . . Those who have known God will understand me. . . . There was a Person with me in that room, directly present to my consciousness—a Person so real that all my precious life was by comparison a mere shadow play. And I myself was more alive than I had ever been; it was like waking from sleep. So intense a life cannot be endured long by flesh and blood; we must ordinarily take our life watered down, diluted as it were, by time and space and matter. My perception of God lasted perhaps half a minute.

Joy concluded that inasmuch as God apparently

exists, then there is nothing more important than learning who He is and what He requires of us. Consequently the former atheist embarked upon a journey to know more of God. At the outset she explored Reformed Judaism but could find no inner peace. Always the reader, she devoured books and verse on spirituality, including Francis Thompson's long poem "The Hound of Heaven." It was first Thompson's poetry and then three books by C.S. Lewis—*The Great Divorce*, *Miracles*, and *The Screwtape Letters*—that caused her to read the Bible. And when she got into the Gospels, according to her testimony, the One who had come to her appeared again: "He was Jesus."

Joy Davidman found nourishing spiritual food in the Bible and the writings of C.S. Lewis. Because of her interest in Lewis, the publications of a liberal arts college professor and poet, Chad Walsh, who also happened to be a mid-life convert, caught her attention. Walsh wrote a biographical article on C.S. Lewis for the *New York Times* in 1948, and he published the first biography of Mr. Lewis a few months later entitled *C.S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics*. Joy corresponded with Chad Walsh about her many questions related to Lewis's books and her new-found faith. Walsh understood and respected Joy's pilgrimage so he and his wife, Eva, frequently entertained Joy and her boys at their summer cottage at Lake Iroquois, Vermont.

The C.S. Lewis—Walsh connection provided just the right tonic for Joy's thirsty soul. At Chad's suggestion she read everything Lewis wrote as well as some books by Charles Williams, George MacDonald, G. K. Chesterton, and Dorothy Sayers. By 1948 Joy pursued instruction in a Presbyterian Church near her upstate New York home. Soon thereafter she and the boys were baptized. Between the New York pastor and her mentor, Chad Walsh, Joy grew in faith and began manifesting signs of genuine conversion and repentance.

At Chad Walsh's urging, Joy wrote to C.S. Lewis about some of her thoughts on his books. Although Walsh assured Joy that Lewis always answered his correspondence, it took her two years to find the courage to write. When she did, in January 1950, Lewis's brother noted in his journal that Jack had received a fascinating letter from a most interesting American woman, Mrs. Gresham.

For the next two and a half years Joy and C.S. Lewis carried on a rich correspondence that intellectually and spiritually encouraged each of them. Over that

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## Jefferson and Wilberforce

(continued from page 9)

worldview that contrasted sharply even with the prevailing religious beliefs and resulting practices of his day. For an understanding of this perspective he held and which sustained him and his colleagues, the best source is written in his own hand.

He believed that slavery would not be abolished without a transformation of the prevailing views of society that went well beyond a single issue. Thus, he viewed the “second great object” as critical to the accomplishment of the first. In that task, his strategy was to begin with the head, the leaders of society in persuading them of the need for a radical change of character. Among many other strategies, he took what we might view as an odd turn: he wrote a best selling book. But not just any book, his was a book of practical theology, improbably (to our ears) called *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians, in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country*.

His central thesis was that God’s redemptive work in each person’s life was not to be that of the nominal faith so widely practiced in England and among his political colleagues, but a real belief in the historic faith. That faith was revealed best in scripture and was evidenced in daily action and humble service. His own diagnosis of “the grand malady” was not that of the threat of the tyranny of the state, as Jefferson held, but nothing less than selfishness—the tyranny of self gratification above all. In an age where faith was kept on a leash and separate from the crucible of power and choices in life, his was a voice that was unique. And it had an immediate impact becoming a widely read best seller in both England and later in America. Lincoln was said to have been strongly influenced as a boy by Wilberforce’s life story and later by his writing.

In the end, Wilberforce was to be the champion of over 70 bills that became law leading to vast changes in child labor, the exploitation of women and the poor, and even the first effort to prevent cruelty to animals. The end result was, as one commentator observed, “he made it fashionable to do good.”

Stemming from his Christian worldview was an understanding of what it means to be human that marked another contrast with Jefferson. As we have seen, Jefferson’s view of slaves included that they were to be considered property and that their capacities were limited in potential for absorption into the culture. Once slavery ended in the far off future, Jefferson saw slaves as being returned to Africa. In contrast, Wilberforce’s views of the slaves as persons can perhaps best be described in the strategy discussed in the previous essay which he developed with fellow Christian Josiah Wedgwood, the famous designer and manufacturer of prestigious lines of fine china.

The conversation “starter” of a china charger plate with a kneeling black man, in chains, his hands uplifted in prayer was more than an intriguing gambit. The words on the plate, “Am I not a man and a brother?” were an expression of a central belief that animated Wilberforce and, in that day, were also a distinctively evangelical Christian worldview. It is interesting to speculate what Jefferson’s reaction would have been had he been a guest at Wilberforce’s table.

### *A Comparative Summary*

Our task has been to try to gain an understanding of what it was that might have shaped the commitments of Thomas Jefferson and William Wilberforce as their lives sailed further away from their commitments as young, rising politicians. Many possible explanations have presented themselves along the way under the rubrics of their mentors, their colleagues and supporters, and their worldviews. We can at this point summarize them comparatively as a way to fill out the entire picture. In the end, there is one last explanation for their divergence that we have yet to touch upon.

[Refer to the chart on the facing page for a comparative summary.]

[Wilberforce] believed that slavery would not be abolished without a transformation of the prevailing views of society that went well beyond a single issue.

## JEFFERSON

- ▶ Early mentors in Enlightened rationalism, removal of tyranny of governments and religion
- ▶ Colleagues, e.g. Madison, shared common beliefs to work only within “party” and against former supporters such as Adams; pragmatic regarding slavery vs. ambitions
- ▶ Enlightenment worldview of optimistic resolution of slavery in the “next generation”; belief of triumph of right ideas over time
- ▶ View of African slaves as lesser beings whose destiny is Africa
- ▶ Societal moral reform through triumph of rational structures, education, removal of all forms of tyranny
- ▶ First Loyalty to Virginia planter class and to the southern planters
- ▶ Unwilling to come under criticism publicly or to give up lifestyle

## WILBERFORCE

- ▶ Early mentors influenced Christian beliefs and faith, serving the poor, realities of slavery, and vocation of politics
- ▶ Clapham circle gave encouragement of prayer support, persistence, worked across party and belief lines, gave up personal aspirations
- ▶ Christian worldview of redressing societal ills as personal responsibility to God; faith = action, not practices
- ▶ View of African slaves as men made in the image of God and brothers
- ▶ Societal reform through changed hearts and lives and unselfish responsibility
- ▶ First loyalty to God and colleagues in faith
- ▶ Willingness to be vilified and experience economic hardship

*Jefferson was very fastidious about how he wanted history to remember him, even designing the obelisk he wanted to mark his grave and its inscription.*

### *Two Legacies*

The notion of a person’s legacy in life has taken on much interest in recent decades. It is perhaps most prominently and publicly discussed when the term of a President is nearing its end and many of the penultimate acts are interpreted by journalists as enhancing the leader’s legacy. But what of the legacies of Jefferson and Wilberforce: what did they leave behind for the next generations, and what were their own views of their legacy?

### *Planned Yet Unanticipated*

Interestingly, Jefferson was very fastidious about how he wanted history to remember him, even designing the obelisk he wanted to mark his grave and its inscription:

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom and Father of the University of Virginia.

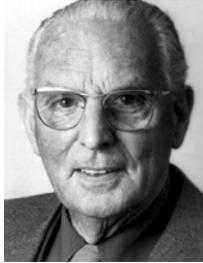
*(continued on page 24)*



## Maturity Can Be Measured

by J. Oswald Sanders

Reprinted by permission from his book *In Pursuit of Maturity*



A native of New Zealand, the late **J. Oswald Sanders** (1902-1992) was a consulting director for Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the organization founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865. He preached and taught in conferences in many countries and wrote over 40

books on the Christian life, including *The Incomparable Christ*, *Satan Is No Myth*, and *Enjoying Intimacy With God*.

This is the fourth in a series of reprinted chapters from his book *In Pursuit of Maturity* which will be featured in *Knowing & Doing* during 2005.

*It was he who gave some to be apostles,  
some to be prophets, some to be evangelists,  
and some to be pastors and teachers,  
to prepare God's people  
for works of service,  
so that the body of Christ might be built up  
until we all reach unity in the faith  
and in the knowledge of the Son of God  
and become mature,  
attaining to the whole measure  
of the fullness of Christ.  
Then we shall be no longer infants.*

Ephesians 4:11-13  
Emphasis added.

The biblical writers frequently draw parallels between physical and spiritual life, and in many cases the parallels are close. The physical maturity of a child can be measured with the aid of a tape measure and scales; the child's intellectual development can be gauged by examinations and tests. Likewise our own growth in maturity can be measured, and those most closely associated with us will be the best judges of our growth. Paul states the infallible standard of measurement—"the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

This seems a daunting and unattainable standard; but then, could an infinitely holy and ethically perfect God entertain a standard any lower? Dr. A. T. Robertson, the eminent Greek scholar, throws light on this dilemma. In commenting on our Lord's staggering demand, "Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), he explains the significance of the word "perfect" in this context: "Here it is the goal set before us, the *absolute* standard of our heavenly Father. The word is also used for *relative* perfection, as of adults compared with children" (*italics mine*).<sup>1</sup>

We will know absolute maturity only when we see Christ and are like Him (see 1 John 3:2), but until then it is possible to attain a relative maturity, "continually progressing to maturity,"—the perfection of a child going on to maturity. Both aspects coalesce in Philippians 3:12-15, where Paul says,

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it, But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for

<sup>1</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament I* (New York: R.R. Smith, Inc., 1930), p. 49.

which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. *All of us who are mature* should take such a view of things. (italics mine)

Paul here clearly disclaims having attained an absolute maturity, but he lays claim to a relative maturity in his experience.

#### *How May We Gauge Our Degree of Maturity?*

Paul rules out the validity of comparing ourselves with ourselves. “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12).

In his book *Christian Holiness* Bishop Stephen Neill concurs with Paul’s dictum. Bishop Neill writes, “Is man once again to be the measure of all things? By what standard am I to be judged? Is my unaided capacity at any one moment to be the measure at that moment of Christian attainment and Christian expectation?”<sup>2</sup>

The answer is, No! The measure of our maturity is seen when the “fullness of Christ”—the sum total of all the qualities that make Him what He is—is increasingly exhibited in our lives.

*The primary mark of a developing maturity is growth in personal and experiential knowledge of God, coupled with a strong aspiration to know Him better.* This was well illustrated in the experience of Moses. As his intimacy with God developed, he had the temerity to ask of Him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, teach me your ways so I may know you...” (Exod. 33:13). The readiness of the Lord’s response should encourage others to make the same request. “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will do the very thing you have asked...’” (Exod. 33:17a).

This gracious response gave Moses boldness to ask for yet a further blessing. Wonderful as it was to have an understanding of God’s ways—the principles on which he governs His people—that only inflamed Moses’ desire to know God himself in a more

intimate way. So Moses asked, “Now show me your glory” (Exod. 33:18). This request, too, was granted. Every forward move toward a deeper knowledge of God was met by a positive response.

Paul cherished a similar aspiration. “I want to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like him in his death” (Phil. 3:10). Only a maturing Christian would share that aspiration. It was not a mere intellectual concept of Christ that Paul desired, but a comprehension, an acquaintance with Him on the deepest level that would issue in transformation and unreserved commitment.

*The maturing Christian has as a life objective the securing of the glory of God.* The old Presbyterian catechism has its priorities right with its first question, “What is the chief end of man?” Equally right is its answer, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.”

The first petition of Christ’s pattern prayer, “Hallowed be your name,” is really asking that God’s name might be honored and glorified everywhere, by all people. If we prayed this petition sincerely, we could well add, “at any cost to me.” Every choice in which the honor and glory of God is involved will have only one answer from the mature Christian. There is no room for debate.

After Jesus had opened His heart to His intimates in the Upper Room, he offered His moving High Priestly Prayer. The prayer sounds as if He is reporting to His Father about His earthly ministry: “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4). How concise yet how comprehensive! Since the servant is not greater than his or her Lord, the maturing Christian will experience a growing passion for the glory of God such as gripped Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Church—“I have one passion; it is He, He alone!”

(continued on page 22)

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Neill, *Christian Holiness* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960), p. 38.

## Maturity Can Be Measured

(continued from page 21)

*John Wesley once said he doubted that people had been made complete in Christ while they came to church to enjoy religion, instead of to learn how to be holy.*

To the mature Christian holiness will be more attractive than mere happiness. It seems that in some Christian circles, the pursuit of happiness has become almost pathological. In a recent letter from Dr. J. Hudson Taylor III, he makes the following assessment of the contemporary scene: "Ours is a very self-centered culture. Self-fulfillment and self-advancement have become our chief goals. Even Christians are not exempt from this. The leading question of our faith seems to be, 'How can I be happy and satisfied?' As a result there is shallow conversion and superficial commitment." The mature Christian has learned that true happiness is a by-product of holiness.

A consuming desire to be holy is clearer proof of sanctification than is an itch for thrilling and exciting experiences. John Wesley once said he doubted that people had been made complete in Christ while they came to church to enjoy religion, instead of to learn how to be holy.

God wants His people to be joyous, and the Holy Spirit is the source of that fruit of the Spirit, which is joy. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11 KJV). But true happiness comes only along the pathway of holiness.

Our Lord was the most joyous person this world has ever known, and this was because He was the holiest. It was said of Him, "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (Heb. 1:9, italics mine).

When we make holiness the object of our pursuit, joy is thrown in as a bonus. It takes some of us a long time, however, to master the elementary lesson that we are happiest when we are holiest.

*The maturing Christian becomes dissatisfied with the "milk" of the Word and craves "solid food."* "You need milk," wrote the author of

the letter to the Hebrews, "not solid food. Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature..." (Heb 5:13a-14, italics mine).

No longer is the maturing Christian solely dependent on pre-digested spiritual food and artificial stimuli. The spiritual infant has now learned how to nurture the inner life on the Word of God and delves more deeply into its teachings. While enjoying helpful and challenging Christian literature, the main stimulus comes directly from the Word of God illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

*The maturing Christian also has a growing discernment that helps him to discriminate between truth and error, good and evil.* "The mature...by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Heb. 5:14). There is such a thing as spiritual intuition, but more than that is in view here. It is a spiritual sensitivity that comes from "training" – that is, through the mastery of the principles of Scripture and their consistent application to the decisions and events of daily life.

This quality characterized the Christians at Berea. When new teaching was presented to them, they did not accept it on the mere say-so of those who brought it, but they searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were really so. They trained their spiritual senses to detect error just as police dogs are trained to detect harmful drugs. The Bereans were not heresy hunters but truth seekers. This type of Christian does not fall an easy prey to the heresies and cults that abound today.

*Like the Master, the maturing Christian prefers serving others to being served by others.* The maturing Christian emulates the Lord who claimed, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27c). "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45).

True spiritual leadership springs not from a desire to rule but from a passion to serve.

This exotic grace is not native to most of us, but the Master equated it with greatness. "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43).

This was one of the most revolutionary concepts Jesus introduced into the religious world of His day. Now, as then, most want to be masters not servants, leaders not followers. Christ's view of His kingdom was a community of people characterized by serving one another and the needy world outside. Unlike in earthly realms, our status in His kingdom is to be judged by the number of people whom we serve, not by the number who serve us.

It was in the context of servanthood that Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:15-16).

*The life of the maturing Christian will be characterized by giving rather than receiving.* In this the Master is again the model. "The Son of Man [came]...to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This, too, is not natural to us. In the Christian life we are mostly on the receiving end, but Jesus exemplified our responsibility to give as well as to receive.

From Bethlehem to Calvary, the Lord's life was one consistent giving of Himself, a constant outpouring of His life, until at its close, He gave up life itself. Every act of service He performed cost Him something. When an afflicted woman pressed her way through the throng and touched the fringe of His robe, she was healed. But in the process He lost something – nervous and spiritual force. "I know that power has gone out from me," Jesus said (Luke 8:46). He gladly gave of Himself to needy people in life, even as He gave His life for needy people in death.

It is far easier for us to give time or money than it is to give our very selves to those in need around us, yet this is the path to spiritual fruitfulness.

*The mature Christian life will be fruitful, not*

*barren.* The ability to reproduce oneself is the proof of physical maturity, and this is also true of spiritual maturity. One of Christ's purposes for us as His disciples is that our lives should be fruitful. "You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last [. . . This is my command]" (John 15:16). A fruitless disciple is a contradiction in terms.

What constitutes "fruit"? We can look for it in two areas.

There will be *fruit in character* – the fruit of the Spirit that finds expression in the nine winsome graces enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23. Note that these are passive rather than active qualities. All nine can be produced in the life of one who is paralyzed from the neck down. As we grow in maturity, these graces will be manifested in increasing measure.

There will be *fruit in service*. "Even now the reaper...harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together" (John 4:36). In writing to the Romans, Paul revealed the purpose of his visit: "I planned many times to come to you ...in order that I might have a harvest among you" (Rom. 1:13). Souls won and lives disciplined and encouraged into a closer walk with God will be evidence of a believer's growing maturity.

*The maturing Christian's life will be dynamic rather than static.* The growing believer will not resist change that is obviously in the interests of the church of God. The maturing Christian will reach out toward new horizons of service and will grapple with new concepts of truth. The growing believer will not be content with reading what is superficial but will welcome mind-stretching and heartwarming new aspects of truth. Growth will continue even in old age.

*The maturing believer will accept rather than resent or rebel against the disciplines God in His wisdom allows to come into his or her life.* If we are maturing as Christians, we may not actually enjoy the experience while we

*(continued on page 26)*

*Unlike in  
earthly  
realms, our  
status in  
His  
kingdom is  
to be judged  
by the  
number of  
people  
whom we  
serve, not by  
the number  
who serve  
us.*

## Jefferson and Wilberforce

(continued from page 19)

He then added, “because of these as testimonials that I have lived, I wish most to be remembered.”

It might also be added – with the benefit of our view from history – that he, himself, was mentor to two future leaders and Presidents, both fellow Virginians and neighbors, Madison and Monroe. Both would perpetuate Jefferson’s avoidance of the slavery issue as a matter to be resolved politically, despite the growing seriousness of its divisiveness in America north, south, and west. But yet on a personal level, both men would, unlike their patron, free their slaves upon their deaths.

Despite his unarguably superior accomplishments and visionary leadership, it may be seen that Jefferson’s legacy lies as well in what was *not* done with the opportunities he had and the consequences of a failure to act in accord with belief. His optimism that history and the intellectual and moral progress of man would resolve the black cloud that hung over them proved wrong. Never would he have foreseen that the lives of over six hundred thousand Americans would be given to keep intact the union his generation had forged and finally resolve the question on which they stood silent for so many years.

### *Humbly Transforming a Culture*

Wilberforce, much like Jefferson, had leaders coming behind him whom he had influenced and who would carry on his work. By 1823, he was obviously becoming more frail and subject to attacks of inflamed lungs (pneumonia?) which laid him low for weeks or months at a time. Yet his two great objectives still animated his life. While the abolition of slavery was gaining momentum, it was by no means complete. He was reluctant to step down feeling he had not done enough!

Nevertheless, he prepared to pass the mantle on to Thomas Buxton, a Quaker M.P. who shared Wilberforce’s views on abolition and had been a leader in prison reform. Wilberforce saw Buxton almost as

much as a son as a colleague in the fight. In a letter, he warns Buxton of the difficult road ahead and then shares his own hard earned lessons of leadership:

If it be His will, may he render you an instrument of extensive influence . . . [But] above all, may He give the disposition to say at all times “Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do or suffer?” looking to Him, through Christ, for wisdom and strength.

Buxton would go on to introduce the bill, and with Wilberforce supporting and advising him, the last race began that would end literally on Wilberforce’s deathbed when the bill finally passed in 1833.

His own view of his legacy was far different than Jefferson’s. Despite over 50 years of laboring for the abolition of slavery and championing dozens of worthy causes for oppressed people, all he could say of himself was “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

### *A Final Note*

There is one final explanation for the divergent outcomes and legacies of the lives of the two men who made early commitments to abolish slavery that may be more telling than any historian has noted to date: the sovereignty of God.

When Wilberforce was first taking up his task, the aged John Wesley wrote to encourage him and to warn him. “Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you who can be against you?”<sup>3</sup> Why God raised up a Wilberforce in England, brought him together with a Newton, and surrounded him with the Clapham circle during his life, we will never know. We do know it was a sovereign act of grace.

For Jefferson, the belief in sovereignty ran equally strong: the sovereignty of man. It was the central core belief of the Enlightenment that man would ultimately triumph and secure moral progress through ideas and

*Despite over 50 years of laboring for the abolition of slavery and championing dozens of worthy causes for oppressed people, all he could say of himself was “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”*

3 John Wesley as cited in Belmonte, *Hero for Humanity* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), p. 138.

through education freed from religious cant. And many in America felt that way in his time. Why God did not raise up a Wilberforce in America and why so many died to end slavery and leave a legacy that haunts the United States even today is also something we will never know. We do know that the great leaders of the North and the South, Grant and Lee, acknowledged the providence of God in the outcome and it humbled both men. This, too, we know as a sovereign act of God's grace. Not why, but Who.

Even as we have examined these two lives and sought to understand them, we remain awed by what Wilberforce and his friends were able to accomplish and the legacy they left. Perhaps John Newton draws the conclusion best in a letter he wrote to a young Wilberforce in 1796 urging him to remain in the political vocation and not withdraw from public life. He counseled that God's grace would be sufficient and that "Happy the man who has a deep impression of the Lord's words, 'Without me you can do nothing.'"<sup>4</sup> For the next 37 years Wilberforce took that scriptural wisdom to heart. To God be the glory. ■

## Profiles in Faith: Helen Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis)

(continued from page 17)

quarter decade Joy's health and family problems opened the way for the famous English author and his talented American pen friend to meet.

During the late 1940s Joy's health deteriorated. She suffered from nervous exhaustion while trying to raise the boys and write enough to pay all the bills. To be sure, Bill Gresham sobered up for brief periods, and he was in and out of the house depending on his moods.

Joy finished several writing projects, including a novel, *Weeping Bay*, that came out with Macmillan in early 1950. She gave a lengthy interview to a reporter for the *New*

*York Post*, and he brought out a multi-part series of Joy's testimony dubbed "Girl Communist." Then while writing a book-length Jewish-Christian interpretation of the Ten Commandments, she became gravely ill with jaundice. Her doctor ordered rest — preferably away from the pressures of her chaotic house and family.

In the midst of this turmoil Joy received a cry for help from her first cousin, Renée Pierce. Renée had two little children, and an alcoholic husband, and a desperate need to live apart from her estranged spouse until a divorce could be finalized. With no money and few alternatives, she threw herself on the Greshams for mercy. Joy took her in and after a few months Renée enthusiastically agreed to oversee the household so Joy could get away for a rest.

With financial help from her parents, Joy sailed for England in August 1950. She found a room in London, rested well, and put the finishing touches on *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments*. While in London for four months the Lewis brothers invited Joy to Oxford. Indeed, there were several visits where Joy Gresham and Jack Lewis had opportunity to get better acquainted. Joy laid out her problems before Jack. He listened, grieved for her, and said a sad farewell when she returned to New York in January 1951.

During the four months Joy resided in London, Bill wrote from time to time keeping her informed about the boys. Just before her return, however, he announced that he and Renée were in love and having an affair. He wondered if Joy would consider living under the same roof despite the changed circumstances. Joy had no intention of doing that but she did return with some hope that the mess could be redeemed.

Months of wrangling failed to bring reconciliation. Nine months later Bill sued Joy for a divorce on grounds of her desertion when she went to England. In the meantime C.S. Lewis and his brother, Warren — both of whom had grown extremely fond of Joy — urged her to return to England and bring the boys. She was back in England with David and Douglas before Christmas.

Joy lived in London for nearly two years, trying to support herself by free-lance typing and writing in order to supplement Bill's erratic child-support checks. The boys were placed in private schools thanks to the generosity of C.S. Lewis. For almost two years Joy and Jack visited one another regularly. When Joy's financial situation worsened in August 1955, Lewis secured a place for her in Oxford, not far from his own home. He paid the rent and he and Warren plied her with manuscripts to edit and type.

By Christmas 1955 it was apparent to everyone who knew them that friendship had become love. Lewis visited Joy almost daily and she and the boys spent holidays and special occasions with Warren and Jack at their home, The Kilns. Because Joy was now a divorced woman, there was no impropriety — at least to their mind — for them

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## Maturity Can Be Measured

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are passing through it – and Scripture realistically recognizes this possibility (see Heb. 12:11) – but we will regard the will of God as being “good, acceptable, and perfect” (Rom. 12:2 KJV), a statement that indicates that God’s will for our lives cannot be improved upon.

As Paul’s character matured, he was able to testify that he had reached the place where he could truthfully say, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Phil. 4:11). Not that he had always been content, but his increasingly intimate walk with God had made him absolutely satisfied that whatever God ordained was in his best interests.

When tragedy, sorrow, or bereavement strike, it is not always easy to hold on to this contentment, but it is the only path to comfort and peace of heart. Paul enunciated a principle of perpetual relevance when he recorded the word from the Lord that came to him: “He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Cor. 12:9).

He will glory in the Cross of Christ and will sing with Sir John Bowring:

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o’er the wrecks of time,  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

Only the spiritual person welcomes the impact of the Cross on his or her life, for it spells death to the self-life. “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20a).

*The mature Christian will be willing to accept responsibility in the work of the kingdom.* Not everyone is called to a place of prominence in God’s service, but very many could do much more than they are doing if only they would respond to the promptings of the Spirit and the persuasion of godly people. All too many believers are content to be spectators instead of participators.

The immature Christian is content to accept all the blessings and benefits of faith but is unwilling to share the accompanying responsibilities. When God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, he produced all kinds of excuses to cover up his unwillingness to assume that onerous responsibility. We can all understand and perhaps condone Moses’ reluctance, but God did not. He was angry at Moses’ lack of confidence that He would enable him to do what He had commanded (see Exod. 4:14). God is equally displeased with us when we decline responsibility and cover it up with a plea of inadequacy.

The mature believer will be willing to accept responsibility for failure, too, and will not shuffle the blame onto a subordinate.

*The mature Christian will demonstrate a growing love for God and others.* Paul commended the Thessalonian believers for this mark of their growing maturity: “We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing” (2 Thess. 1:3).

By pouring out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), God stimulates and enlarges our hearts and enables us to love Him in return. Love begets love. But when love cools, every grace languishes.

Growth in maturity is stimulated by sharing the knowledge of God with other believers, for we are to become mature in community life as well as in individual experience.

Paul talks of attaining “the unity of faith” as well as spiritual maturity, for that develops best not in isolation but in the corporate life of the church (see Eph. 4:13). This unity among believers is produced by their mutual sharing of “the knowledge of the Son of God” – an increasing acquaintance with Him in corporate life. F. F. Bruce rightly contends that “the higher reaches of the Christian life cannot be attained in isolation from others.”<sup>3</sup> It is the team that is fully integrated and works together unselfishly and harmoniously that wins the game. ■

<sup>3</sup> Frederick F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Ephesians* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1961), p. 86.

*Growth in maturity is stimulated by sharing the knowledge of God with other believers, for we are to become mature in community life as well as in individual experience.*

## Profiles in Faith: Helen Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis)

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to see one another on a regular basis. But Joy told her closest friends that although they frequently walked and held hands, marriage was out of the question. Because she was divorced even their friendship appeared scandalous to some people.

In April 1956 the British Government, perhaps because of Joy Davidman's previous Communist Party affiliation, refused to renew her visa. C.S. Lewis was devastated. How could this woman be sent back to the United States where her boys would possibly be abused by their alcoholic father who had more than once done them physical harm? And how could he manage without Joy nearby? She, after all, was the first woman with whom he had been truly close. She was his equal if not superior in intellect, and they were the epitome of two people who truly were like iron sharpening iron,

In fact, C.S. Lewis could not imagine living apart from Joy Davidman. He threw caution and appearances to the wind. They quietly married in a civil ceremony on April 23, 1956. Now Joy could legally remain in England, with her boys, as long as she wished.

C.S. Lewis inquired about a sacramental marriage in the Anglican Church because to his mind a civil marriage was a legal convenience but not a real marriage. Lewis sought the blessing of the church on the grounds that Joy had legal grounds to be divorced and remarried due to Bill's infidelity, and further because he had been married prior to marrying Joy, and also neither of them were Christians when they were joined in a civil service years before. But the Bishop of Oxford refused. Joy was divorced. The Church did not condone divorce and he would not give his blessing.

Joy and Jack lived apart but they continued to see one another. So much so that some people were critical of their relationship despite the fact that they honored the guidance of the Church. But everything changed in early 1957. Joy was standing in her kitchen, her leg broke, and with excruciating pain she was able to drag herself to a

place to call for help. She was rushed to the hospital where x-rays and tests revealed that her body was full of cancer. C.S. Lewis's doctor, who tended to her at the hospital, told me in the 1980s that she was dreadfully ill. There were malignant tumors in her breast and her bones were riddled with cancer. Dr. Humphrey Havard told Jack to prepare for her death. She could not live but a few days or weeks.

Professor Lewis called in a favor from a man he had helped after the war. Father Peter Bide, an Anglican priest with a parish just south of London, was purported to have the spiritual gift of healing. Lewis called him and asked if he would come up to Oxford, anoint Joy with oil, and pray for her. Father Bide arrived at Oxford at night. He and Jack talked about Joy's situation at some length, and Lewis told him of Joy's dying wish to be married in the Church. Father Bide recalled that he did not feel he could in good conscience deny this poor soul her wish, even though she was not in his diocese. Therefore the next day, March 21, 1957, he anointed her with oil, prayed for healing, and then in the presence of Warren Lewis and one of the sisters at the hospital, he administered the sacraments of Holy Matrimony and Holy Communion. Within a few minutes an apparently dying Joy Davidman became Mrs. C.S. Lewis.

Christian marriage was only the first unexpected effect of Joy's illness. To the amazement of doctors and nurses, she made a rapid recovery after being sent home from the hospital to die. She went into a remission of nearly three years. She and Jack traveled to Ireland and Wales, and they made a memorable trip to Greece with their friends, June and Roger Lancelyn Green. The Lewises' closest friends, the Greens and George and Moira Sayers – all said that she showed no signs of poor health except some edema. Indeed, Joy and Jack were like two school-aged youth who were cutting up and having a wonderful time. That Joy had brought great happiness to Jack became evident by what he wrote to one friend: "it's funny having at 59 the sort of happiness most men have in their twenties. . . [ellipses his] 'Thou has kept the good wine till now.'"

The relationship of C.S. Lewis and Joy lasted only a decade. She first wrote to Jack in January 1950, and the cancer returned with a vengeance in spring 1960. Joy died in July and her ashes (she requested cremation) were scattered over a rose garden at the crematorium. Although it is impossible to quantify the impact of any loving relationship, there is massive evidence to show that these two pilgrims were unusually important to one another. On Jack's part, his early books had helped Joy come to faith in Christ. His letters and their personal relationship helped her mature spiritually in Christ, and he helped her to develop professionally as a writer. Lewis helped Joy sharpen *Smoke on the Mountain*. He also wrote a Foreword for the British edition, helped promote the book and intervened to secure her a good contract with a British publisher. On her part, Joy had an impact on C.S. Lewis that has seldom been recognized. Lewis admitted that when she and the boys came into his life it was extremely difficult for an aging bachelor to have an instant family in



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## Profiles in Faith: Helen Joy Davidman (Mrs. C.S. Lewis)

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his house. But the result was that both he and Warren were forced outside of themselves and this was precisely what these self-centered bachelors needed. Beyond such intangible benefits, Joy helped Lewis with his writing. She wrote to one person that she increasingly felt called to give up her own writing so that she could assist Jack in his work. Lewis gave up writing non-fiction and apologetical books after he published *Miracles* in 1947. Some people have argued it was because Elizabeth Anscombe so devastatingly attacked a part of the book. In any case Joy Davidman pushed him to take up non-fiction once more and as a result she helped him produce *Reflections on the Psalms* (1958) and she enthusiastically talked him out of a writer's block so he could finally go forward with his long-time coming *Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer*.

Lewis believed his best book was *Till We Have Faces*, and most students of his books agree. He unabashedly dedicated this classic to Joy Davidman and many saw her in the novel's character Orual. To the point, Lewis believed that Joy helped complete him as a person, and she acknowledged that he did the same for her. A careful reader will also find Joy's fingerprints on several of his other works, all the way from the double-meaning

title of *Surprised by Joy* to some words and phrases in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. But the clearest evidence of her impact on his thinking and writing is in *The Four Loves* and *A Grief Observed*. Lewis might have written *The Four Loves* without Joy as his wife, but it would have been much less profound and certainly more theoretical than experiential. And finally, *A Grief Observed* could never have been written without the love and pain of Jack's life with Joy.

In the final analysis, then, those of us who thank God for the way C.S. Lewis has been our teacher through his books, must also be grateful for Joy Davidman Lewis. Without her the Lewis collection would be smaller and poorer. ■

Note: This article is based on Lyle W. Dorsett's biography of Joy Davidman: *And God Came In* (Macmillan, 1983) and a revision of that book titled *A Love Observed: Joy Davidman's Life and Marriage to C.S. Lewis* (Northwind, 1998), as well as the author's oral history interviews housed at the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. Dorsett's book on Joy Davidman is available in audio format as *Surprised By Love: The Life of Joy Davidman: Her Life and Marriage to C.S. Lewis* (Hovel Audio) [www.hovelaudio.com](http://www.hovelaudio.com).

## 2006 UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **Art Lindsley Conference:** *Narnia and C.S. Lewis: Imagination, Reason, and You*, January 13-14, 2006, McLean Presbyterian Church, McLean, Virginia.
- ◆ **Dr. Drew Trotter:** *Show & Tell: The Christian and The Movies in Contemporary America*, (a co-sponsored event with Cornerstone Church), February 24-25, 2006, Cornerstone Church, Annandale, Virginia.
- ◆ **Fifth Annual Fundraising Banquet & 30th Anniversary Celebration**, Thursday evening, March 23, 2006, with featured speakers Dr. James Houston and Mr. Jim Hiskey, Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church, Virginia.
- ◆ **James Houston Conference:** *Psalms As The Prayerbook for Israel – And For Us Today*, March 24-25, 2006, Location TBA.
- ◆ **Os Guinness Conference:** *The Gospel and Globalization*, April 21-22, 2006, Location TBA.

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