



PROFILES IN FAITH J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973)

by Dr. Art Lindsley
Senior Fellow



J.R.R. Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on January 3, 1892 (died in Oxford, England, September 2, 1973).

His father, Arthur, a bank clerk, was transferred from England to South Africa and later became a manager with the Bank of Africa. Arthur's bride, Mabel (Suffield), moved from England to South Africa where the two were married. About a year later, she gave birth to John Ronald Reuel, whom they called Ronald.

Ronald's memories of his four childhood years in Africa were few; however, one memory stood out. When Ronald was learning to walk, he stumbled onto a tarantula. It bit him, and he ran crying to a nurse nearby who sucked out the poison. Even though he remembered only running through long grass in fear, large spiders with poisonous bites are mentioned more than once in his stories.

In April 1895, Mabel and her two sons (Hilary was born February 17, 1894) returned to England for a visit. Arthur planned to join them later. The delay increased when

Arthur contracted rheumatic fever and struggled to regain his health. Mabel was planning on returning to be with him when news came that Arthur had suffered a severe hemorrhage and died on February 15, 1896.

Mabel rented a cottage in the countryside near Birmingham and began to educate her children at home. She knew Latin, French, and German, and could paint, draw, and play the piano. Ronald could read by age four, and his favorite subject was the study of languages. Early on, Mabel introduced him to the basics of Latin and French. Ronald loved the sounds of words, listening, reading, and reciting them.

In 1900, Mabel and her sister, May, decided to join the Roman Catholic Church, much to the displeasure of their family. Mabel raised both sons in the Catholic faith, and they remained devoted Catholics throughout their lives. Father Francis Morgan, a local priest, regularly visited the family and remained a lifelong friend.

In the same year, Ronald began studying at King Edward's School. During his time

Ronald could read by age four, and his favorite subject was the study of languages.

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Thank You, Readers!
by Thomas A. Tarrant, III, *President*

Dear Reader,

As 2002 draws to a close, I find myself thanking God for yet another year of fruitful ministry in the lives of God's people and of significant growth at the Institute. It is frankly astonishing to see how far God has brought us in the past four years. (I briefly summarize some of this on pages 22-23 and encourage you to read it.)

But my astonishment at the past is surpassed only by my anticipation and excitement for the future. Great opportunities lie before us in 2003. There is an increasing hunger for authentic discipleship among men and women in the Washington area. We have more interest in the Fellows Program than we can presently accommodate, and at the same time, there also seems to be a greater openness to Christ and the gospel than in recent memory.

Thank you very much for your support this past year! It is through God's grace and your help that we have come this far. This ministry is truly a partnership, and your help through praying, working, and giving has been and continues to be vital.

Let me ask you to pray about how God might want you to be involved in the work of the Institute in 2003. *We need your help now more than ever.* Some of the possibilities include serving as the Institute's representative in your church, helping with conference coordination, office support, special projects, intercessory prayer, and financial support.

Please also pray that God will keep us clearly focused on his purposes and priorities and that we will do his work in his way.

I pray God's blessing for you and yours this Christmas and New Year.

Your brother in Christ,

The Most Reluctant Convert: C.S. Lewis's Journey to Faith

A Book Review by Art Lindsley, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow, C.S. Lewis Institute

Having read *Planets in Peril*, David Downing's award-winning book on C.S. Lewis's space trilogy, I looked forward to reading his new book, *The Most Reluctant Convert*, the fascinating story of C.S. Lewis's journey to faith. I was not disappointed. The same qualities found in Downing's previous book are evident here—a thorough knowledge of C.S. Lewis, a clear writing style, and many helpful insights that are unique to Downing.

Downing starts his work with two contrasting quotes from C.S. Lewis. At age seventeen, Lewis wrote to longtime friend Arthur Greeves, "I believe in no religion. There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the best." Fifteen years later, Lewis wrote to Arthur, "Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call 'real things' . . . namely, the actual incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection" (p. 11).

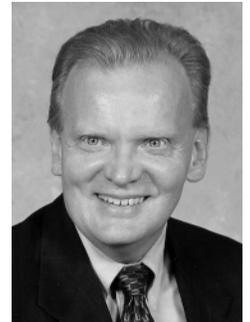
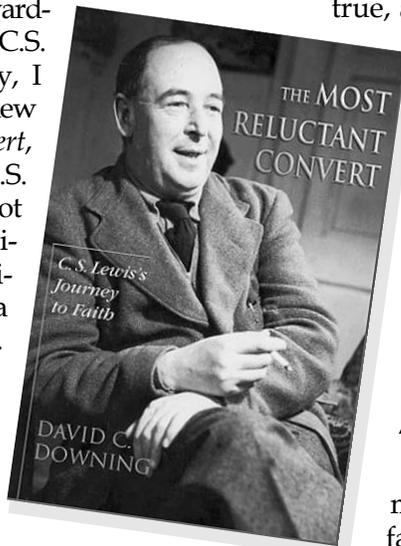
C.S. Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland, on November 29, 1898. He had an idyllic early childhood. He and his older brother Warren played together, invented games, and read many books that lined the hallways and the attic. When he was four years old, he pointed to himself and said, "He is Jacksie," and refused to answer to any other name. Downing says that, "These carefree years held an almost

mythic status in the mind of the adult Lewis" (p. 25). "Childhood" throughout his life is viewed as good and filled with joy. "Nurse" and "nursery" are associated with Lizzie Endicott (his nurse), as that which is simple, true, and good. His sense of joy described in his autobiographical *Surprised by Joy* took on great significance in his life.

The death of Lewis's mother while he was still young (age 9) ended the settled happiness of his childhood. He describes his loss of security in the imagery that "the great continent had sunk like Atlantis." There were now only "islands" of joy in the midst of an unsettled "sea."

Tragically, when Lewis's mother died, he in effect lost his father as well. Perhaps out of an inability to cope with the loss of his wife, Albert Lewis sent his two boys to a boarding school, whose headmaster, "Oldie," was later certified as insane. Lewis had gone to church some in his early life and continued in boarding school, but his sincere efforts soon ended. Lewis had gotten the idea that when you prayed you needed to mean what you said. When he said his evening prayers, he was always analyzing whether they were said rightly. Inevitably, they were not sincere enough, so he would start again and again and again. He would, he says, have gone crazy, had he not stopped.

This was the beginning of his "atheist" phase. Even though it is never wise to reduce



Dr. Art Lindsley

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The Most Reluctant Convert

(continued from page 3)

Once, before embarking on a long train ride, Lewis purchased a copy of George MacDonald's book *Phantastes*. He was surprised by what happened during his reading. Something came off the pages and "baptized his imagination."

people to psychological explanations, it is nevertheless accurate to say that psychological issues are contributing factors. Downing mentions Paul Vitz's book, *Faith of the Fatherless: The Psychology of Atheism*, in which Vitz turns the tables on the normal psychological charge of religious belief as a "crutch" to meet emotional needs. Vitz argues that such a view is a double-edged sword that can also be used to explain atheists' unbelief. He studies such militant atheists as Voltaire, Hume, Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, Sartre, and others. He concludes that atheism of the strong or intense type is to a substantial degree caused by the psychological needs of its advocates, usually related to defective father figures. Downing says that while you can take this kind of analysis only so far, it could be posited that at least one factor contributing to Lewis's emergent atheism might be the loss of his mother and his now absent and more volatile father.

Certainly there were many other factors drawing Lewis toward atheism. One was the lure of the occult. Lewis indicated that if the wrong person had come along he might have ended up a sorcerer or a lunatic. Another factor Lewis had to face was the problem of evil. He dwelt on the "Argument from Undesign" stated well by Lucretius. Had God designed the world, it would not be a world so frail and faulty as we see (p. 53).

Similar to atheist Bertrand Russell, Lewis came to believe in the meaninglessness of life and that we need to build our lives on the basis of "unyielding despair." Lewis's way of stating it was, "Nearly all I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real, I thought grim and meaningless" (p. 63). In his imagination, he loved to read about truth, goodness, and beauty, but in his reason he held to a rather dark view of life. One of his prep school friends says Lewis was a "riotously amusing atheist." However, this tension between reason and imagination, between the hemispheres of his brain, continued to increase.

Once, before embarking on a long train ride, Lewis purchased a copy of George MacDonald's book *Phantastes*. He was surprised by what happened during his reading. Something came off the pages and "baptized his imagination." Although he couldn't put this quality into words at that time, he later came to describe it as holiness.

Another experience that finally cured his lure toward the occult was Lewis's personal observation of the decline of Dr. John Askins, Mrs. Moore's brother. (Mrs. Moore, mother to Lewis's college roommate "Paddy," lived with Lewis and his brother after Paddy was killed in World War I) Askins had been wounded in World War I and never recovered physically or spiritually. Dr. Askins had become a psychoanalyst after

the war and developed an obsession with spiritualism and contacting the dead. During one fourteen-day period, Lewis had to "hold him while he kicked and wallowed on the floor, screaming out that devils were tearing him and that he was at that moment falling into hell" (p. 112). While atheist Lewis was aware that there could be physical causes for Askins' problems, he could not separate the man's state from his passionate pursuit of the occult. Lewis decided to stick to the "beaten path, the approved road." Walter Hooper says, "It would be difficult to exaggerate the effect of this experience on Lewis" (p. 113).

On the intellectual side of things, G.K. Chesterton had a significant influence on Lewis. As Lewis read *The Everlasting Man*, he appreciated Chesterton's humor and was surprised by the power of his presentation. He began to feel that "Christianity was very sensible 'apart from its Christianity'" (p. 130). Lewis also found that he was drawn to many other authors that had this strange Christian twist—Spenser, Milton, Johnson, MacDonald, and others. In contrast, those with whom he theoretically agreed—Voltaire, Gibbon, Mill, Wells, and Shaw—seemed thin and "tinny." On top of this, some of the brightest, most intelligent at Oxford were also "supernaturalists." People like Neville Coghill, Hugo Dyson, and J.R.R. Tolkien were kindred spirits and also Christians. One by one, the

arguments that were obstacles to faith were removed.

Once while riding on a bus in Oxford, Lewis had the sense that he was "holding something at bay, or shutting something out" (p. 131). He could either open the door or let it stay shut, but to open the door "meant the incalculable." He finally submitted himself to God, the most "dejected and reluctant convert" in all England. This belief in God happened in 1929, but it was not until 1931 that he surrendered himself to Christ.

When Lewis finally came to Christ, he at last resolved the "dialectic of desire" he had been struggling with since childhood. Downing points out that Lewis's first experience at Oxford was highly symbolic. When he exited the Oxford railway station for the first time, he was loaded down with luggage. Mistakenly, he started walking down the street in the wrong direction. As he kept walking, he grew disappointed at the rather plain houses and shops he found. Only when he reached the edge of town did he turn around to see the beautiful spires and towers that constitute Oxford. In telling this story, Lewis says, "This little adventure was an allegory of my whole life." Boyhood was a "fall" from the joys of childhood. Growing up was even more of following the wrong way. The "path less taken" was a return to wonder and glory and a rejection of the mundane inanities of modern

life (p. 153). He needed to look back in order to go forward. Good only comes by "undoing evil;" a wrong sum can be put right.

His faith changed his direction from "self-scrutiny" to "self-forgetfulness." He rejected the "unsmiling concentration on the self" and was "taken out of my self" to love God and others (p. 156). Downing says: "The real story of Lewis's conversion, then, is not about dramatic changes in a man's career but about dramatic changes in the man."

Walter Hooper calls Lewis the "most thoroughly converted man I ever met." His journey from atheist to "reluctant convert" to influential writer, perhaps the most highly regarded Christian writer of our time, was something beyond even his imagination (p. 160).

While I have tried to capture a few of Downing's insights, it is, of course, much better to read the book yourself. Perhaps your appetite has been whetted to take up this book that combines clarity of style, depth of scholarship, and insights about Lewis's life. Enriching reading awaits you. ■

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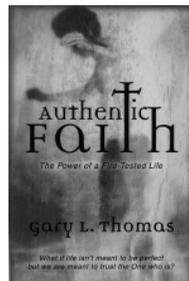
SPECIAL OFFER

As part of its request for year-end contributions, the C.S. Lewis Institute is offering donors of \$50 or more a choice between two books:



The Most Reluctant Convert: C.S. Lewis's Journey to Faith
by David Downing

OR



Authentic Faith: The Power of a Fire-Tested Life
by Gary Thomas
(reviewed in *Knowing & Doing*, Fall 2002)

See the enclosed form for more information.

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Alister McGrath

Loving God with Heart and Mind

ALISTER MCGRATH

I recall a conversation some years ago with Donald Coggan, formerly archbishop of Canterbury. We were discussing some of the challenges to theological education, and had ended by sharing our concerns over folk who left theological education knowing more about God, but seemingly caring less for God. Coggan turned to me, sadly, and remarked: 'The journey from head to heart is one of the longest and most difficult that we know.' I have often reflected on that comment, which I suspect reflects his lifelong interest in theological education and the considerable frustrations it generated—not to mention his experiences of burnt-out clergy, who seemed to have exhausted their often slender resources of spiritual energy, and ended up becoming a burden instead of a gift to the people of God.

I have no hesitation in affirming that theology is of central importance to Christian life and thought. I have little time for the various efforts to dumb down the preaching and teaching of our churches, or simply to focus on the development of new and better techniques for the care of souls and the growth of the churches. But I am an honest person, and I want to admit from the outset that focusing simply on doctrinal affirmations is seriously deficient. Theological correctness alone is no balm for the wounds of our frail and sinful humanity. We cannot nourish the mind while neglecting the heart. Like its political counterpart, an obsession with theological correctness can simply engender the kind of harsh judgmental personality which is eager to seek out and expose alleged doctrinal errors, and cares little for the fostering of Christ-imaging relationships.

In my first period as a Christian, I found my attention focusing on *understanding* my faith. I continue to regard this as being of the utmost importance. There is a marvellous coherence to Christian doctrine, and wrestling with the great truths of our faith provided me with both spiritual encouragement and intellectual challenge. Yet it seemed

to me that my "knowledge" of the Christian faith was rather dry and cerebral.

Part of the difficulty was that I was, like most people of my generation, deeply influenced by the Enlightenment. Christianity was all about *ideas*—and it was important to get those ideas right. As a result, theological correctness had become something of an obsession with me. I had failed to realize that the gospel affects every level of our existence—not just the way we think, but the way in which we *feel* and *live*. The Enlightenment had championed the role of reason, and vetoed any engagement with emotions or imagination. Yet I knew that writers such as Jonathan Edwards and C.S. Lewis had stressed the importance of precisely these aspects of our lives. I gradually came to the realization that my faith was far too academic.¹

My realization of the importance of spirituality began about 1989, but really blossomed from about 1992. I was invited to lead a regular summer school course in Oxford on "medieval and Reformation spirituality." This allowed me to engage with some of the great texts of Christian spirituality, including many from the period of the Reformation. As my students and I wrestled with these texts, we found ourselves challenged to deepen the quality of our Christian faith through being more open to God. I found that the quality of my Christian life deepened considerably as a result.

As I mentioned earlier, my basic understanding of Christian doctrine has not changed over the last ten years. I remain deeply committed to the fundamentals of Christian orthodoxy. What has happened is that these ideas have taken on a new depth,

both as I appreciated more their implications, and as I realized that my grasp of the totality of the Christian gospel had been shallow. Perhaps I could say that I experienced a deepening in the quality of my faith, rather than any change in what I believed.

Traditional theology makes a distinction between two senses of the word “faith”. On the one hand, there is the “faith which believes” — that is, the personal quality of trust and commitment in God. On the other, there is the “faith which is believed” — that is, the body of Christian doctrine. Using this way of speaking, I could say that, in my case, the “faith which is believed” remained unaltered. What developed, matured and deepened was the “faith which believes”. The New Testament often compares the Kingdom of God to a growing plant, or a seed taking root. What happened to me was that a plant which had grown to some extent underwent a new spurt of growth, leading to increased strength and vitality.

My guess is that many readers of this article will be able to identify with my earlier and rather academic approach to faith, and are fed up being told by their doubtless well-meaning friends that they just need to know more *facts* about their faith. My experience is that we need to *go deeper*, rather than just *know more*. Perhaps we all have to discover that we have simply scratched the surface of the immense riches of the gospel. Beneath the surface lies so much more, which we are meant to discover and enjoy. The greater our appreciation of the wonder, excitement, and sheer delight of the Christian faith, the more effective our witness to our friends, and the greater our enjoyment of the Christian faith.

Spirituality is all about the way in which we encounter and experience God, and the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as a result of that encounter and experience. It is most emphatically not the exclusive preserve of some spiritual elite, preoccupied with unhealthy perfectionist tendencies. It is the common duty and joy of all Christian believers, as they long to enter into the deeper fellowship with the living God which is promised in the Scriptures. We can think of it in

terms of the *internalization of our faith*. It means allowing our faith to saturate every aspect of our lives, infecting and affecting our thinking, feeling, and living. Nobody can doubt how much we need to deepen the quality of our Christian lives and experience, with God’s gracious assistance, and live more authentic lives in which we experience to the full the wonder of the love and grace of God. It is about ways in which we can foster and sustain our personal relationship with Christ. Christian spirituality may be thus understood as the way in which Christian individuals or groups aim to deepen their experience of God, or to “practise the presence of God,” to use a phrase especially associated with Brother Lawrence (c. 1614-91).²

Any definition of “spirituality” is likely to make reference to the following themes:

- knowing God, not just knowing about God;
- experiencing God to the full;
- transformation of existence on the basis of the Christian faith;
- attaining Christian authenticity in life and thought.

Spirituality aims to ensure that we both *know about* God and *know* God. It seeks to apply God to our hearts as well as our minds. It deals with the deepening of our personal knowledge of God. Yet this immediately indicates that spirituality is grounded in good theology. Spirituality is about the personal appropriation of what theology points toward and promises. Theology thus provides us with a secure foundation for Christian living.

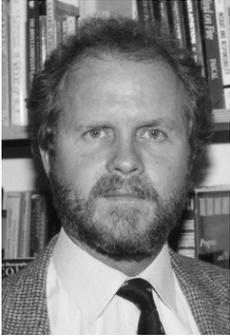
For the first period of my Christian life, I thought that Christian development was all about thinking harder about things I already knew. It brought some useful results. For example, I realized how important it was to explain key Christian ideas faithfully and effectively, and developed several ways of doing this which have proved very helpful to others. But it soon became obvious that this

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“
Spirituality
is all about
the way in
which we
encounter
and
experience
God,
and the
transformation
of our
consciousness
and our lives
as a result...
”

Learning from Tolkien about Life *The Lord of the Rings Revisited*

by Steven Garber
Senior Fellow, C.S. Lewis Institute



Dr. Steven Garber

“Tollers, there is too little of what we really like in stories. I am afraid we shall have to try and write some ourselves.”

At least that’s the way J.R.R. Tolkien remembers his conversation with C.S. Lewis. Dear friends that they were, Lewis affectionately called Tolkien by his nickname.

They in fact assigned themes to each other; Lewis would do something on space travel, while Tolkien was to take up time travel. Amateurs at the craft of popular writing, Lewis’s effort grew into *Out of the Silent Planet*, but he had a horrible time finding a publisher. Tolkien’s try fizzled completely; he described it as having “run dry: it was too long a way round to what I really wanted to make, a new version of the Atlantis legend.”

Rather than being broken by the frustrations, they continued to talk and write together. Week after week they met in Oxford pubs to eat, drink, and read aloud the next chapters of their stories, asking one more time, “So, what do you think?”

Seeds of friendship

For years their faithful friendship amidst the push-and-pull of life has inspired me. Two professors busily engaged in their labors

within the university, as well as having very full responsibilities at home and at church, choosing to listen and respond to each other, encouraging and stimulating each other as they learned to think carefully and critically – yes, to think Christianly – about the stuff of life. They were iron sharpening iron in the very forge of their vocations – something so rare, so unusual, and yet so important.

After each had found amazing acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic in the decades that followed, Tolkien observed, “And after all that has happened since, the most lasting pleasure and reward for both of us has been that we provided one another with stories to

hear or read that we really like – in large parts. Naturally neither of us liked all that we found in each other’s fiction.”

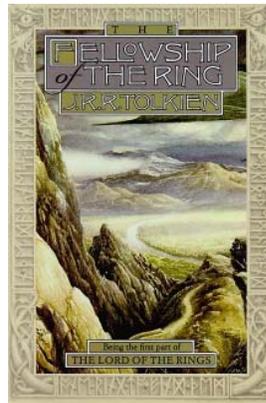
Some sixty years later I am sure it would surprise them both to see the incredible popularity of their books; every good English-speaking bookstore in the world carries their stories of Ransom and Aslan, of Bilbo and Frodo. But as surprising as that would be to these two celebrity-shunning Oxford dons, it would be even

more surprising for Tolkien to walk into the Borders bookstores of the Washington area and see larger-than-life, three-sided displays of *The Lord of the Rings* on sale. Bemused? Perhaps. Dismayed? Maybe.

And, God alone knows what he would think of the film.

Torn of heart

I must confess a torn heart about seeing



Tolkien's great story in celluloid. On the one hand, I love film. Not only do I like to go to the movies, but also I believe they offer us important windows into the human heart. As the Institute's longtime friend, the English educator and film critic Donald Drew, persuasively argued in his groundbreaking *Images of Man: A Critique of the Contemporary Cinema* (1974), movies both reflect and promote a society's understanding of itself, its hopes and dreams, its attitudes and aspirations, its glories and shames. He was right, profoundly so.

But believing that, I am still unsure what to do with my own images and visions of the hobbits, of Gandalf and Gollum, of Rivendell, as I contemplate the cinematic telling of the tale that has descended upon us in all of its commercial clamor. (How many conversations have you heard from your children or young friends about the dates for the new film, the DVD version, the music, and on and on? None of that is wrong in and of itself, of course.)

I have a very good friend whom I respect deeply whose favorite book is *Les Misérables*. He has read it, and re-read it. And it has profoundly nourished his understanding of what it means to be a human being living in this world—even of what it means to know God and his grace as it is incarnate in the richly written characters of Hugo's novel. For all those reasons, he refuses to see any film or theater versions of the story. He wants the images to be his and does not want London's West End or Hollywood to diminish or distort the characters as he knows them with the eyes of his own heart.

Though I have not made that choice about *Les Misérables*, I understand it.

A year ago when the news began to be full of stories of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy coming into our neighborhood theaters by winter, the film magazines were full of images of what "they" would look like. Now as we enter this second winter with its promise of the second film, again I wonder what I will do. Will my

love of film win out, will my interest in popular culture draw me in? Or will I hold onto the Bilbo and Frodo that I have known now for thirty years, the ones who are my companions in the quest I have taken up?

You see, I do *know* them. Their furry-footedness helps me understand my clay-footedness. The lack of self-consciousness in their courage is inspiring to me. The steadfastness of their vision sustains me when I begin to falter. Time and again their love of home and hearth helps me remember why I love good cups of tea, comfortable chairs, fireplaces, and long conversations. Yes, I do have a torn heart here.

But even if I don't go, many others will. The theater-owners of the world are depending upon us, after all! And, since it is not a moral matter, but rather something more to do with aesthetic disposition, the theaters are

likely to be full of Frodo's friends once again—though we do have to wonder at why Elijah Wood was cast in that role, as he does not look AT ALL like the real Frodo?! I am SURE you agree.

Don't leave your brains at the box-office

If you find yourself and your little ones drawn to the theater in the next weeks, then remember to bring your mind and heart with you. Donald Drew admonished us all: don't leave your brains at the box-office! Enjoy the story and the popcorn, but ask good questions too. Remember that someone is telling a story that shapes the moral imagination, and that the medium of the movies is very powerful. It speaks to us, calls to us, persuades us, both in ways we are aware, and in ways we are not so aware.

Stories are like that. Years ago, in the first days of Rivendell School—the K-8 school in Arlington, VA, where our five children have



English
educator and
film critic
Donald
Drew
persuasively
argued [that]
movies both
reflect
and
promote
a society's
understanding
of itself,
its hopes
and dreams,
its attitudes
and
aspirations,
its glories
and
shames.

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James Stuart Stewart

The Mysticism of Paul

by James S. Stewart, M.A., B.D. (1896-1990)

An extract from his book A Man in Christ, Hodder & Stoughton, 1957. Reproduced by permission of Hodder and Stoughton Limited.

*Union with the divine
would make men
not less efficient for life,
but more so.*

Paul, by the grace of God, discovered that the glory of the mystical experience was waiting for any soul which gave itself in faith to Christ. Such union with the divine need be no transient splendour, flashing for a moment across life's greyness and then gone; it could be the steady radiance of a light unsetting, filling the commonest ways of earth with a gladness that was new every morning.

It is necessary to grasp quite clearly what the term mysticism means, as applied to Paul's religious experience. Efforts are periodically made to banish this conception altogether. But it is hard to destroy; it has a way of reasserting itself, and coming back into its own. Indeed, the stubborn survival-power of this term, in face of trenchant criticism and attack, suggests that it stands for something quite indispensable and essential in religion.

A hundred years ago, Schleiermacher, in *The Christian Faith* (p. 429), declared that an idea so vague was better avoided; and with this many today are disposed to agree. They imagine that mysticism represents something so shadowy and ill-defined and non-intellectual that to use the term is simply to "darken counsel by words without knowledge." Others go further, and proclaim a personal aversion to the mystic and all his works. He is

accused of a selfish absorption in his own individual experience. He is regarded as culpably negligent of religion's roots in history. He is criticized for an alleged indifference to moral judgments. It is even suggested that he has not escaped the deadly sin of the superior person.

Behind all this there lies a serious confusion of thought. The type of character which seeks religious emotions and ecstasies for their own sake, which dissolves history in speculation and is defective in respect of moral duty, is unfortunately not unknown: the pity is that to religion of this kind the noble name of mysticism should ever have been applied. Linguistically, we are not so well equipped here as are the Germans: for where they have two words, *Mystik* and *Mysticismus* (the former standing for the true religious attitude, the latter for its debased and spurious imitation), we have to make the one do duty. But the confusion goes deeper than that. It is not only a case of distinguishing between what is genuine and what is forged.

We have to realize that there are important differences even within the range of what may properly be called mystical experience. A very striking illustration of this lies to our hand in one of Paul's epistles. Writing to the Corinthians, he relates an extraordinary event which had happened in his own spiritual life. He was caught up to the third heaven. He was given the beatific vision. He had a direct experience of the presence of God. He heard divine secrets which no man was at liberty to repeat. Now the precision with which he dates this event is highly significant. It happened fourteen years before this particular letter was written. That is to say, even in the apostle's own career, it was quite exceptional. This was not the level on

which he habitually lived. The rapture and ecstasy came—and passed. The trance marked an epoch in his life. That glorious experience of the open heavens, of

*“God’s presence, and His very self
And essence all-divine.”*

meant to Paul something akin to what Bethel meant to Jacob. Undoubtedly this was one aspect of the apostle’s mysticism. *But only one.* And Paul himself—this is the point to be emphasized—would have been the first to recognize and to insist that such experiences form only a comparatively small part of the soul’s deep communion with God in Christ. His whole teaching about special gifts of the Spirit, their value and their limitations, makes it perfectly clear that, while attaching great importance to these unique “visions and revelations” and glorifying God for them, he would never dream of using them to disparage the more normal experiences of souls “hid with Christ in God.” On the contrary, it was in the daily, ever-renewed communion, rather than in the transient rapture, that the inmost nature of Christianity lay. This was the true mysticism. This was essential religion. This was eternal life.

In some degree, then, *every real Christian is a mystic in the Pauline sense.* It is here that Paul differs very notably from his great contemporary Philo. For Philo as for Paul, a direct apprehension of the eternal was the goal of religion. But this union with God was the reward only of a privileged minority. Outside the comparatively small circle of elect, initiated souls, the crowning experience remained unknown. And even the few who were taken into inmost fellowship with God had but broken glimpses of the glory: God was an intermittent, not an abiding, presence. This was the Philonic mysticism—noble so far as it went, but too esoteric to be a Gospel, far too restricted and aloof to be good news for a perishing world. What Paul by the grace of God discovered was that the glory of the mystical experience was waiting for any soul which gave itself in faith to

Christ. Not only so: such union with the divine, he knew, need be no transient splendour, flashing for a moment across life’s greyness and then gone; it could be the steady radiance of a light upsetting, filling the commonest ways of earth with a gladness that was new every morning. Unhealthy reactions such union never could engender. The crushing sense of worldweariness which has marked too many types of mysticism, the contempt of life, the absorption in unproductive emotion, were foreign to it altogether. Its effect, as the apostle saw and as his own career in Christ convincingly proved, would be the very opposite. It would make men not less efficient for life, but more so. It would vitalize them, not only morally and spiritually, but even physically and mentally. It would give them a verve, a creativeness, an exhilaration, which no other experience in the world could impart. It would key life up to a new pitch of zest and gladness and power. This is Pauline mysticism; and great multitudes who have never used the name have known the experience, and have found it life indeed.

Mention should here be made of a fruitful distinction which Deissmann has drawn between two types of mysticism, which he calls respectively “acting” and “reacting.” “The one type”—the reacting—“is everywhere present where the mystic regards his communion with God as an experience in which the action of God upon him produces a reaction towards God. The other type of mysticism”—the acting—“is that in which the mystic regards his communion with God as his own action, from which a reaction follows on the part of Deity” (*The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, p. 195). Much religion has been of the latter kind. Man’s action has been regarded as the primary thing. The soul has endeavoured to ascend towards God. Spiritual exercises have been made the ladder for the ascent. But all this savours of the religion of works as contrasted with the religion of grace.

(continued on page 12)

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The Mysticism of Paul

(continued from page 11)

We must guard, however, against conveying the impression that such union implies virtual absorption of a pantheistic kind.

Paul's attitude was different. His mysticism was essentially of the reacting kind. Christ, not Paul, held the initiative. Union with the eternal was not a human achievement: it was the gift of God. It came, not by any spiritual exercises, but by God's self-revelation, God's self-impartation. The words "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15), which remind us that the Damascus experience itself was the foundation of the apostle's mysticism, are Paul's emphatic way of saying that God's action always holds the priority: His servant simply reacts to the action of God. Here, as everywhere in Paul, all is of grace; and it is well to be thus reminded by the apostle that union with Christ is not something we have to achieve by effort, but something we have to accept by faith.

From what has now been said, it will be apparent why we cannot agree with the proposal to drop the term "*mystical*" union, and speak simply of a "*moral*" union. There is, of course, no such thing as a union with Christ which does not have the most far-reaching effects in the moral sphere. The man who comes to be "in Christ" has found the supreme ethical dynamic. But just as religion is something more than a mere device for reinforcing conduct, so union with Christ as Paul experienced it has more in it than can be described by the one word "moral." In this respect, it is like love. Love between human beings is morally creative. It is a master-force for character. It lets loose amazing energies for goodness. Superb ethical achievements are at its command. But no one imagines that to describe it thus is to say all that may be said. Love is moral *plus*, as it were: there is in it a whole range of glory and surprise which the single term cannot really convey. So with that divine union in which Paul's religion centers: it is ethical through and through, never for a moment is it anything but ethical; and yet it is in simple justice to the facts that we press beyond the idea of a moral to that of a mystical union. Only so can we adequately depict the true inwardness and intimacy of this union, and the abiding wonder of those gifts — so lavish and undeserved and gracious and rich in beauty — which it brings with it from the side of God to man.

The analogy just used — that of the love of one person for another — lets in a flood of light on the whole matter of union with Christ. The notion which certain philosophies have almost taken for granted, that human personalities are mutually exclusive and impermeable, is disproved when the experience of love is taken into account. "Separateness" is not, in point of fact, the final truth about living souls. When we say of those to whom the gloriously enriching gift of love has come that they are "bound up" in each other, we are not indulging in empty metaphor: we are giving a strictly accurate description of what happens to their souls. Walls of partition go down, and self merges in self. Nor is the resultant union a lower state of being than the rigid separation of the self-sufficient soul: on the contrary, it is definitely higher. Now it is this potential permeation of one personality by another which makes spiritual religion possible. It is this that promotes the mystical union. But seeing that personality as it is in Christ has far greater resources, both of self-impartation and of receptiveness, than it has anywhere on the purely human level, it follows that there can exist between Christians and their Lord a degree of intimacy and unity absolutely unparalleled and unique. Hence the analogy, illuminating as it is, can never be more than an analogy; and we might indeed go the length of saying that the union of believing souls with Christ is as far beyond any merely human union as the union of the three Persons in the Godhead is beyond them both.

We must guard, however, against conveying the impression that such union implies virtual absorption of a pantheistic kind. Nothing was further from Paul's thoughts. Here again his doctrine runs along a different line from that of Philo. "When the divine light blazes forth," said Philo, "the human light sets; and when the former sets, the latter rises. The reason within us leaves its abode at the arrival of the divine Spirit, but when the Spirit departs the reason returns to its place."

This suggests that what the divine immanence does is to impair or even destroy the distinctness of the human personality. But there is certainly no hint of any such idea in Paul. He

never thought of Christ as overriding any man's individuality. Union with Christ, so far from obliterating the believer's personal qualities and characteristics, throws these into greater relief. How far any thought of absorption was from the apostle's mind is evidenced by such statements as these: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (I Cor. 12:4).

The passage which, on a superficial view, comes nearest proclaiming the end of all personal identity — "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" — is followed immediately by the significant words, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," in which, as Weiss has pointed out, Paul deliberately guards against the possible pantheistic interpretation by reasserting the religious attitude where "Thou" and "I" stand over against each other. Clearly Paul's view is that the man whom Christ begins to possess does not thereby cease to be himself. On the contrary, like the younger son in Jesus' story, he then for the first time really "comes to himself."

Christian experience does not depersonalize men and reduce them to a monotonous uniformity: it heightens every individual power they have. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (Rom. 8:14-15). More convincing than anything Paul ever said about this is the evidence of his own life. Study the record of that amazing career, mark the impact which this God-filled and Christ-mastered soul made upon the life of men and Churches and nations, and then declare if he was lacking in individuality! No, it was anything but a blurring and obliterating of personality that resulted from the Damascus experience. Every quality of heart and brain and soul which the man possessed was lifted into sudden, new distinctness and vigour. This was what union with Christ meant to Paul, and what he believed it could mean to all the world. ■

James Stuart Stewart was born in Dundee, Scotland, July 21, 1896. As a boy in his father's YMCA Bible Class, he was influenced by the great Scottish preacher, James Denney.

Stewart earned a first class degree in classics at the University of St. Andrews. Later, following service with the Royal Engineers in World War I, he studied for the ministry at New College, Edinburgh, and then did post-graduate work at the University of Bonn.

James Stewart's parish ministries included St. Andrews Church, Auchterarder in Perthshire; Beechgrove Church, Aberdeen; and, the ministry for which he was most known, North Morningside, Edinburgh.

In 1946, Stewart was appointed Professor of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology in the University of Edinburgh, a post which he held for two decades until his retirement in 1966. During this time, he served as a Royal Chaplain and as the Chaplain of the Heart of Midlothian Football Club. From 1963-64, he was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

During his tenure at the University of Edinburgh, Stewart delivered important lecture series at Union Theological Seminary, New York, Yale Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the Duff Missionary Lectures in Scotland. His books include *Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* (1934), *A Man in Christ: the Vital Elements of Paul's Religion* (1935), *Heralds of God* (1946; later re-printed as *Teach Yourself Preaching*), and *A Faith to Proclaim*.

James Stewart married Rosamund Anne Barron in 1931. They had two sons, Robin and Jack. Rosamund died in 1986, James in 1990.

Award-winning media great, Bill Moyers, wrote, "I heard James Stewart preach one sermon when he visited Texas forty years ago and resolved on the spot to sit at his feet in Edinburgh. I had never heard a man whose words so touched both heart and mind.... This learned, eloquent, gentle man lived the Gospel he preached and by word and example gave us truth to build on."

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Learning from Tolkien about Life

(continued from page 9)

Stories
of all
sorts
instruct
the heart –
for
blessing
and
for
curse.
Jesus
understood
that,
and
mostly
taught
with
parables.

all gone – I remember the principal calling me one day to ask if I would write something for the school community about reading. In particular she was concerned about parental criticism over asking the students to read *The Hobbit*. How could that be? we wondered. After all, outside of Scripture, it was the story of our stories, the meta-narrative that made sense of our school's literature-based curriculum. (As you may already know, "Rivendell" arises out of *The Hobbit*, and is the place where the best songs are sung, the best stories are told, and the quest is formed. In Tolkien's own words, "Rivendell... was perfect, whether you liked food, or sleep, or work, or story-telling, or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all." Yes, a worthy name for a school.)

Well, the complaining parents had come to faith as adults, and wanted their children to be kept free from the dangers of the world; especially the ones they remembered as destructive in their own coming-of-age years. *The Hobbit*? Their only familiarity was that they used to sit around with their hippie friends smoking dope and reading Tolkien's tales of Bilbo and his adventures – *certainly not a good story for serious Christians*.

Stories of all sorts instruct the heart – for blessing and for curse. Jesus understood that, and mostly taught with parables, saying, "If you have ears, then hear." Shakespeare did too, and offered to the ages, "The play's the thing to catch the conscience of the king." More recently, the great American novelist Walker Percy argued, "Bad books always lie. They lie most of all about the human condition." He then proceeded to wonder about the worldview which nourishes the novel, maintaining that its narrative quality necessarily grows out of the Jewish and Christian view of human nature and history. Provocatively, he asked, "Have you read any good behaviorist novels

lately...any good Buddhist novels lately...any good Marxist novels lately?" teasing out his critique with each flawed understanding of human nature.

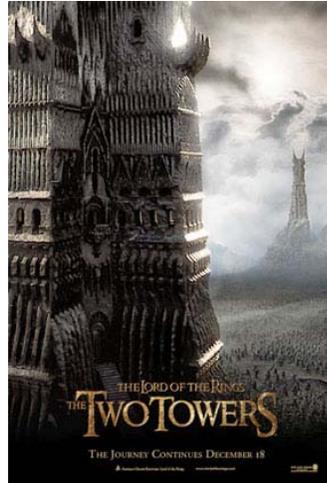
To go or not to go? I'll bet most have gone and will go; and perhaps Tolkien himself would want it that way. But as we watch and wonder at this story become film, we ought to be instructed by Tolkien's friendship with Lewis. They kept asking each other, "So, what do you think?" as they worked at exploring God's world and discovering their place in it, writing stories and reading them aloud over the years. It is a far-reaching question, particularly as it speaks about the human condition. Is the story telling the truth? Does that matter to us? What consequences are there?

So what do you think? As we see movies, read books, listen to music – and take up family relationships, political responsibilities, and vocational commitments – it is a good question for us, too, to keep asking of each other, as we set out on the quests before us. They are no less treacherous than that which Frodo found, as he responded to the call that came to him.

The heart of Tolkien's heart

If good stories are dependent upon the understanding of human nature and history that is rooted in the Jewish and Christian worldview, what would one look like? *The Lord of the Rings* is just that, and is at the same time one of the very best stories ever written.

Tolkien was a Christian, and saw his life and labor in the light of those commitments. His letters are probably the most interesting and accurate windows into his heart; we see his affection and cares for family and friends unfolded over the years, for the trials and pleasures in his vocation and occupation. In addition, he wrote essays in which he reflected upon his writing. Joining his good friends Dorothy Sayers, C. S. Lewis, et al. in



a book of essays in honor of Charles Williams, Tolkien put it this way:

In God's kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The Evangelium [the good news of the gospel] has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the 'happy endings'. The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed.... All tales may come true; and yet, at the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know.

Surely one of the most important reasons that *The Lord of the Rings* has such staying power, and has come into such prominence as a work of literature, equally satisfying both ten-year-olds and fifty-year-olds, is that Tolkien tells the truth about the human condition. In a letter to his publisher, Houghton Mifflin, in 1955, he wrote:

There are of course certain things and themes that move me specially. The inter-relations between the 'noble' and the 'simple' for instance. The ennoblement of the ignoble I find specially moving. I am (obviously) much in love with plants and above all trees, and always have been; and I find human maltreatment of them as hard to bear as some find ill-treatment of animals.

Those few words not only tell us of his understanding of people, and of what is to be prized, but also give us a window into his own deepest loves, which is the truest window into any human heart.

A story for our city

Tolkien's tale is a story of the heart, after all, noble and ignoble as it is. Therefore, it is a story worth pondering always and everywhere, perhaps specially in a city like ours, capital city of the world at the dawn of the 21st century. Tempted as we are to false ambition and skewed aspiration, we can see and hear ourselves in the lives of Bilbo and Frodo; but it is the other hobbit, Gollum — the one who so horribly

lost his way in the world of Middle-earth by distorting means and ends, by forgetting that good gifts are to be stewarded and not hoarded — that we must remember, too.

In our city of Washington — as in all cities, perhaps, but here it is to the *n*th degree — we are prone to prize what is not worth prizing. It is hard to remember what matters. The push-and-pull of power creates a culture of cynicism about truth and reality, about what is really true and truly real. And so it is Gollum who instructs us in the end. What happened to him? Why did it happen? Simply said, he failed to guard his heart, and so perverted the meaning of the quest, and the meaning of his own life.

To remember Tolkien, sober words that they are, they are not despairing: as we work, with mind as well as body, we will suffer, hope, and die. May we be people who love what is worth loving along the way, remembering that real redemption is both now and not yet—even as we wrestle with the bentness that is inside of our hearts and that is all throughout the cosmos. It is a call, and a quest, worthy of hobbit and human alike. ■

If you find yourself wanting to understand more of what Tolkien intended, more of what is behind the sound and the fury of this Hollywood blockbuster, I suggest these resources:

Humphrey Carpenter, with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien, ed. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Kurt Brunner and Jim Ware, *Finding God in The Lord of the Rings*. Tyndale, 2001

Steven Garber is a Senior Fellow for the Institute, and has long been part of its programs. For many years the Scholar-in-Residence for the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, he now serves as Fellow and Lilly Faculty Scholar at Calvin College. Married to Meg and father of five children, he lives in Virginia. For years, their family e-mail address has been: hobbits7@.... No one in the family has furry feet or smokes a pipe, though they are on record as not opposed to those who do.

*In God's
kingdom
the presence
of the
greatest
does not
depress
the small.*

Profiles in Faith: J.R.R. Tolkien

(continued from page 1)

there, he mastered Latin and Greek and became proficient in other languages, modern and ancient, such as Finnish and Gothic.

Early in 1904, Mabel became ill and was diagnosed as having diabetes. Insulin treatment was not available at that time, and she died later that year. Father Francis took the responsibility for watching over the boys' welfare. They were sent to live with an aunt, Beatrice, and later with a Mrs. Faulkner.

Also staying at Mrs. Faulkner's was a young woman, Edith Bratt. Ronald was 16 and Edith 19. Their friendship grew into a romance, but, when Father Francis found out about the relationship some time later, he absolutely forbade it. He told Ronald not to see her or correspond with her for three years until he was 21. After some initial hesitation, Ronald obeyed his mentor to the letter. After the three years, Tolkien worked to re-establish the relationship, and, in 1916, he and Edith married.

While finishing his education at King Edward's, Tolkien made friends who formed a club—the T.C.B.S. or, Tea Club, Barrovian Society—named after the place where these friends met to read and criticize each other's literary works. They remained in close correspondence until 1916 when two of the four died in World War I.

In 1911, Ronald went to Exeter College, Oxford, where he studied Classics, Old English, Germanic languages, Welsh, and Finnish. Eventually, he focused more on English language.

Tolkien enlisted in the army and after four months in the trenches contracted recurring bouts of "trench fever" that effectively limited his time of military service. After the war, he first worked on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and later was appointed a professor of English at the University of Leeds (1920). In 1925, he was appointed to a professorship at Oxford in Anglo-Saxon and much later, in 1945, the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature at Oxford. Tolkien's life at Oxford was uneventful or, perhaps, very eventful, depending on how you look at it. He was a professor giving lectures, meeting with students, doing research, and writing until his retirement in 1959.

In the next issue of *Knowing & Doing*, I will look at

Tolkien's writings—particularly *The Lord of the Rings*. For the rest of this article, I want to give some brief snapshots of Tolkien's character and relationships.

- ◆ One inspiration for Tolkien's writing was his relationship with his wife, Edith. He told one of his sons about a special moment with his wife early in their marriage. In 1917, while on leave from his army officer's post, they went for a walk in the woods. There she danced for him alone. He said, "I met the Luthien Tinuviel of my own personal romance with her dark hair, fair face, and starry eyes and beautiful voice." In that "glade filled with hemlocks" there arose the myth of Beren and Luthien. On their gravestone, it reads: Edith Mary Tolkien, Luthien, 1889-1971. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, Beren, 1892-1973. He wrote, "Forever (especially when alone) we still met in the woodland glade and went hand in hand many times to escape the shadow of imminent death before our last parting." Somehow, the difficulties of their lives never touched "the memories of our youthful love."

*"I met the
Luthien Tinuviel
of my
own personal
romance
with her
dark hair,
fair face,
and
starry eyes
and
beautiful
voice."*

- ◆ Tolkien met C.S. Lewis at an Oxford faculty meeting, May 11, 1926. Lewis wrote in his diary about Tolkien that he was "a smooth, pale, fluent little chap . . . No harm in him: only needs a smack or so." The relationship developed, and Tolkien invited Lewis to join the Coalbiters Club, which focused on reading Icelandic myths (1927). These and other regular meetings allowed Tolkien and Lewis (at this time an atheist) to talk about issues relating to faith. In 1929, Lewis embraced theism; but it was not till 1931 that he came to believe in Christ as the Son of God. One night, Lewis, Tolkien, and Hugo Dyson were having dinner at Magdalen College. Lewis had difficulty with the parallels in pagan mythology and the Gospels. Lewis maintained that "myths are lies." Tolkien argued, "No, they are not." Myths in Tolkien's view, although they may contain error, also reflect part of God's reality. They are splintered fragments of the true light. Only by becoming a "sub-creator," inventing myths, can mankind return to the perfection before the Fall. After a

long night, together they came to the conclusion that Christ was the true myth – the myth become fact – revealed in history. Soon afterwards, Lewis came to believe in Christ. Lewis wrote in a letter to Arthur Greeves with respect to his new faith, “My long talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a great deal to do with it.”

- ◆ Tolkien and Lewis preferred plain dress that normally consisted of tweed jackets, flannel trousers, nondescript ties, solid brown shoes, dull-colored hats, and short hair.
- ◆ C.S. Lewis and friends loved long walks through the English countryside. Tolkien only occasionally joined them. George Sayer, author of the C.S. Lewis biography *Jack*, tells of a time when he (Sayer) was with Tolkien, Lewis, Warren (Lewis’s brother), and Dr. Harvard. Lewis pulled Sayer aside and said about Tolkien: “He’s a great man but not our sort of walker. He doesn’t seem able to talk and walk at the same time. He dawdles and then stops completely when he has something interesting to say. Warnie [Warren] finds this particularly irritating.” Sayer stayed back with Tolkien and found these observations true. Sayer says, “He talked faster than anyone of his age that I have known, and in a curious fluttering way, or interpolated remarks that didn’t seem to have much connection with what we were talking about.”
- ◆ Tolkien had loved trees ever since he was a child. Once, he said, “ORCS” when he heard the sound of a chainsaw. He said, “That machine is one of the horrors of our age.” Sometimes he imagined an uprising of trees. “Think of the power of a forest on the march,” he said.
- ◆ Tolkien gave much time to preparing and giving lectures at Oxford, many more than required for a professor. Sayer mentions Lewis’s comments on Tolkien as a lecturer: “He is scholarly and he can be brilliant though perhaps rather recondite for most under-

“...pay particular attention to the extempore remarks and comments he often makes.

These are usually the best things in the lecture...

In fact one could call him an inspired speaker of footnotes.”

graduates. But unfortunately, you may not be able to hear what he says. He is a bad lecturer. All the same I advise you to go. If you do go, arrive early, sit near the front and pay particular attention to the extempore remarks and comments he often makes. These are usually the best things in the lecture ... In fact one could call him an inspired speaker of footnotes.”

- ◆ One of Tolkien’s favorite meetings was his time with the “Inklings.” This informal group met on Tuesday mornings at the Eagle and Child pub and on Thursday nights in Lewis’s sitting room at Magdalen College. At night, tea was served, pipes lit, and inevitably Lewis would query, “Well, has nobody got anything to read us?” Then someone would read a poem, story, or chapter, followed by praise or criticism, often punctuated with laughter. There was no formal membership, but regular attendees were Lewis, Tolkien, Warren Lewis, Dr. Harvard, Owen Barfield, Hugo Dyson, and Charles Williams. For instance, Tolkien would read from sections of a work in progress – *The Hobbit* – and later he read chapters of *The Lord of the Rings* to the group. Tolkien says of Lewis’s impact on *The Silmarillion* that it was not so much a matter of the influence of his comments but the sheer encouragement of Lewis that kept him going through the long process of writing.
- ◆ When *The Lord of the Rings* was completed, Lewis wrote to “Tollers” (as Tolkien was called by the Inklings): “I have drained the rich cup and satisfied a long thirst;” it is “almost unequalled in the whole range of narrative art known to me. In two virtues it excels: sheer sub-creation ... Also in gravitas.” Lewis had his criticisms – which were delivered to Tolkien, straining the friendship – but overall, Lewis says, “I congratulate you. All the long years you have spent on it are justified.”
- ◆ Once, when engaged on the laborious task of grading School Certificate exam papers, Tolkien came across an

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So far
I have felt
the normal
feelings
of a man
of my age –
like
an old tree
that is losing
all its leaves
one by one:
this feels
like
an axe blow
near the
roots.

Profiles in Faith: J.R.R. Tolkien

(continued from page 17)

empty page and impulsively wrote on it, "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit." He did not know what this meant, but names can often be the genesis of a story. He started to think, "What's a hobbit like?" It was only the beginning.

- ◆ Lewis said of Tolkien's study of words, "He had been inside language." He was always studying and creating languages such as for *The Lord of the Rings*.
- ◆ Once, Walter Hooper visited Tolkien after Lewis's death. Tolkien commented that Lewis "had not made enough time for me." Hooper explained that Lewis felt that Tolkien had not made enough time for him. Both claimed to be busy, but Hooper comments, "You just don't really believe your friends are going to die."
- ◆ Lewis died November 22, 1963. A few days later, Tolkien wrote to his daughter, "So far I have felt the normal feelings of a man of my age—like an old tree that is losing all its leaves one by one: this feels like an axe blow near the roots." ■

Next issue, we will examine Tolkien's writings. Biographical information on Tolkien can be found in the following:

Humphrey Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*.

Joseph Pearce (ed.), *Tolkien: A Celebration*.

Humphrey Carpenter (ed.), *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*.

Loving God with Heart and Mind

(continued from page 7)

had its limits. I stalled. It was as if my faith was affecting only a tiny part of my life.

It was then that I began to realize the importance of letting biblical ideas impact on my imagination and experience. I read some words of a medieval writer, Geert Zerbolt van Zutphen (1367-1400), who stressed the importance of meditating on Scripture. *Not understanding, but meditating*. Here is what he had to say.

Meditation is the process in which you diligently turn over in your heart whatever you have read or heard, earnestly reflecting upon it and thus enkindling your affections in some particular manner, or enlightening your understanding.

Words like these brought new light and life to my reading of the Bible. I had thought that meditation was some kind of Buddhist practice that was off-limits for Christians. Yet I had failed to notice how often Old Testament writers spoke of meditating on God's law. Meditation was about letting the biblical text impact upon me, "enkindling the emotions" – what a wonderful phrase! – and "enlightening the understanding". And my heart, as well as my mind, was to be involved! The worlds of understanding and emotion were brought together, opening the door to a far more authentic and satisfying way of living out the Christian life.

So how do we ensure that the riches of Christian theology nourish our hearts, as well as our minds? Let's look at just one way in which we can do this. Theology affects the way in which we live. An excellent example is provided by the Christian vision of the New Jerusalem, which is meant to encourage us to lift our eyes upwards, and focus them on where Christ has gone before us. Paul makes this point as follows in his letter to the Colossians:

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

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What Makes Spirituality Christian?

A conversation with

DALLAS WILLARD

Reprinted by permission from Christianity Today, March 6, 1995

Dallas Willard thinks it is as important to live the truth as it is to believe it.

Dallas Willard leads two lives. In academic circles he is known for teaching philosophy at the University of Southern California, where he has been since the sixties. However, in the evangelical community, he is best known for his work in the area of spirituality. An ordained Southern Baptist minister and an adjunct professor of spirituality at Fuller Theological Seminary, he has been addressing the subject of the spiritual disciplines throughout his adult life. He has also been a mentor to many in this area, including noted author and minister Richard Foster.

Willard's 1988 book *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (HarperSanFrancisco) generated fresh thinking on spirituality among evangelicals and led to the 1993 republication of his earlier work *In Search of Guidance* (HarperSanFrancisco). Here Willard talks about the state of spirituality today and its meaning for the church.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE CURRENT WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN SPIRITUALITY?

People hunger to do more than just believe the right things. There is a hunger for some experience of God in their lives.

Whether or not this new interest in spirituality leads to much good remains to be seen. There is a danger of spirituality becoming "the new legalism" of our day, so that one of the criteria for advancement in our society will be that you must "be spiritual."

But there are two directions spirituality can take: Christian or general human interest. A great question in our day is whether it will be defined as Christian or non-Christian spirituality.



Dallas Willard

HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

Much modern thinking views spirituality as simply a kind of "interiority" — the idea that there is an inside to the human being, and that this is the place where contact is made with the transcendental. In this view, spirituality is essentially a human dimension.

Christian spirituality is centered in the idea of a transcendent life — "being born from above," as the New Testament puts it. This idea of spiritual life carries with it notions like accountability, judgment, the need for justice, and so on. These concepts are less popular, and they certainly are more difficult, than a conception of spirituality that simply focuses on one's inner life.

MANY PEOPLE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT EVANGELICALISM LACKS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUALITY. DO YOU CONCUR?

That has been largely true in the twentieth century, but it's not true if we go back to earlier periods. Believers in the nineteenth century, for example, were not shallow in this regard. If you look at the practices of the leading figures in that time, you will find that they did not separate their daily life from their faith in the way that has evolved in the twentieth century.

As liberal theology began to degener-

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What Makes Spirituality Christian? *A Conversation with Dallas Willard*

(continued from page 19)

“

...the Bible simply does not recognize a separate category of “Christian” over against “disciple.”

”

ate into a mild form of social ethics, the fundamentalist-evangelical movement came to stress the notion that if you believe the right things, it will get you into heaven. So in an effort to preserve the faith, we came to emphasize that what *really* matters is what you profess. This left believers very little help on how to actually enter into the life that Jesus himself modeled and taught.

MOST CHURCHES AT LEAST OFFER AN OCCASIONAL CLASS ON SPIRITUALITY.

But it's still in the category of the optional. I believe this reflects a widespread misunderstanding about the true nature of the gospel. What has come down for us historically is that the center of the gospel is sin. With the manner in which we treat the gospel, you'd almost get the idea that if it were not for sin, we'd have no use for God.

It also reflects a misunderstanding about faith. Faith has been redefined by social and historical processes so that you can profess to believe in Christ while being deeply doubtful about the wisdom of what he says. This is really central to the whole issue of spirituality. If you see faith as merely a mental shift in your mind that God sees, and thereby determines you will get into heaven, then spirituality has no place. Once you see that faith is not simply believing certain things *about* Jesus but also believing that what he taught about life was right, then you see that faith is much more than taking advantage of a convenient accounting procedure to get into heaven.

WHAT IS A “SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE”?

It is a practice undertaken with the aid of the Spirit to enable us to do what we cannot do by human effort. And that's the essence of Jesus' teachings, because if you succeed in obeying Christ, it's a manifestation of grace. You can never do that on your own.

HOW DOES ONE BEGIN THE PURSUIT OF THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES?

First, you must have a clear definition of faith: To trust Christ is to believe that he was right. This has much deeper implications than merely believing certain things *about* Jesus — though, of course, that is important, too.

Second, you must have a working definition of what makes a disciple:

One whose goal is to live the way Jesus would if he were confronted with your circumstances.

Third, you must realize that the Bible simply does not recognize a separate category of “Christian” over against “disciple.”

PEOPLE SOMETIMES EQUATE DEEP INTEREST IN SPIRITUALITY WITH THE ABSENCE OF SOLID THEOLOGY. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THEOLOGY IN SPIRITUAL LIFE?

It depends on how you approach theology. Students in my philosophy classes know that their task is to get the right answer. If you were to ask them if they actually believe the things they wrote on the test or if you were to say, “I'm going to give you a C on this test because you didn't *believe* this,” they'd think you had lost your mind. They're not graded for *believing*, just for getting the right answers.

Likewise, if we're studying theology so that we will know what the right answers are, it is of very little relation to spirituality. If I study a subject like the Virgin Birth so that I'll know the right answer to give on a test, God probably won't be very impressed. But if I'm interested in it because I realize that believing in it totally changes the meaning of human history and life, that's the difference. Being able to give the right answer is not particularly important if, at the level of your “mental map,” you don't actually believe it's true.

WHAT ABOUT ARGUMENTS THAT FOCUSING ON SPIRITUALITY LEADS TO A LACK OF CONCERN ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES?

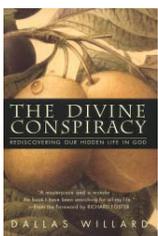
There actually is a connection between spirituality and concern for social issues. If you look at the journals of someone like Walter Rauschenbusch – father of “the social gospel” – you will see that he thought of personal spiritual concern and social concern as inseparable. An authentic spiritual life always pushes one back into the world.

HOW HAS RESPONSE TO YOUR WORK ON SPIRITUALITY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

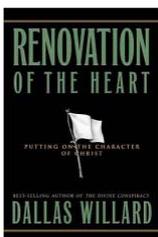
In the sixties, evangelicals thought of my work as dangerous: Teachings on the spiritual disciplines were thought to be teetering on the edge of Catholicism and salvation by works. Today there is an enormous hunger for this material, and I believe it is evidence of the church’s hunger for the reality of God. ■

By John Ortberg, a pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago.

BOOKS BY DALLAS WILLARD:



The Divine Conspiracy
HarperSanFrancisco,
April 1998, 448 pages



Renovation of the Heart
Navpress, April 2002,
272 pages

Loving God with Heart and Mind

(continued from page 18)

Our belief concerning the New Jerusalem ought to encourage us to behave as people who are looking forward to finally being with Christ, and to view the world accordingly.

In a series of addresses given to the InterVarsity Mission Convention at Urbana, Illinois, in 1976, John Stott developed the importance of the hope of glory for theology, spirituality, and especially evangelism. His addresses issued a clarion call for the recovery of this leading theme of the Christian faith, and its application to every aspect of our present Christian lives.

Lift up your eyes! You are certainly a creature of time, but you are also a child of eternity. You are a citizen of heaven, and an alien and exile on earth, a pilgrim travelling to the celestial city.

I read some years ago of a young man who found a five-dollar bill on the street and who “from that time on never lifted his eyes when walking. In the course of years he accumulated 29,516 buttons, 54,172 pins, 12 cents, a bent back and a miserly disposition.” But think what he lost. He couldn’t see the radiance of the sunlight, the sheen of the stars, the smile on the face of his friends, or the blossoms of springtime, for his eyes were in the gutter. There are too many Christians like that. We have important duties on earth, but we must never allow them to preoccupy us in such a way that we forget who we are or where we are going.

Stott encourages us to renew our acquaintance with the glory that awaits us, and begin to anticipate its wonder – and allow that to impact upon us *now*.

My concern in this brief paper has been to offer some preliminary reflections on the importance of relating our minds and hearts, and some thoughts on how we might go about doing this. Happily, others have developed such insights in much greater detail! Theology offers us a firm foundation upon which we may build, ensuring that the great riches and truths of the gospel stimulate and nourish our minds, emotions, and imaginations. Yet we cannot abandon the building once the foundation has been laid; the superstructure must be erected, and inhabited. Paul wrote these words: “I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8). I pray that we may know the full reality of that “surpassing greatness”, and that it may inspire us and encourage us as we journey on the road to the New Jerusalem. ■

- 1 For my reflections on the inadequacies of my spiritual life and some lessons I learned in consequence, see Alister McGrath, *The Journey: A Pilgrim in the Lands of the Spirit* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), and *Knowing Christ* (New York: Doubleday, 2002).
- 2 For a survey of the issues and potential solutions, see Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999).

Alister McGrath serves as Principal, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and Professor of Historical Theology, Oxford.

The President's Year-End Report

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE – *Looking Back, Looking Forward*

by Thomas A. Tarrants, III, President

Four Years of Amazing Grace and Growth!

For the past four years we have seen an increasing hunger among God's people for deeper, more authentic discipleship. As you can see on the next page, this growth is reflected in the increased activity of the Institute, especially as we have become focused on discipleship of heart and mind for thoughtful believers.

In 1998, we had only one paid staff member and a budget of \$100,000. Today, we have four paid staff, four part-time volunteer staff, and a budget of over \$500,000.

And, our work is continuing to grow:

- **Conference attendance** is increasing. This year we had 1,400+ people for Ravi Zacharias and almost 600 for Dr. N.T. Wright.
- **Knowing & Doing**, our teaching quarterly, is being recognized as a valuable resource for growth by more and more people, many considering it a "must read."
- **The C.S. Lewis Fellows Program** continues to draw outstanding men and women who want to go deeper with Christ and make an impact on their world.
- **Our redesigned website** is now operational at www.cslewisinstitute.org with e-commerce and e-giving capability, and the potential for added content and resources.

In 2003, opportunities are abundant:

- ▶ Events with Michael Ramsden, Susan Yates, Dallas Willard & Richard Foster, Ravi Zacharias, Alister McGrath, and Lyle Dorsett. Plus a banquet with Chuck Colson.
- ▶ A second year curriculum for the C.S. Lewis Fellows Program.
- ▶ A new Fellows-Preparatory program for men and women aged 24-34.
- ▶ Added website content and resources for enhanced spiritual and theological impact.

Growth and opportunities like this are possible only through the grace of God and the consistent financial support and prayers of our friends.

To continue to meet this increasing hunger for authentic discipleship and to accept the significant opportunities at our door, we very much need your strong support. Here are two key ways to help:

- ❑ **Matching Gifts:** The C.S. Lewis Institute Board and several Fellows created a \$30,000 fund to match year-end gifts to the Institute dollar-for-dollar. Not only will your year-end gift gain twice the impact, but this combined effort will enable the Institute to meet its obligations to close 2002. And, matching donors of \$50 or more will receive their choice of two outstanding books: *The Most Reluctant Convert: C.S. Lewis's Journey to Faith* by David Downing, or *Authentic Faith: The Power of a Fire-Tested Life* by Gary Thomas.
- ❑ **Faithful Friends:** By committing to monthly support C.S. Lewis Institute during 2003, Faithful Friends provide critical financial strength for the Institute's continuation and growth. Without such support, our treasurer has informed us that difficult cutbacks may be necessary.

With your help in these two ways and your continued prayer, C.S. Lewis Institute can not only continue its work of discipleship of heart and mind but also take advantage of the great opportunities which are before us in the coming year.

Thank you and God bless you,



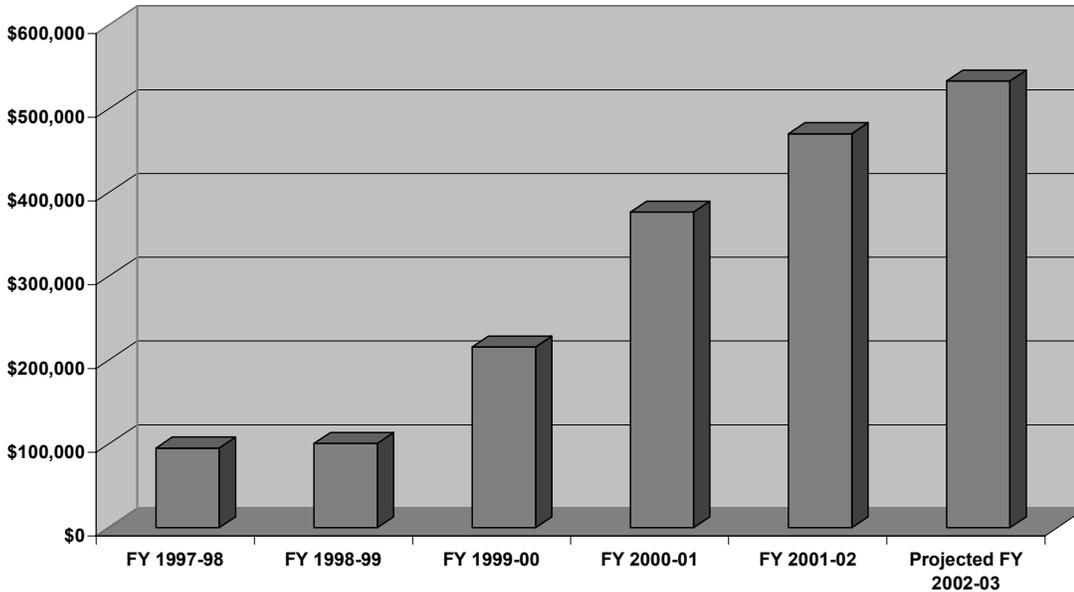


C·S· LEWIS INSTITUTE

2002 Financial Report

The following graphical overview of C.S. Lewis Institute's finances gives a view of recent growth, sources of revenue, and patterns of expenses for the most recent completed fiscal year. For questions or more detailed financial information, please contact the Institute and speak to our treasurer, Bill Deven.

Fiscal Year Revenues 1998-2002

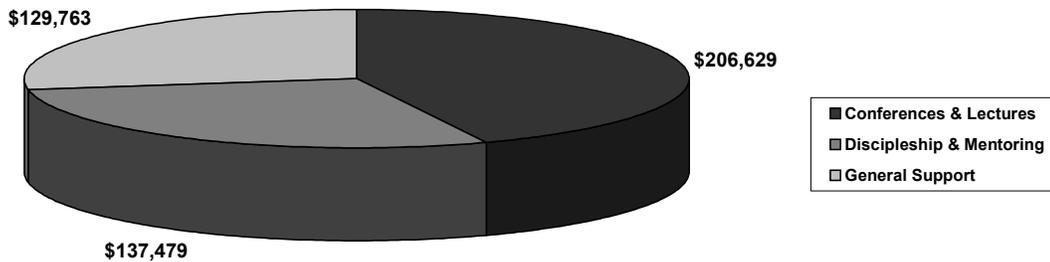


NOTES:
 1. Fiscal years are July 1-June 30.
 2. Based on actual figures as reported on IRS Form 990.

NOTES:

1. Conferences & Lectures includes registration fees and tape/CD sales.
2. Discipleship & Mentoring includes gifts in support of the Fellows Program and *Knowing & Doing*.

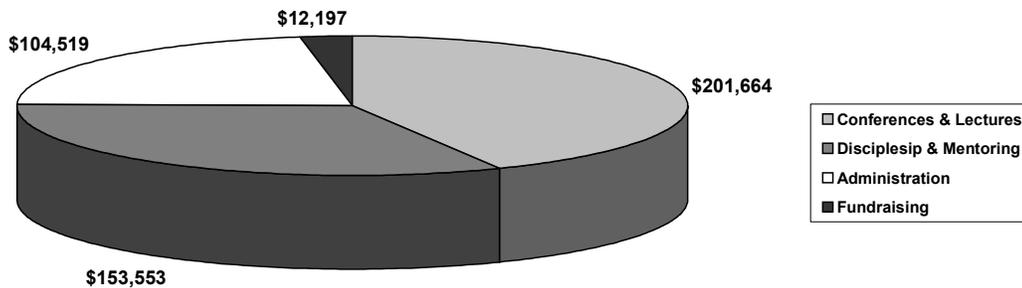
Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Revenue



NOTES:

1. All expense areas include apportioned salary and benefits for related staff members.
2. All overhead costs associated with Conferences & Lectures and Discipleship & Mentoring are included in Administration.

Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Expenses



COMING IN 2003

- ◆ **Michael Ramsden Seminar** on Conversational Apologetics, Saturday Morning, January 18, Christ Our Shepherd Church, Washington, DC
- ◆ **Jim Houston Conference**, "Redeeming Our Tears: Experiencing Transformation Through Suffering and Disappointment," February 7-8, The Falls Church (Episcopal), Falls Church, VA
- ◆ **Susan Yates Conference**, "My God Is Too Small: A Fresh Perspective Toward a Deeper Walk," February 28-March 1, McLean Presbyterian Church, McLean, VA
- ◆ **Renovaré Conference with Dallas Willard & Richard Foster**, May 2-3, Truro Episcopal Church, Fairfax, VA
- ◆ **Annual Fundraising Banquet; Speaker: Chuck Colson**, Tuesday, June 17, Fairview Park Marriott, Fairfax, VA
- ◆ **Ravi Zacharias Conference**, June 27-28, McLean Bible Church, Vienna, VA
- ◆ **Dr. Alister McGrath**, Conference Subject: Science and Religion; October 3-4, The Falls Church (Episcopal), Falls Church, VA
- ◆ **Dr. Lyle Dorsett Conference** on The Spiritual Formation of C.S. Lewis, November 14-15, Location TBA

UPCOMING EVENTS

TWO GREAT CONFERENCES; TWO GREAT RESOURCES

Conference recordings to benefit you from C.S. Lewis Institute AUDIO

Finding and Following the True Jesus

with Dr. N.T. Wright



These lectures provide fresh understanding about the controversies surrounding Jesus and the confusions that many are struggling with today, particularly those brought about through the so-called "Jesus Seminar." They help reinforce and reinvigorate the Christian faith, suggesting new ways in which the genuine historical Jesus can be known, served and spoken of in our own day and context.

Lecture Titles:

- *What's the Problem with Jesus?*
- *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*
- *Jesus, Israel, and the Cross*
- *Jesus and the Kingdom – Today and Tomorrow*

The conference was September 27-28, 2002, at The Falls Church (Episcopal), Falls Church, Virginia.

Choosing the Good: Ethics in a Complex World

with Dr. Dennis P. Hollinger



In the midst of business scandals, complex political challenges, new sexual patterns and values, and constantly emerging bioethical issues, how can followers of Jesus find moral sanity for their own lives and character? And if we do find a moral framework for our own lives, how can we possibly bring that commitment to a pluralistic, secular society? This conference provides helpful guidance for choosing the good in a highly complex world.

Lecture Titles:

- *Foundations: What makes our actions and character good or bad?*
- *Contexts: Can our ethics survive modernity and postmodernity?*
- *Decisions: Is the Bible relevant in a complex world?*
- *Applications: Is our ethic applicable for a secular, pluralistic society?*

The conference was November 8-9, 2002, at National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C.

Each conference provided in 4-tape/CD albums: \$25/tape set \$32.50/CD set
(Virginia Sales Tax, if applicable, and Shipping additional)

Conference Registration & Tape Orders: 703/620-4056

KNOWING & DOING is published by the C.S. Lewis Institute and is available on request. A suggested annual contribution of \$20 or more is requested to provide for its production and publication. An e-mail version (PDF file) is available as well. E-mail a request to p.anderson@cslewisinstitute.org.

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or via e-mail to: info@cslewisinstitute.org.