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PROFILES IN FAITH

Major Warren Hamilton Lewis 1895–1973

by Marjorie Lamp Mead
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Major Warren Hamilton Lewis was a kind-hearted and genuinely humble man, who spent most of his years living a quiet and retiring life. Were it not for his own extensive diary kept over the span of five decades, we would know very little of this reserved gentleman, who in later years grew to prefer the company of a good book to even the most congenial of social gatherings. Like most people, his life was filled with times of genuine happiness as well as moments of great sorrow. But unlike anyone else, he was C.S. Lewis's brother.

Loving Brother

Though there is no doubt that his name is best-remembered today because he was C.S. Lewis's brother, Warren would have willingly embraced such a designation—and not chafed under it. For in spite of the fact that he was the elder by three years, Warren never evidenced resentment at being overshadowed by his highly visible and successful younger brother. Indeed, if anything he welcomed it, for Warren and his brother (known to him as Jack) were from their earliest days the

closest of friends. As Warren himself described their relationship:

Like most people, his life was filled with times of genuine happiness as well as moments of great sorrow. But unlike anyone else, he was C.S. Lewis's brother.

I first remember [my brother, Jack], dimly as a vociferous disturber of my domestic peace and a rival claimant to my mother's attention: . . . [but] during these first years . . . we laid the foundations of an intimate friendship that was the greatest happiness of my life and lasted unbroken until his death fifty-eight years later.¹

Born in a suburb of Belfast in northern Ireland on the 16th of June 1895, Warren spent his early years in a loving and intellectually stimulating home. His mother, Flora Hamilton Lewis, was intelligent and unusually well-educated for her day, receiving her First Class degree in mathematics from Queen's University, Belfast. His father, Albert, had an exceptionally quick mind and a skillful tongue which, coupled with his passionate nature, aided him in becoming a successful solicitor (lawyer) in the Belfast courts.

Along with his younger brother Jack, Warnie was first taught at home by his

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Editor's Note



With the highly publicized release of the movie version of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* just two months ago, the interest in C.S. Lewis is at an all-time high. Many are discovering Lewis's writings for the first time, enjoying the rest of the enchanting *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Others who have read his children's works have been surprised to discover his theological writings. And, a few have vehemently criticized Lewis and his books.

Since coming to C.S. Lewis Institute, I have learned a great deal more about the remarkable man whose name our organization bears. He was extraordinarily gifted and yet quite reserved and not one to enjoy being the focus of attention. One of our Institute's founders and Senior Fellows, Dr. James Houston, taught at Oxford during Lewis's lifetime and got to know him through various activities. Dr. Houston once commented in a lecture, "C.S. Lewis would have been utterly embarrassed at all of the attention given him in recent times." One thing is certain, however: Lewis was delighted to draw attention to the person of Jesus Christ.

Even though at his conversion Lewis referred to himself as "...the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England," it is evident that a brightness filled Lewis's mind and soul that went on to illuminate the hearts and minds of many, many others. He was a bright light pointing the way to Light Himself.

It is that very purpose which the C.S. Lewis Institute has endeavored to accomplish in its three decades of work: to enliven, enlighten, and embolden the hearts and minds of followers of Jesus Christ so that they, too, can serve as lights to point the way for others.

Thank you for being part of that. And, may God bless you as you read this issue and, we pray, grow in your love for and faith in Christ.



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Bearing the Weight of Glory

The cost of C.S. Lewis's witness

by Christopher W. Mitchell, Ph.D.

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What is it that motivated C.S. Lewis, a comfortable academic with more than enough to do, to direct so much of his time writing and speaking towards the conversion of the unbelieving of the world? What made him sacrifice not only the regard of many of his colleagues but his own academic advancement to defend the faith? The answer will no doubt appear quite obvious once it is stated. But since it says something important about Lewis and something quite profound about the human drama viewed through the lenses of the Christian faith, and because I do not recall anyone having yet called specific attention to the connection I propose (though some have hinted at it),¹ it seems appropriate to present the matter here.

To state the case most plainly, the vividness by which Lewis perceived the potential eternal destinies of every man and woman compelled him to direct a great part of his energies towards the saving of souls. Lewis perceived evangelism to be his lay vocation, and the means by which he expressed this evangelistic impulse were through his writing and speaking. The particulars of his ministry are generally well known. However, a summary of them in the context of his life will be necessary in order to appreciate the significance of his motivation.

Lewis's bent toward evangelism began to assert itself within the first year of his conversion in 1931.² He "felt it was the duty of every Christian," observed Owen Barfield, "to go out into the world and try to save souls."³ In an essay on "Christianity and Culture" Lewis stated plainly that "The glory of God, and, as our only means to glorifying him, the salvation of the human soul,

is the real business of life," and in another place admitted that most of his books were "evangelistic."⁴ Speaking of the fundamental difference between the Christian's and the unbeliever's approach to literature, and by extension to any of the great works of human culture, Lewis said without qualification, that "the salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world."⁵

His vision for employing his own fiction as a means of evangelizing came quite unexpectedly and quite early. When in 1939 Lewis became aware that most of the reviewers of his book *Out of the Silent Planet* failed to recognize its Christian theology, the idea struck him that the Gospel could be "smuggled into people's minds" by means of fiction.⁶ It was a vision he sustained throughout his career. Less than six months before he died, in answer to the question, asked by an American evangelical: "Would you say that the aim of...your own writing, is to bring about an encounter of the reader with Jesus Christ?", he replied, "That is not my language, yet it is the purpose I have in view."⁷

Lewis, whose literary output was enormous, has been aptly called a "literary evangelist."⁸ Before his death in 1963, he wrote forty books and edited three. Since his death, nearly a dozen volumes of his essays have been published. In addition, he wrote thousands of letters (many of them published). Add to his writing (most of which was evangelistic) his speaking, praying and discipling,⁹ and one begins to sense Lewis's enormous drive to save souls.

It is important to notice, however, as Michael Ward has recently pointed out, that Lewis's brand of evangelism never involved the kind of direct appeal that bids people to

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C.S. Lewis Feature



Dr. Christopher Mitchell

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Mitchell received his M.A. from Wheaton College, and a Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, where his concentration was Historical Theology. His published works include "Bearing the Weight of Glory: The Cost of C.S. Lewis's Witness," *The Pilgrim's Guide: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Witness* (Eerdmans, 1998), and "Following the Argument Wherever it Leads: C.S. Lewis and the Oxford University Socratic Club, 1942 to 1954."

Excerpted from *The Pilgrim's Guide: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, ed. David Mills Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company © 1998, pp. 3-14. Reprinted by permission.

Bearing the Weight of Glory

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Lewis saw himself not so much a reaper of souls, but one who prepares the soil, sows the seed, and weeds out what hinders growth.

“come to Jesus.”¹⁰ Lewis saw himself not so much a reaper of souls, but one who prepares the soil, sows the seed, and weeds out what hinders growth. His job, as he understood it, was on the one hand to seek to break down the intellectual prejudices to Christianity by detecting and exposing the fallacies of current objections to belief in such a way as to make faith in Christianity intellectually plausible, and on the other to prepare the mind and imagination to receive the Christian vision.

His evangelistic genius was not in his ability to inspire faith (this he flatly disavowed), but to maintain an atmosphere where faith could be possible—rationally and imaginatively plausible—and where it could grow and even thrive. He was happy to prepare the way for those who were gifted to reap what had been sown—who could successfully bring the direct appeal to the heart.

The well-known preacher Stephen Olford tells of an experience he had with Lewis during a “This is Life” crusade, held in London, when he found himself on the same platform as Lewis. Lewis spoke first, brilliantly arguing, according to Olford, the case for Christianity before an audience of approximately 3,000. Following Lewis, Olford picked up on a motif that came through Lewis’s message and used it to lead into his own message

and ultimately to an invitation for an open commitment to Christ. After the meeting, Olford remembers Lewis coming right up to him, shaking his hand and saying, “That was so impressive and effective. Thank you for that.” “I hope you didn’t mind my taking up on what you said,” replied Olford. “No,” said Lewis, “That was magnificent!”¹¹

Lewis’s prominence as a representative of the Christian faith began initially in 1940 with the publication of his book *The Problem of Pain*, rose in 1941 as a result of his series of broadcast talks over the BBC, and reached new heights with the publication of *The Screwtape Letters* in 1942. Other avenues for speaking of the faith included such diverse settings as talks to Britain’s RAF, the weekly meeting of the Oxford University Socratic Club, Christian groups on university campuses, and the occasional sermon.

A Hated Man

Lewis’s evangelistic impulse not only brought him public acclaim, but also created tensions and hostility among friends and colleagues. Owen Barfield, who was one of Lewis’s closest friends, honestly admits that Lewis’s zeal for the conversion of the unbeliever bothered, even embarrassed him at times.¹² He could appreciate Lewis’s faith as a private matter, but found it difficult to accept his determination to take it public with

the aim of converting others.

Barfield was not alone. The amount of ridicule and scorn it fostered among his non-Christian colleagues was especially virulent. His theological books and his standing as a Christian apologist which made him much loved also spawned a great amount of ill-feeling. According to Harry Blamires, Lewis was acutely sensitive to the fact. He recalls that Lewis once told him with great feeling, “You don’t know how I’m hated.”¹³

One of the reasons for this hatred is that Lewis’s use of his training as a scholar in the work of Christian apologetics was viewed by many of his colleagues as a form of prostitution. In an attempt to explain to Walter Hooper the reason for Lewis’s unpopularity among so many dons in Oxford, J.R.R. Tolkien observed: “In Oxford, you are forgiven for writing only two kinds of books. You may write books on your own subject whatever that is, literature, or science, or history. And you may write detective stories because all dons at some time get the flu, and they have to have something to read in bed. But what you are *not* forgiven is writing popular works, such as Jack did on theology, and *especially* if they win international success as his did.”¹⁴

Lewis’s work on a popular level, which appealed to vast audiences outside the University defied academic protocol. “In the eyes of some,” says

Blamires, "he was using a donnish knowledge to mesmerize the innocent masses with dialectical conjuring tricks."¹⁵ Moreover, he chose to express his faith in the vernacular rather than in the language of the scholar. Although he did so in order that he might make the faith accessible to all, this was viewed by many in the University as a thing not proper to his profession. Besides, it was thought that a professor of English Literature should teach literature, not theology. It appears that Lewis's growing fame as an amateur theologian contributed to his being twice passed over for appointments to much-coveted Chairs in English Literature at his University despite his scholarly claim to the appointments. Some certainly objected to his Christianity in itself, but apparently also suspected, along with perhaps even some sympathetic colleagues, that his commitment to the salvation of human souls would not allow him the time to fulfill the duties and responsibilities the position would require.¹⁶

Lewis was himself, however, clearly uncomfortable with the publicity his success brought. As early as 1941 he was already feeling the sting of hostility and the crush of popularity. Responding to a point made by Dom Bede Griffith in a letter in October of this year concerning his growing public persona, he acknowledges the growing tension within himself: "As for retiring into 'private life,' while

feeling *very* strongly the evil of publicity, I don't see how one can. God is my witness I don't look for engagements."¹⁷

A particularly burdensome outcome of this growing popularity was the ever increasing amount of correspondence he felt obliged to answer. One of the reasons Lewis chose to terminate the radio broadcast talks was that he could not face the increase in the number of letters that would certainly be generated if he didn't.¹⁸ Already he was spending countless hours responding to the correspondence he was receiving. When describing, in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*, what he considered the perfect day, he made a special point of noting that an essential element of the happy life was that one "would have almost no mail and never dread the postman's knock."¹⁹

Yet the number of letters continued to increase as the years went on. There was a time, Lewis told a young correspondent in 1956, when he was apt to delay responding to letters. But that was when there were fewer of them. "[N]ow that I have such a lot to write," he said, "I've just got to do them all at once, first thing in the morning."²⁰ For, unlike many in his position, Lewis felt a commitment to answer every letter that required a personal response. (His brother Warren, who in 1943 took on the role of secretary for his brother, routinely answered those letters not requiring Lewis's per-

sonal attention.) Although there were moments when he complained about his vast correspondence, he continued the practice to the end of his life. A letter dated March 26, 1963, just a few months before his death, provides a vivid picture of both his reluctance and commitment to letter writing. The letter is addressed to Hugh, a young man and the eldest of eight children who had been corresponding with Lewis since 1954: "Don't get any more girls to write to me," he wrote, "unless they really need any help I might be able to give. I have too many letters already."²¹

Lewis's Evangelistic Drive

Now here is the question: *Why* did Lewis willingly persist in the kind of evangelistic activity that created obvious tensions and hardships in his personal and professional life and that increased an already heavy work load?²² He did not have to do so. He could have easily avoided such problems and still lived an active and fruitful, enormously fruitful, Christian life. Admittedly, no single factor can account for Lewis's actions at any given moment, and certainly in the case of his commitment to evangelize several other factors could be suggested. For example, in one place he explained his passionate and forceful defense of the Christian faith in terms of Donne's maxim, "'The heresies that men leave are hated most.'

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Now here is the question: Why did Lewis willingly persist in the kind of evangelistic activity that created obvious tensions and hardships in his personal and professional life and that increased an already heavy work load?

Bearing the Weight of Glory

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The things I assert most vigorously are those that I resisted long and accepted late.”²³

Yet I would propose that the primary driving force behind his evangelical impulse is best summed up by his conviction that “there are no *ordinary* people.”²⁴ The line comes near the conclusion of his sermon “The Weight of Glory,” which was preached in Oxford at the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin on June 8, 1941. Coming when it did, just about the time his ministry as a herald and defender of the Christian faith was taking off, the sermon may reasonably be assumed to express an early fundamental and guiding conviction. The sermon’s beauty, force, and clarity seem to suggest this as well.

Lewis began the sermon with the startling assertion that “if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desire not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us,... We are far too easily pleased.”²⁵

He went on to argue that there is reason to believe that such infinite joy does in fact exist – indeed our deepest longings suggest it is so. At the moment, however, we all are on the wrong side of the door, leaving us with two possibilities: we can choose to be “left utterly and absolutely *outside* – repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored” or “we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged.” But to *get in* we must choose to follow Jesus Christ who has opened the way and who invites us to follow him inside. We have a choice. “We walk every day,” said Lewis, “on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities.” Consequently it is hardly possible, he concluded in the crowning paragraph of the sermon, to think too often or too deeply about my neighbor’s potential glory.

The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour’s glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry

it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations – these are mortal,... But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendours.”²⁶

A Burden of Glory

Why was Lewis willing to sacrifice his own pleasure and comfort, risk alienating friends and colleagues, and jeopardize possible career opportunities? Because of the enormous magnitude and weight of the possible eternal destinies of human beings: “[A] weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain.”²⁷ According to Tolkien, Lewis knew the price of such popularity, he knew he would be hated, yet “he was driven to write popular works of theology because of his *conscience*.”²⁸ Lewis was convinced that one of these two destinies was true for all humanity, and it compelled him to make the saving of souls the chief end of his earthly labors.²⁹ To put it most plainly, Lewis preached what he believed, and practiced what he preached. As he said to Dom Bede Griffith in the same year he delivered this sermon, “I don’t see how one can” do otherwise.

This is not to say that Lewis never struggled with his commitment (he would have been happy to have avoided the public notoriety), nor that he felt himself more

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saintly than other Christians who did not share his sense of urgency in the matter. Rather, he simply did not see that *he* had a choice. The possibilities were plainly too momentous to be ignored. But Lewis did not do the work of evangelism simply out of a feeling of duty either. It was for him also a labor of love.

Dorothy L. Sayers gave memorable tribute to this side of Lewis's evangelistic person in a letter addressed to him in May 1943. Sayers had herself by this time become quite well known in Britain for her creative and effective presentation and defense of orthodox Christianity. And like Lewis she had attracted a growing number of correspondents who wrote to her about religious concerns. Speaking of one particular pesky atheist, she wrote Lewis:

Meanwhile, I am left with the Atheist on my hands. I do not want him. I have no use for him. I have no missionary zeal at all. God is behaving with His usual outrageous lack of scruple....If he reads any of the books I have recommended, he will write me long and disorderly letters about them. It will go on for years. I cannot bear it. Two of the books are yours—I only hope they will rouse him to fury. Then I shall hand him over to you. You like souls. I don't.³⁰

Sayers recognized that Lewis "liked souls" in a way she did not. In other words, viewed from the perspective of eternity, he worked sacrificially and without complaint for what he understood to be the soul's ultimate good. This is not to say that he liked all the people with whom he associated. Lewis was, as are the rest of us, possessed of a particular social disposition. Although he was typically pleasant and courteous to all those with whom he had contact, he maintained that his temperament was such that he tended to shy away from the company of others beyond the close circle of friends he maintained in and near Oxford. Nonetheless, in spite of the fact that Lewis did not always like people, he valued them enough to risk directing his

unique talents and the majority of his energies toward their spiritual good.³¹

"But heaven forbid we should work in the spirit of prigs and Stoics," Lewis declared, writing of the ultimate purpose of love in his book *The Four Loves*. "While we hack and prune we know very well that what we are hacking and pruning is big with a splendour and vitality which our rational will could never of itself have supplied. To liberate that splendour, to let it become fully what it is trying to be, to have tall trees instead of scrubby tangles, and sweet apples instead of crabs, is part of our purpose."³² In his fiction, theology, apologetics and correspondence Lewis can be seen hacking and pruning with the hope that his efforts might be used to produce "everlasting splendours."

I am reminded of the vision expressed by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: "we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Although Lewis never refers to this text in "The Weight of Glory," its spirit and truth pervade the work, and all his work.

Lewis longed above all else for the unseen things of which this life offers only shadows, for that weight of glory which the Lord Christ won for the human race. And knowing the extraordinary nature of every human person, Lewis longed for and labored for their glory as well. ■

1 See for example, Patrick T. Ferry's fine essay, "Mere Christianity Because There Are No Mere Mortals: Reaching Beyond the Inner Ring," *C.S. Lewis: Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*, edited by Angus Menuge (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1997), pp. 169-90, where he suggests that the motive behind Lewis's sermon, "The Weight of Glory," unites Lewis's idea of 'mere Christianity' to evangelism.

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C.S. Lewis's Concern for the Future of Humanity

by James M. Houston

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Founder of Regent College (Vancouver, B.C.) and Professor of Spiritual Theology (retired)



James M. Houston

Dr. James M. Houston is retired Board of Governors' Professor of Spiritual Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia. In 1968 he worked with others to found Regent, an international graduate school with over 1,000 students annually and a world-class faculty which has included J.I. Packer, Eugene Peterson, and others. In 1976, Dr. Houston co-founded the C.S. Lewis Institute and serves as Senior Fellow.

He received his MA from the University of Edinburgh and M.A., B.Sc., and D.Phil. degrees from Oxford University.

Dr. Houston is the author of numerous books including *The Transforming Power of Prayer: Deepening Your Friendship With God*, *In Pursuit of Happiness: Finding Genuine Fulfillment in Life*, and *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood*. *Jim and his wife Rita make their home in Vancouver.*

Between 1947 and 1956, I was privileged to meet with C.S. Lewis in a group convened by Nicholas Zernov, Spalding Lecturer of Russian History at Oxford. I shared an apartment with Nicholas for seven years, and we entertained the group in our home together. After he published his novel, *Till We Have Faces*, I asked Lewis on one occasion, of all the books he had written, what did he consider the most important Christian message he had given? With no hesitation, his reply was, "the three lectures I gave at Newcastle on *The Abolition of Man*, in 1942-43, together with my recent novel, *Till We Have Faces*" (1956). I think he already sensed disappointment that the latter novel was being scarcely noticed. Certainly, there was no reprint as long as he lived—another seven years. Nor did his three lectures to the Faculty of Education in the University of Newcastle make any headlines. If anything, they seemed an exaggeration on the threat of technology in society. Only later, did the popular book by C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures*, as that of science and the humanities, arouse more popular debate.

Part of the apathy over Lewis's topics was the reputed traditional bias of Oxford colleges as the bastion of the classical humanities, unlike Cambridge, with science having only marginal influence until World War II. So it could be argued that Lewis's science fiction, especially *That Hideous Strength*, was what an entrenched, traditional Oxford don would write about; the intrusion of young science fellows entering into college life. Ironically, Winston Churchill selected an Oxford scientist, Lord Cherwell, to intensify the role of science into warfare, as it had never been exploited before. England might not nationally have

survived without this new penetration of technology into society. But Lewis was aware and alarmed by the wholesale acceptance of technology. He saw it was becoming a new threat to our *humanum*. As he observed: "Each new power won by man is a power over man. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger."¹ The notion of "Man's Power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument." It remained later for Jacques Ellul to further see the entrapment of modern society within the relentless growth of "technique for technique's sake."

Why Myth?

One early reviewer described his novel *Till We Have Faces* as "brilliantly offbeat." Only Chad Walsh, in the New York Herald Tribune, declared it to be "the most significant and triumphant work that Lewis has yet produced." But Lewis was already dead by then. The deliberate choice of pagan mythology as his genre in his novel *Till We Have Faces* was to suggest that a good classical pagan was closer to the apostle Paul than a liberal secularist is today. For, at least, there was the dominating presence of the "sacred," the awareness of good and evil, the sense of mystery, an after-life, and of moral accountability. Myth is associated with the lack of differentiation, of earth and heaven, man and beast, with scope for the heroic which leaves the human and the divine indeterminate. This is cause for chaos and violence. But at least mythopoeia leaves space to see that things are not as they might appear, for multiple layers of meanings, and thus always a challenge to our over-confident claims to "know" what is "reality." It is a sphere beloved of the literary

critic. So it was left to later novelists such as William Golding and Saul Bellow to complain against the loss of all mystery in a technical society, because with this loss no "space" was allowable to what is indeterminate in myth. Yet we cannot be "human" without it.

In this context, often in our discussions, Lewis would speak about the tension required to see *through* the clean window, without losing the perspective of also looking *at* the view. A culture dominated by psychoanalysis, would end up seeing nothing. You simply cannot afford to *explain everything away*. So Lewis would challenge us today, how much mystery has been lost in a secular society? As I write, it is ironic that in the same month (January 2006), we have the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI on the love of God, and the National Geographic article on the brain chemistry of love, as a clash of two mindsets, about the realm of God, and the materialist realm of sex, that is of "mystery" and of "no mystery!"

In his novel then, *Till We Have Faces*, Lewis adopts the universal awareness of "the numinous" in primitive religion. This is where humans cannot breach the mystery of divinity by ordinary perception. Lewis takes the seriousness of myth as expressive of a great sovereign, unconditional Reality at the core of all things. Myth, too, is the way the shadow of the inexpressible can be vocalized, like beams of light from an immense but far distant source. There are several truly human themes of myth that Lewis sees: 1) humanity should worship; 2) human dependency is upon God (the gods); 3) scape-goating is basic to human fallenness; 4) blood is the appropriate symbol of life and its sacrifice; 5) it is appropriate one should die for the sake of the people; 6) consolation is found in the religious life, whether symbolized by temple or other sacred site; 7) bearing one another's burdens, is expressive of being a personal being; 8) sins of jealousy, envy, and pride destroy relationships, human and divine; 9) redemption requires dealing with the past, as well as the present, such as is evidenced in family legacies; 10) re-birth requires a willing death. As

Lewis stated, myth became fact in the Incarnation. Now as myth transcends thought, Incarnation transcends "myth" as indeed it transcends "fact". So Lewis concluded we ought not to be ashamed of the mythical radiance cast over our theological faith, indeed of our wonder and joy. Scholars are reluctant to accept such premises, since myth has been traditionally associated with unreality, whereas for Lewis it is necessary for awe and worship, of what is beyond our ken.

The Novel as Autobiographical

The novel is, of course, Lewis's rewriting of the story of Cupid and Psyche in the Latin novel, *Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass*, by Lucius Apuleius Platonicus. Lewis was haunted by the myth ever since he read it in preparation for his entrance exam to University College, Oxford, in 1917. Following on the poems of William Morris and Robert Bridges, Lewis began to compose an unfinished poem on the myth in 1923, called *Dymer*. When eventually he wrote about it in his last novel, *Till We Have Faces*, the story had become deeply autobiographical. He acknowledges that Orual's tutor, the Greek slave, "The Fox," is very much the "academic," showing ambiguously his love of poetry, and yet his rationalistic fears of rousing the emotions by it. Lewis acknowledged, "I'm much with the book."

Until we have each one received God's transforming love within us, we are all like Orual, called through nature, conscience, myths, believers' testimonies, miracles, voices within and circumstances without, and above all, by the personal transformation of one so closely beloved, as Psyche was to Orual, or as Joy Davidman became for Lewis, to whom he dedicated the novel.

When Lewis first tried to compose his poem of Cupid or *eros* and Psyche or *agape*, of what is humanly desirous and of what is divinely given, he states,

(continued on page 22)

In his novel then, Till We Have Faces, Lewis adopts the universal awareness of "the numinous" in primitive religion. This is where humans cannot breach the mystery of divinity by ordinary perception.



Three Book Reviews

Art Lindsley looks at new books about C.S. Lewis and his writing.



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.

Art 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.

With the production of the much anticipated film adaptation of C.S. Lewis's, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, many new books about Lewis and The Chronicles of Narnia have been published. C.S. Lewis Senior Fellow Art Lindsley gives a review on three.

The Narnian:

The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis
by Alan Jacobs

Alan Jacobs' new biography of C.S. Lewis is a fascinating study weaving together his life and writings. It is a great addition to the fast growing literature on Lewis. It is beautifully written and always interesting, at many points shedding new light on aspects of Lewis's life. Each chapter is titled with a quote about Lewis—all but one from Jack (C.S. Lewis) himself. When an event in Jack's life relates to something later in his writings, Jacobs carefully draws parallels and connections. As the title suggests, an important goal is to show what sort of person wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*. There are many helpful insights in this book; here are a few for you to consider:

- J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, "adored" the Narnia books when a child. (p. xi)
- One of Jacobs' central ideas in this book is that Lewis had a "willingness to be enchanted." (p. xxi)
- Although Lewis drew on both reason and imagination, he insists that the "imaginative man in me is older." (p. xiv)
- Lewis was a Narnian long before he wrote the books. (p. xxv)
- Lewis's father, Albert, wrote after his wife's death that she was "as good a woman, wife and mother as God has ever given to man." (p. 9)
- Lewis loved to go for long walks. There are also some long hikes in the Narnia books.

- His tutor, Kirk, wrote of Jack that, "He has read more classics than any boy I ever had—or indeed I might add than any I ever heard of, unless it be an Addison or Landor or Macaulay. These are people we read of, but I have never met any . . . He is the most brilliant translator of Greek plays I have ever met." (p. 59)
- Jack never passed his math entrance exams for Oxford. If he had not been exempted from them as a returning serviceman, he might never have attended a university at all. (p. 66)
- In May 1921 he found that he had won the Chancellors Prize at Oxford for an essay on "Optimism." (p. 102)
- Lewis said that his chosen career as a tutor/teacher was "the only one in which I can ever hope to go beyond the meanest mediocrity." (p. 107)
- Lewis, while meditating on his own self-admiration: "And, will you believe it, one out of every three is a thought of self-admiration: when everything else fails, having had its neck broken, up comes the thought, 'What an admirable fellow I am to have broken their necks!' I catch myself posturing before the mirror, so to speak, all day long. I pretend I am carefully thinking out what to say to the next pupil (for *his* good, of course) and then suddenly realize I am really thinking how frightfully clever I'm going to be and how he will admire me . . . And then when you force yourself to stop it, you admire yourself for doing *that*. It is like fighting the hydra . . . There seems to be no end to it. Depth under depth of self-love and self-admiration." (p. 133)

- Jack's wife Joy wrote about what she was taught before becoming a Christian, that "Life is only an electrochemical reaction. Love, art, and altruism are only sex. The universe is only matter. Matter is only energy. I forget what I said energy is only." (p. 142)
- In 1917 Lewis had a physical exam: his height was five feet eleven inches, and he weighed 13 stone (about 182 pounds). (p. 164)
- Jack first wrote chapters of *The Screwtape Letters* as installments for a magazine. One clergyman (missing the point) wrote in to cancel his subscription because the advice given by Wormwood was "not only erroneous but positively diabolical." (p. 168)
- Screwtape's advice points out the demonic way, "An ever increasing craving for an ever diminishing pleasure is the formula . . . To get a man's soul and give him *nothing* in return – that's what really gladdens Our Father's heart." (p. 189)
- Lewis says of friendship, "Every real friendship is a sort of secession, even a rebellion . . . In each knot of Friends there is a sectional 'public opinion' which fortifies its members against the public opinion of the community in general. Each therefore is a pocket of potential resistance." (p. 203)

There are many other helpful insights in this biography. There are occasional interpretations of Lewis that I find dubious (particularly a few pages' blast against apologetics), but I find Jacobs' judgments characteristically trustworthy. Jacobs helps us see that almost everything of substance that Lewis writes about in any of his writings can be found in the Narnia books. As Barfield points out, what C.S. Lewis thought about everything could often be found in what he thought about anything.

A Reader's Guide Through The Wardrobe:

Exploring C.S. Lewis's Classic Story
by Leland Ryken and Marjorie Lamp Mead

A *Reader's Guide Through The Wardrobe* is an excellent and appealing study of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. The book combines the efforts of Leland Ryken, a professor of English at Wheaton College, and Marjorie Mead, associate director of the Wade Center since 1977. As you might expect, there are many literary insights into *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (LWW) as well as interesting facts and quotes about C.S. Lewis, his process in writing about Narnia, and his sources for names and ideas. This study of LWW is clearly written and very satisfying on a number of levels.

The book proceeds through a chapter-by-chapter study of LWW, followed by chapters on "How the Narnian Books Came to Be," a chapter addressing criticisms of LWW and the Narnia series, and an appendix on the correct order of reading Narnia. Here are a few of the many insights given in this work.

First, LWW was not written as an allegory. It all started with images in C.S. Lewis's mind. Lewis had an image of a Faun carrying packages and of a lamppost, and had been having dreams about lions. Lewis set out to create a story about these images, and naturally some of Lewis's beliefs about Christ found their way into the story. However, LWW as well as the rest of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, are not to be interpreted as allegory, where each detail has a spiritual meaning (as in *Pilgrim's Progress*).

Other interesting facts revealed in *The Reader's Guide Through The Wardrobe*:

- The span of the seven Narnia books covers 2,555 Narnian years, to only 52 English or earth years. (p. 56)
- The origin for the name Aslan is from the notes to Lane's *Arabian Nights*. It is Turkish for Lion. Lewis pronounced it as Asslan. He meant to portray the Lion of Judah (Jesus). (p. 66)

(continued on page 26)

“Jack never passed his math entrance exams for Oxford. If he had not been exempted from them as a returning serviceman, he might never have attended a university at all.”



I Was Decided On *An Interview with C.S. Lewis*

by Sherwood E. Wirt
Editor Emeritus, Decision Magazine

Decision magazine, the official magazine of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, has been published since November 1960. Its September 1963 and October 1963 issues contained a two-part interview with C.S. Lewis by *Decision's* then editor, Sherwood E. Wirt. This is the last known interview conducted with C.S. Lewis before his death on November 22, 1963.

This article was taken from *Decision* magazine, September 1963; © 1963 Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; used by permission, all rights reserved.

I drove to Cambridge, England, on May 7 [1963] to interview Mr. Clive Staples Lewis, author of *The Screwtape Letters* and one of the world's most brilliant and widely read Christian authors. I hoped to learn from him how young men and women could be encouraged to take up the defense of the faith through the written word.

It was quickly evident that this interview was going to be different from any that I had ever been granted. I found Mr. Lewis in a wing of the brick quadrangle at Magdalene College, Cambridge University, where he is professor of Medieval and Renaissance literature. I climbed a flight of narrow, incredibly worn wooden steps, knocked at an ancient wooden door with the simple designation, "Prof. Lewis," and was shown in by the housekeeper.

Passing through a simply furnished parlor, I came into a study that was quite Spartan in appearance. Professor Lewis was seated at a plain table upon which reposed an old-fashioned alarm clock and an old-fashioned inkwell. I was immediately warmed by his jovial smile and cordial manner as he rose to greet me; he seemed the classic, friendly, jolly Englishman. He indicated a straight-backed chair, then sat down, snug in his tweed jacket and two sweaters, and we were away.

Professor Lewis, if you had a young friend with some interest in writing on Christian subjects, how would you advise him to prepare himself?

"I would say if a man is going to write on chemistry, he learns chemistry. The same is true of Christianity. But to speak of the craft itself, I would not know how to advise a man how to write. It is a matter of talent and interest. I believe he must be strongly moved if he

is to become a writer. Writing is like a 'lust,' or like 'scratching when you itch.' Writing comes as a result of a very strong impulse, and when it does come, I for one must get it out."

Can you suggest an approach that would spark the creation of a body of Christian literature strong enough to influence our generation?

"There is no formula in these matters. I have no recipe, no tablets. Writers are trained in so many individual ways that it is not for us to prescribe. Scripture itself is not systematic; the New Testament shows the greatest variety. God has shown us that he can use any instrument. Balaam's ass, you remember, preached a very effective sermon in the midst of his 'hee-haws.'"

By this time the mettle of the man I was interviewing was evident. I decided to shift to more open ground.

A light touch has been characteristic of your writings, even when you are dealing with heavy theological themes. Would you say there is a key to the cultivation of such an attitude?

"I believe this is a matter of temperament. However, I was helped in achieving this attitude by my studies of the literary men of the Middle Ages, and by the writings of G.K. Chesterton. Chesterton, for example, was not afraid to combine serious Christian themes with buffoonery. In the same way the miracle plays of the Middle Ages would deal with a sacred subject such as the nativity of Christ, yet would combine it with a farce."

Should Christian writers, then, in your opinion, attempt to be funny?

"No. I think that forced jocularities on spiritual subjects are an abomination, and

the attempts of some religious writers to be humorous are simply appalling. Some people write heavily, some write lightly. I prefer the light approach because I believe there is a great deal of false reverence about. There is too much solemnity and intensity in dealing with sacred matters; too much speaking in holy tones."

But is not solemnity proper and conducive to a sacred atmosphere?

"Yes and no. There is a difference between a private devotional life and a corporate one. Solemnity is proper in church, but things that are proper in church are not necessarily proper outside, and vice versa. For example, I can say a prayer while washing my teeth, but that does not mean I should wash my teeth in church."

What is your opinion of the kind of writing being done within the Christian church today?

"A great deal of what is being published by writers in the religious tradition is a scandal and is actually turning people away from the church. The liberal writers who are continually accommodating and whittling down the truth of the Gospel are responsible. I cannot understand how a man can appear in print claiming to disbelieve everything that he presupposes when he puts on the surplice. I feel it is a form of prostitution."

What do you think of the controversial new book, Honest to God, by John Robinson, the bishop of Woolwich?

"I prefer being honest to being 'honest to God.'"

What Christian writers have helped you?

"The contemporary book that has helped me the most is Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*. Others are Edwyn Bevan's book, *Symbolism and Belief*, Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, and the plays of Dorothy Sayers."

I believe it was Chesterton who was asked why he became a member of the church, and he replied, "To get rid of my sins."

At this point I was surprised by the sud-

denness of Professor Lewis' reply. "It is not enough to want to get rid of one's sins," he said. "We also need to believe in the One who saves us from our sins. Not only do we need to recognize that we are sinners; we need to believe in a Savior who takes away sin. Matthew Arnold once wrote, 'Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread.' Because we know we are sinners, it does not follow that we are saved."

In your book Surprised by Joy you remark that you were brought into the faith kicking and struggling and resentful, with eyes darting in every direction looking for an escape. You suggest that you were compelled, as it were, to become a Christian. Do you feel that you made a decision at the time of your conversion?

"I would not put it that way. What I wrote in *Surprised by Joy* was that 'before God closed in on me, I was offered what now appears a moment of wholly free choice.' But I feel my decision was not so important. I was the object rather than the subject in this affair. I was decided upon. I was glad afterwards at the way it came out, but at the moment what I heard was God saying, 'Put down your gun and we'll talk.'"

That sounds to me as if you came to a very definite point of decision.

"Well, I would say that the most deeply compelled action is also the freest action. By that I mean, no part of you is outside the action. It is a paradox. I expressed it in *Surprised by Joy* by saying that I chose, yet it really did not seem possible to do the opposite."

You wrote 20 years ago that "a man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool; you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But

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I Was Decided Upon

(continued from page 13)

let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." Would you say your view of this matter has changed since then?

"I would say there is no substantial change."

Would you say that the aim of Christian writing, including your own writing, is to bring about an encounter of the reader with Jesus Christ?

"That is not my language, yet it is the purpose I have in view. For example, I have just finished a book on prayer, an imaginary correspondence with someone who raises questions about difficulties in prayer."

How can we foster the encounter of people with Jesus Christ?

"You can't lay down any pattern for God. There are many different ways of bringing people into his Kingdom, even some ways that I specially dislike! I have therefore learned to be cautious in my judgment.

"But we can block it in many ways. As Christians we are tempted to make unnecessary concessions to those outside the faith. We give in too much. Now, I don't mean that we should run the risk of making a nuisance of ourselves by witnessing at improper times, but there comes a time when we must show that we disagree. We must show our Christian colors, if we are to be true to

Jesus Christ. We cannot remain silent or concede everything away.

"There is a character in one of my children's stories named Aslan, who says, 'I never tell anyone any story except his own.' I cannot speak for the way God deals with others; I only know how he deals with me personally. Of course, we are to pray for spiritual awakening, and in various ways we can do something toward it. But we must remember that neither Paul nor Apollos gives the increase. As Charles Williams once said, 'The altar must often be built in one place so that the fire may come down in another place.'"

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Bearing the Weight of Glory

(continued from page 7)

- George Sayer, *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), p. 138.
 - Oral History Interview, conducted by Lyle W. Dorsett, Kent, England, July 19 & 20, 1984, for the Marion E. Wade Center, p. 61.
 - "Christianity and Culture," *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), p. 14; "Rejoinder to Dr. Pittenger," *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), p. 181. According to the poet and novelist John Wain, who had been one of Lewis's students, "Lewis used to quote with approval general Booth's remark to Kipling: 'Young man, if I could win one soul for God by — by playing the tambourine with my toes, I'd do it.' Lewis did plenty of playing the tambourine with
- his toes, to the distress of some of the refined souls with whom he was surrounded at Oxford." "A Great Clerke," in *C.S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (Harcourt Brace/Harvest Books, 1992), p. 69.
- "Christianity and Literature," in *Christian Reflections*, p. 10. Similarly, he wrote in the midst of a sharp argument against T.S. Eliot, that "I agree with him about matters of such moment that all literary questions are, in comparison, trivial." *A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* (Oxford University Press/Galaxy Books, 1961), p. 9.
 - Letter to Sister Penelope, July 9, 1939, *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, Revised and Enlarged Edition, edited by Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), p. 322. It is not the purpose of this essay to go into how Lewis dealt with the problem of communicating traditional Christian content by using modern literary forms such as fantasy. Those interested in this aspect will find help in Doris T. Myers, *C.S. Lewis in Context* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1994) and in Meredith Veldman's treatment of the subject in *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain: Romantic Protest, 1945-80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
 - "Cross-Examination," *God in the Dock*, p. 262.
 - Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Essential C.S. Lewis* (New York: Colliers/Macmillan, 1988), p. 8.
 - Philip Ryken has nicely summarized the various aspects of Lewis's ministry of evangelism under teaching, writing, praying, and discipling in, "Winsome Evangelist: The Influence of C.S. Lewis," *Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*, pp. 55-78.
 - Michael Ward, "Escape to Wallaby Wood: Lewis's Depictions of Conversion," *Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*, p. 143.

You can't lay down any pattern for God. There are many different ways of bringing people into his Kingdom, even some ways that I specially dislike! I have therefore learned to be cautious in my judgment.

- 11 Oral History Interview with Stephen F. Olford, conducted by Lyle W. Dorsett, Oxford, England, July 26, 1985, for the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, pp. 6-7. Lewis said that his predominately intellectual approach in evangelism was due to the limitation of his own gifts. However, he was very sensitive to and appreciative of what he called the more emotional and more "pneumatic" kind of appeal which he had seen "work wonders on a modern audience." "Where God gives the gift, the 'foolishness of preaching' is still mighty. But best of all is a team of two: one to deliver the preliminary intellectual barrage, and the other to follow up with a direct attack on the heart "Modern Man and his Categories of Thought," in *Present Concerns*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Pub., 1986), p. 66.
- 12 Oral History Interview, conducted by Lyle W. Dorsett, Kent, England, November 19, 1983, for the Marion E. Wade Center, p. 9.
- 13 Harry Blamires, "Against the Stream: C.S. Lewis and the Literary Scene," *Journal of the Irish Christian Study Centre*, vol. 1 (1983), p. 16. A.N. Wilson wrote that the *Oxford History of English Literature*, published in 1954, "established Lewis as a giant among pygmies of the Oxford English Faculty, which made their failure to promote him to a professorship all the more surprising." *C.S. Lewis: A Biography* (W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 244-45.
- 14 Quoted in a letter from Walter Hooper to Christopher W. Mitchell, February 8, 1998. Lewis himself noted that having written imaginative books was used against a writer if he then wrote theology or literary criticism. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 185.
- 15 Blamires, "Against the Stream," p. 17.
- 16 Walter Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 65.
- 17 *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, p. 369., Lewis "was a rare case of the don who is forced into the limelight by the demands of his own conscience," noted Wain. "I believe he would never have bothered to court the mass public at all had he not seen it as his duty to defend the Christian faith...against the hostility or indifference that surrounded it." "A Great Clerke," p. 69. Lewis observed: "If all the world were Christian, it might not matter if all the world were uneducated. But, as it is, a cultural life will exist outside the Church whether it exists inside or not. To be ignorant and simple now – not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground – would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen." Quoted from "Learning in War-Time," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, Revised and Expanded Edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), p. 28.
- 18 Sayer, *Jack*, p. 170.
- 19 *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1984), p. 143. Walter Hooper states that if all the extant letters of Lewis were published today the entire collection would run to at least a half dozen volumes.
- 20 *Letters to Children*, edited by Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead (New York: Touchstone Book, Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 60.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 106f.
- 22 Lewis typically had a heavy tutorial load each term, frequently lectured, and was often occupied in the afternoons with domestic duties at home. See "Memoir of C.S. Lewis," by W.H. Lewis in *Letters to C.S. Lewis*, p. 37.
- 23 *Surprised By Joy*, p. 213.
- 24 "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and other Addresses*, p. 19.
- 25 *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 28 Quoted in a letter from Walter Hooper to Christopher W. Mitchell, February 8, 1998.
- 29 Patrick Ferry does a compelling job of linking this idea with Lewis's notion of "Mere Christianity": "A respectful regard for the glory of eternity finally must overcome factionalism for the benefit of those who are still outside the faith....As long as there are people who are numbered among those who comprise the communion of saints, the *una sanctu* remains in need of a 'mere' Christianity – because, as C.S. Lewis reminds us, there is no such thing as a 'mere' mortal." "Mere Christianity Because There Are No Mere Mortals," *Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*, pp. 170-71.
- 30 *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers*, Volume 2, chosen and edited by Barbara Reynolds and published by the Dorothy L. Sayers Society (Cambridge: Carole Green Publishing, 1997), p. 413. Sayers is having a bit of fun at her own expense here, for as Barbara Reynolds notes, Sayers continued the correspondence for at least another year and even permitted the Atheist to call on her twice (n. 8, p. 413).
- 31 Once again, Patrick Terry's treatment of the connection between Lewis's concept of "mere Christianity" and his idea of the "weight of glory" provides a compelling illustration of this point. One further qualification is in order. I do not mean to leave the impression that Lewis's ministry was limited to the written word. See for example his brother Warren's estimate of Lewis's sense of charity in *Memoirs of C.S. Lewis*, *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, pp. 41-42.
- 32 *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1988), pp. 117-18.

Lewis "was a rare case of the don who is forced into the limelight by the demands of his own conscience," noted Wain. "I believe he would never have bothered to court the mass public at all had he not seen it as his duty to defend the Christian faith...against the hostility or indifference that surrounded it."

Profiles in Faith: Major Warren Hamilton Lewis

(continued from page 1)



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primary Lewis-related publications include *A Reader's Guide to Through the Wardrobe*, *InterVarsity Press*, September 2005 (co-authored with Leland Ryken), *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis* (co-edited with Clyde S. Kilby), and *C.S. Lewis: Letters to Children* (co-edited with Lyle W. Dorsett). She is Managing Editor for *Seven: An Anglo-American Literary Review*. The Marion E. Wade Center houses a major research collection of writings by and about seven British authors including C.S. Lewis (the other six writers are Owen Barfield, G.K. Chesterton, George MacDonald, Dorothy L. Sayers, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams).

mother and later a governess. These were idyllic years for the two boys; virtually inseparable, they spent the vast majority of their waking hours together, not only learning their lessons, but also in long periods of creative play. Active children, though not athletic, whenever the weather permitted, the brothers were out of doors exploring the beautiful Irish countryside which was just a short bike ride from their home Little Lea. Another favorite childhood activity was their annual month-long seaside holiday, taken with their mother and nursemaid.

When typical rainy Irish weather forced them indoors, the two boys relished these hours as well.

Reading filled much of their time, but they also created and illustrated their own stories. Together, they conceived the imaginary world of *Boxen*, which combined Warnie's interest in steamships and trains with Jack's passion for chivalrous knights, along with "dressed animals" in the tradition of Beatrix Potter.

These happy early years were the foundation for the lifelong friendship that meant so much to both brothers. Jack described their relationship this way in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*: "Though three years my senior, [Warnie] never seemed to be an elder brother; we were allies, not to say confederates, from the very first."²

Bright But Lazy Student

In May 1905, shortly before his tenth birthday, Warren was sent by his parents to Wynyard, a small boarding school in Hertfordshire, England. Unfortunately, the choice of school could not have been worse, as it was run by a headmaster who "was an extremely uninspiring teacher—in fact not a teacher at all, but rather a warder who ruled his charges by sheer terror, and saw that the day's useless allotted

task was performed solely by the gusto and dexterity by which he yielded his cane."³ The misery of enduring this terrible school was compounded by the fact that little learning actually occurred. Years later Warren acknowledged: "It is a significant fact that I cannot remember one single piece of instruction that was imparted to me [during my four years] at Wynyard, and yet, when I first went there, I was neither an idle nor a stupid boy."⁴

After his dismal years spent foundering at Wynyard, Warren's next school could not help but shine in contrast. And indeed that was the case, for Warnie quickly grew to love Malvern College and the freedom it offered (in contrast to the constant harassment he had experienced at Wynyard). This freedom did not translate into academic rigor in his studies, however, for the slovenly academic habits that Warren had acquired at his earlier school remained. Thus, though he was very happy at Malvern, Warren left in May 1913 with little scholastic achievement to show for his four years.

As a result, once Warren decided to apply for a career in the army, it became clear that he would need help preparing for the entrance exam to Sandhurst Royal Military Academy. With the assistance of W.T. Kirkpatrick, the tutor who was later to have such a great impact on C.S. Lewis, Warren was able to earn a Prize Cadetship to Sandhurst, placing twenty-first out of 201 successful candidates. As Warren later recalled:

When I went to [study with Kirkpatrick] I had what would now be called 'an inferiority complex', partly the result of Wynyard, partly of my own idleness, and partly of the laissez faire methods of Malvern. A few weeks of Kirk's generous but sparing praise of my efforts, and of his pungent criticisms of the Malvern masters restored my long lost self confidence: I saw that whilst I wasn't not brilliant or even clever, I had in the past been unsuccessful because I was lazy, and not lazy because I was unsuccessful.⁵

Career Soldier

Due to wartime pressures, Warren's accelerated officer's training course was only nine months in length instead of the usual two years. On September 30, 1914, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC), and sent to France where he spent most of World War I. Following the end of hostilities, he served in Belgium for a

few months, until he was reassigned to England for additional training. During this and subsequent home assignments, Warren's usual practice was to spend his leaves with his brother Jack, who was then a student at Oxford University, and later a don at Magdalen College, Oxford. Upon occasion, Warren did return to Belfast to visit his father, Albert, but these visits were almost always ones of obligation, for both Lewis brothers had become increasingly estranged from their father since the death of their beloved mother, Flora, in 1908.⁶

Warren's responsibilities in the RASC were primarily administrative in nature as he fulfilled various supervisory roles overseeing troop supply needs including, at times, mechanical transport. His later overseas postings included Sierre Leone, West Africa, and two tours of duty in Shanghai, China, where he was stationed when the Japanese attacked in January 1932. Throughout his years in the army (ranging from 1914 until 1932), these overseas tours of duty were interspersed with home assignments at military bases in England.

It was during his first posting in the Far East that Warren received a telegram from his brother, Jack, informing him of their father's death on the 25th of September 1929. The sad news was totally unexpected, as due to the distance from home and the slowness of sea mail, Warren was not aware that Albert was gravely ill. Alone and grieving, far from his brother, Warnie recorded the following thoughts in his diary:

[My father's death] is hurting me more than I should ever have imagined it would have done. For one thing, my relations with him on paper have been friendly and intimate ever since I was unexpectedly ordered abroad, and by mere lapse of time I was perhaps more affectionately disposed to him than I would have been had I been in frequent contact with him. . . . I am glad that the last time we spent together was also one of the happiest we ever had — the first week of April 1927 — unclouded by the emotionalism with which he would have spoilt it had he known that I would be half way to China before the month was over. . . . The thought that there will never be any 'going home' for me [to the family home in Belfast], is hard to bear. I'd give a lot at this minute for a talk with Jack.⁷

Some months after his father's death, Warren returned home from Shanghai on leave, during which

time he and Jack settled the affairs of their father's estate, including the sale of the family home in Belfast. By this time, Jack was already established as a don at Oxford University, and making his home with the mother and daughter of an army friend, Paddy Moore, who had died in the war. When Warren's next assignment was a fortuitous posting to nearby Bulford, he was able to spend many weekend leaves visiting Jack's new household in Oxford. Eventually, Jack and the Moores invited Warren to permanently make his home with them when he was no longer in the army. He happily agreed. And so it was that in July 1930, with funds combined from the brothers' inheritance from their father, along with money from Mrs. Moore, this newly formed family unit purchased The Kilns, just outside Oxford. The Kilns, a modest brick home set on eight acres of lovely grounds including woods and a pond, became Warnie's permanent home in December 1932 when he retired with the rank of Captain from the RASC after 18 years of service.⁸

As much as Warnie grew to love his new home at The Kilns, the relationship between Jack and Mrs. Janie King Moore was to cause him great unhappiness. Initially appreciative of the home life Mrs. Moore offered to him and Jack, Warren grew to resent her unceasing demands upon the time and energies of his brother. Jack's commitment to Mrs. Moore was begun with a wartime promise to her son, and he fulfilled it faithfully until her death in 1951. It was an attachment which Warren never did understand or approve, as he reflected later: "The most puzzling to myself and to Jack's friends was Mrs. Moore's extreme unsuitability as a companion for him. She was a woman of very limited mind, and notably domineering and possessive by temperament. She . . . interfered constantly with his work, and imposed upon him a heavy burden of minor domestic tasks. . . . the stress and gloom that it caused him must not be played down."⁹ While Warren's assessment of Mrs. Moore may have been overly harsh, there is no doubt that her controlling nature as well as the long years of her failing health did take a heavy toll on the home life of both Lewis brothers.

In spite of his eventual difficulties with Mrs. Moore, the early days of Warren's retirement were very happy indeed. Though there were the usual annoyances common to any household, Warnie was nonetheless grateful for the many good things which Mrs. Moore and

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He began his retirement with the ambitious task of arranging, selecting and transcribing the many family documents which he and his brother had inherited at their father's death....which he titled as *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*.

her daughter, Maureen, brought into his life. He was also very glad to be permanently reunited with his beloved brother. But most of all, Warren rejoiced that he was now free from the boredom and restrictions that had begun to prescribe his military life. A year into his retirement, he recorded the following evaluation: "I can say with no reservations whatsoever, that the past twelve months has been incomparably the happiest of my life."¹⁰

Inveterate Reader and Writer

One of Warren's frequent complaints about life in the army had been that it was difficult to find blocks of uninterrupted reading time in the RASC mess. Though not as disciplined in this pursuit as his brother, reading was nonetheless an essential of his daily life. Raised in a home that nurtured his love for books, whenever possible Warren turned to reading as the preferred way to spend a quiet evening. His reading preferences were eclectic, ranging from the poetry of the *Aeniad* to the humor of P.G. Wodehouse. He devoured mysteries, science fiction, and novels of all sorts. But he also read through an unending supply of history, biography, literary criticism, poetry and drama. Nor did he neglect religious works, as his reading for just one Lenten season illustrates:

I've spent an hour each day in religious reading and during the last six weeks I've read Law's *Serious Call*, Lathom's *Pastor Pastorum*, Jack's *Reflections on the Psalms*, *God in the Dock*, *Screwtape*, and *Letters to Malcolm*, G.K. Chesterton's *Everlasting Man*, and Austin Farrer's *Is There a Science of God* – as well of course as my normal daily Bible reading.¹¹

Warren's love of words led him into another related pursuit – that of writing, itself. He began his retirement with the ambitious task of arranging, selecting and transcribing the many family documents which he and his brother had inherited at their father's death. These materials consisted of family diaries, letters, miscellaneous papers and

photographs covering the years from 1850 through 1930. It took Warren several years to compile these excerpts, along with his accompanying notes and commentary, into eleven bound volumes – which he titled as *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*. Never published, this extensive family record has proved invaluable to those interested in the life of C.S. Lewis.¹²

However, long before he began his work on the *Lewis Family Papers*, Warren had already dedicated countless hours to the writing of his own diaries. Consisting of more than a million and a quarter words, the handwritten diaries fill twenty-three volumes and cover a span of over fifty years (1919-1972). In these pages, Warren wrote of his army experiences, as well as of family life in Belfast and his retirement years at The Kilns. There are records of his walking tours with Jack, conversations with friends, mentions of books he has read and places he has visited, as well as his astute reflections on numerous subjects of all sorts and categories.

Warren's literary and historical curiosity extended to other areas as well. In 1919, his reading of St. Simon's diaries awakened his interest in 17th century France. As he continued to read further in this historical period, his fascination deepened and during retirement he began composing his own popular histories. Warren's first published book, *The Splendid Century: Some Aspects of French Life in the Reign of Louis XIV*, was issued in 1953. It was followed by six other titles on 17th century France: *The Sunset of the Splendid Century: The Life and Times of Louis Auguste de Bourbon, Duc de Maine, 1670-1736* (1955); *Assault on Olympos: The Rise of the House of Gramont between 1604 and 1678* (1958); *Louis XIV: An Informal Portrait* (1959); *The Scandalous Regent: A Life of Philippe, Duc d'Orleans, 1674-1723, and of his family* (1961); *Levantine Adventurer: The Travels and Missions of the Chevalier d'Arvieuz, 1653-1697* (1962); *Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon* (1964).

Though not works of extensive original research, his elegantly written histories of 17th and 18th century France were nonetheless

well-regarded by reviewers. Described as delightful and witty, his seven books demonstrate his insight into human nature as well as his observant eye for details—literary traits which also characterize his own diaries. Following C.S. Lewis’s death in 1963, Warren wrote a biographical volume on his brother which consisted primarily of collected letters. This unpublished work was extensively edited and eventually published as *Letters of C.S. Lewis*.¹³

In addition to his own writing and editing, once he had retired from the army, Warnie also began to serve as his brother’s secretary—typing the answers to all of Jack’s non-personal correspondence. Because of the vast quantity of letters which came to C.S. Lewis in response to both his books and BBC radio broadcasts, the help which Warren provided in this way was extremely significant. (Warren later estimated that he had typed at least twelve thousand letters for his brother.)

Steadfast Friend and “Perfect” Gentleman

In spite of Warren’s reserved character, he was a personable and well-liked friend to many. First and foremost, of course, there was his friendship with his brother Jack which has already been described in some detail. Because of the closeness of their relationship, it is not surprising that in later life most of Warnie’s friends were also friends of Jack’s.¹⁴ In particular, this included those men who were members of the Inklings—a group of friends who gathered together weekly in Jack’s Magdalen College rooms for an evening of vigorous conversation that inevitably revolved around literary topics. In addition to the two Lewis brothers, members of the Inklings included: J.R.R. Tolkien and his son Christopher, Robert Havard, Owen Barfield, Hugo Dyson, Colin Hardie, Charles Williams, and many other academic friends.¹⁵ Most of the Inklings were writers, themselves, and as a result, one favorite aspect of these gatherings often included readings from their various works in progress, accompanied by extempore

criticism—both favorable and not.

J.R.R. Tolkien wrote this description of one meeting to his son Christopher (who also attended the Inklings meetings when he was in Oxford):

C.S.L. [Jack] was highly flown, but we were also in good fettle. . . . The result was a most amusing and highly contentious evening, on which (had an outsider eavesdropped) he would have thought it a meeting of fell enemies hurling deadly insults before drawing their guns. Warnie was in excellent majoral form. On one occasion when the audience had flatly refused to hear Jack discourse on and define ‘Chance’, Jack said: ‘Very well, some other time, but if you die tonight you’ll be cut off knowing a great deal less about Chance you might have.’ Warnie: ‘That only goes to illustrate what I’ve always said: every cloud has a silver lining.’¹⁶

Not only does this brief description give a wonderful glimpse into the joviality and intellectual repartee which was the core of the Inklings, but it also demonstrates the wit of Warren Lewis—an aspect of Warnie’s personality which has often been overlooked.

Indeed, apart from Jack (and certain members of The Kilns household), it was the Inklings friends who saw the reserved Warren at his unguarded best. And as such, their perception of Warnie is worth noting. While his brother Jack was clearly the dynamic center of the gatherings, Warren was nonetheless a popular and significant contributor to the wide-ranging conversations and intellectual debate. But he also played an important part in the group by often serving on behalf of his brother as a welcoming host. It was a role which Warnie filled naturally and humbly. As John Wain, one of his fellow Inklings observed: “W.H. Lewis, [was] a man who stays in my memory as the most courteous I have ever met—not with mere politeness, but with a genial, self-forgetful considerateness that was as instinctive to him as breathing.”¹⁷

This sense of Warnie as a true, instinctive

While his brother Jack was clearly the dynamic center of the gatherings, Warren was nonetheless a popular and significant contributor to the wide-ranging conversations and intellectual debate.

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To be sure, there were moments when he experienced a sense of the transcendent – particularly when as a child he encountered beauty in the natural world – but to a large extent he lived his early years without regard to any spiritual reality.

gentleman who treated others with genuine courtesy and respect is echoed by his step-nephew, Douglas Gresham, who recorded that

Warnie, a gentleman in all the finest senses of the word, was liked throughout the neighborhood, which, when I arrived, was made up chiefly of the homes of people who worked at the nearby motorcar factories at Cowley. 'The Major' was a well known and respected figure; always accorded a civil 'Mornin', Major' or 'Arternoon, Major' as he passed by on his regular walks down to Magdalen to work, study or read with Jack in his college rooms during term time.¹⁸

A Christian Who Struggled and Yet Persevered
Raised in a Christian home, Warren was baptized and confirmed in the Anglican church in Belfast where his grandfather was rector. In spite of this early foundation, however, Warnie felt little attraction to the faith, and his church-going gradually became more a matter of family tradition than of personal conviction. To be sure, there were moments when he experienced a sense of the transcendent – particularly when as a child he encountered beauty in the natural world – but to a large extent he lived his early years without regard to any spiritual reality. However, in March 1930, while returning from a tour of duty in China, Warren stopped off for a visit to the Buddhist shrine at Kamakura, Japan. Standing before a huge statue of the Dibutsu Buddha, Warren had a profound spiritual encounter, one which reawakened his sense that there was more to life than the material world surrounding him.

It was apparent that God was steadily working on his heart and mind, and in his diary entry of May 9, 1931, Warren recorded:

I started to say my prayers again after having discontinued doing so for more years than I care to remember: this was no sudden

impulse but the result of a conviction of the truth of Christianity which has been growing on me for a considerable time: a conviction for which I admit I should be hard put to find a logical proof, but which rests on the inherent improbability of the whole of existence being fortuitous, and the inability of the materialists to provide any convincing explanation of the origin of life. I feel happier for my return to the practice which is a fact that material explanation will cover. When I have prepared myself a little further, I intend to go to Communion once again. So with me, the wheel has now made the full revolution – indifference, skepticism, atheism, agnosticism, and back again to Christianity.¹⁹

Hints of Warren's spiritual development are scattered throughout his diaries, but unlike the very public expression of his brother's faith, Warnie's Christian belief remained a quiet essential of his life. Over time, he developed a practice of daily prayer and Bible Study, and upon retirement, he was a regular congregant at their neighborhood Anglican church (even serving for a time as churchwarden). His diary also demonstrates the way in which his Christian faith informed his daily actions and struggles. There are frequent expressions of gratitude to God for simple pleasures, and an occasional recognition of the transcendent:

Seeing a birch tree with its russet leaves in the bright sunlight, I got that feeling – or rather *vision* that comes like a flash of lightning, and leaves a confused feeling that this is only a pale shadow of some unimaginable beauty which either one used to know, or which is just round some invisible corner. I accept it with deep thankfulness whenever it comes as a promise of immortality.²⁰

In numerous places, Warren also records his deep desire for God's help in facing the ongoing challenges of life. Among the most severe of these trials was his longtime battle

with alcoholism. The addictive attraction of drink was an unfortunate byproduct of his years in the army, when alcohol became his preferred means of coping with stress and boredom. In his younger days, drinking was a crutch which he handled without too much apparent difficulty, but as time went on, the addiction became more destructive. A sensitive and gentle man by nature, Warnie was also subject to bouts of serious depression, which in turn were exacerbated by the affects of alcohol. Thus, in later years, when he sunk into depression—caused often by his reaction to the stressful and unhappy atmosphere in The Kilns as Mrs. Moore’s mental health deteriorated—he succumbed to intense drinking binges which caused him and those around him, most especially his brother, great pain.

Warren struggled valiantly to overcome this addiction without the benefit of understanding it as a disease rather than a character flaw. There were months, sometimes years, of hard won success followed by a brief relapse—and then the struggle would begin once again. The severest test to his resolve came with the death of his brother in 1963. The ten years following Jack’s death were lonely ones for Warren, filled at times with periods of anxiety and depression. But with God’s help, he continued his courageous struggle against turning to the comforts of alcohol, and succeeded more often than not. After a period of declining health and a final visit to his beloved Ireland, Warren Lewis returned to The Kilns where he died peacefully at home on April 9, 1973. He was nearly 78. ■

- 1 Warren H. Lewis, “Memoir of C.S. Lewis” in *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, (London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1966), p. 1.
- 2 C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), p. 13.
- 3 Warren H. Lewis, *Lewis Family Papers*, vol. III, (1933), bound typescript in the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, pp. 39-40.
- 4 Warren H. Lewis, *Lewis Family Papers*, vol. III, p. 40.
- 5 Warren H. Lewis, *Lewis Family Papers*, vol. IV, (1933), p. 62.
- 6 For more on the death of Flora Lewis, see C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, pp. 24-27.
- 7 Warren H. Lewis, *Brothers and Friends*, ed. by Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), p. 16.
- 8 When World War II erupted, Warren was recalled to active service and given the provisional rank of Major. He was transferred to the Reserve of Officers in Oxford in August 1941, after being evacuated along with his unit from Dunkirk.
- 9 Warren H. Lewis, “Memoir of C.S. Lewis” in *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, pp. 12-13.
- 10 Warren H. Lewis, *Brothers and Friends*, p. 129.
- 11 Warren H. Lewis, *Brothers and Friends*, p. 299.
- 12 At his death, Warren willed the *Lewis Family Papers* to the Wade Center at Wheaton College, where they are available for use by researchers.
- 13 The earlier unpublished and unedited biography written by Warren was also willed by him to the Wade Center at Wheaton College, and is available for use by researchers.
- 14 Warren did stay in touch with one close friend from his army days, Major H.D. Parkin – a friendship that spanned almost thirty years, until Parkin’s death in 1958. Though there is not space in this brief biographical sketch to include her, another close friend worth noting was C.S. Lewis’s wife, Joy. For more on Warren’s relationship with his sister-in-law, see *Brothers and Friends*, pp. 244-251.
- 15 For more on the Inklings, see *The Inklings* by Humphrey Carpenter (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), *C.S. Lewis: Companion and Guide* by Walter Hooper (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), and also the forthcoming book, *The Company They Keep: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien as Writers in Community* by Diana Glycer (Kent State UP, 2006).
- 16 Humphrey Carpenter with Christopher Tolkien, ed. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981), p. 103.
- 17 John Wain, *Sprightly Running* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1962), p. 184.
- 18 Douglas Gresham, *Lenten Lands* (San Francisco: HarperSanFran, 1988), p. 42.
- 19 Warren H. Lewis, *Brothers and Friends*, p. 80.
- 20 Warren H. Lewis, *Brothers and Friends*, p. 213.

The severest test to his resolve came with the death of his brother in 1963. The ten years following Jack’s death were lonely ones for Warren, filled at times with periods of anxiety and depression.

C.S. Lewis's Concern for the Future of Humanity

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Personal
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as collegial
life at
Oxford was
full of
masks, as
indeed any
royal court
is full of
them.

I ended my first book, with the words 'no answer.' I know now O Lord, why you utter no answer. You yourself are the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words, words; to be led out to battle against other words. Long did I hate you, long did I fear you.²

Till We Have Faces is then descriptive of the frustrations we share within our natural, human condition, until we meet the face of God, in life through death and resurrection. It is a life journey.

Central to the plot of the novel is Orual, the king's oldest daughter, with her two younger stepsisters, Redival, who never understands Psyche, the youngest sister. But Orual believes she loves Psyche dearly. Changing emotional triangles within the palace and royal family generate much of the story-plot. At the heart of it all is Orual's misconstrual of "love" for Psyche, her adored sister, and of Psyche's contrasted understanding of love. Early on, Psyche confesses to Orual, that all her old longings were removed; for everything before was a dream.³ Then she invites her sister to come to her—for she is not her own.⁴ Orual responds confusedly, because she sees that Psyche is teaching her about kinds of love she did not know.⁵ Later, when she meets again her sister, who she thought was dead, now alive again, Orual confesses that she was telling her about so many wonders. They made her feel she had been wrong all her life. So everything had to be begun all over again.⁶ Then at the end of the narration, as told by Orual, she says: "Psyche, never again will I call you mine; but all there is of me shall be yours." Now Orual realized she never had one selfless thought of her. She was a craver of selfish desires, an erotic indeed!⁷

As every Christian learns with the experience of Nicodemus, or of Psyche, being "born again" is when we become more alive, only by the experience of "death to the self." Indeed, we discover we become

"most ourselves" when we are "most in Christ Jesus." So, as Orual begins this dying process to "her old self," she sees her sister being "the old Psyche still." But she has become a thousand times more her very self than she had ever been before her sacrifice. Now Orual sees "a real woman," as she had never seen before.⁸ This now encourages Orual to follow, but in alarm she realizes she is being un-made, to be no one. Then she is amazed to find she has become Psyche, also.⁹

Personal unreality, Lewis symbolizes, is the wearing of masks, just as collegial life at Oxford was full of masks, as indeed any royal court is full of them. For the roles we wear ambitiously make us all "personages" instead of being real persons. But for Lewis it also echoed a long remembered remark he had from his own adolescence, that he was the kind of person who gets told, "And take that look off your face too." Orual first discovered she was ugly relationally, as a child, "when her father, the King, ordered that she and her companions wear veils, 'and good thick veils too.'" One of the other girls tittered, and Orual realized that was the first time she clearly understood she was ugly.¹⁰ When the King without a male descendent hears he has a third daughter, he sees accusing faces everywhere all gaping at his intense frustration.¹¹ Likewise the vestal girls, attending the priest in his grisly religious duties, have their faces so heavily painted, that they appear only as masked figures. When Psyche is offered for sacrifice as the scape-goat, her face too, is unrecognizable behind the heavy paint.¹² Then as the royal tyrant lies dying, always so self-centered, Orual reported seeing him with a terrified, idiotic, almost an animal's face.¹³ Real people do not wear masks, for expressions of true love are always transparent. Eventually Orual asks the question (which is the title of the novel): "How can they [i.e., the gods] meet us face to face, until we have faces?"¹⁴

Augustine, whom Lewis admired so much, states at the end of his great work, *de Trinitate*, XV, 51, "Let me seek your face

always....Let me remember you, let me understand you, let me love you. Increase these things in me, until you restore me to wholeness." We "see God" in becoming barefaced, stripped of all our pretensions of fear and pride before him, indeed as the Beatitude expresses it, "pure in heart," stripped of all our masks. Personal transformation as Psyche experienced was expressive also for Augustine, as a function of one's relationship with God.

Gifted With Personhood

Postmodern philosophers, under the dominating influence of Heidegger, have been preoccupied with the nature and affirmation of the human identity. A major issue concerns the primacy of *ipseity* over *alterity*. These are the Latin nouns for when I speak of my "self" and when I speak of "the other." Simply contrasted, a narcissistic culture accepts *ipseity* as the belief that one is basically self-contained; hence the cult of self-fulfilment. Whereas *alterity*, as developed by Levinas, gives primacy to being relational and social. Freud represents the first approach, of interpreting the decisive factors of personality as *intra-personal*, whereas Jacques Lacan, and much of the therapeutic movement today, interprets them *inter-personally*. For the small baby, the attestation of the mother's face leads from "smile, to burp, to fart," helping the child to become a valorized self, provided there is attentiveness and unconditional acceptance.

Many of my students have been directed to read *Till We Have Faces*. One wrote to me about her transforming awareness of receiving her identity as the gift of God's attentive love. "I left my 'self' —home, family, job—in order to find myself, like the Prodigal Son. This was because I did not feel that my identity was acceptable to my parents, or that I was 'OK,' the way I was [like Orual]. In order to try and find myself, I re-invented myself, and then discovered there was an enormous gap between the self I had invented and the true self. Despair swamped me, as I realized I did not succeed either

with the self I tried to leave behind, or with the self I had tried to re-invent."

Orual, on assuming the role of Queen of Glome, became more and more "the Queen," and "Orual had less and less." She then locked Orual up or laid her asleep as best she could somewhere deep down inside her.¹⁵ Later she realized that she had been so wounded relationally that all her life she had spent trying to stanch her bleeding heart.¹⁶ Journal-keeping often helps us gain more self-understanding, so Orual's account of the novel gave her personal insights. But they became terrifying revelations of her self. For she discovered how self-centered all her life had been, to the point of destroying her faithful servant Bardia in his selflessness for her. Now she was "empty," only "a gap."¹⁷ In dreams that follow, Orual discovered her whole life had been like forms of cannibalism, eating other people up that she thought she loved, only to abuse and use them for her own narcissistic purposes. She was wholly a "craver" who had to be "un-made," to become as "no one" in herself, only gifted "to be," by true love beyond her control.

The confession of Orual is the tragic narration of Everyone. It expresses the incapacity of the human being to exercise love properly, without the capacity of God's love within us.¹⁸ Only humans live with "mythopeia," because of their "sinful" confusion to know their moral limits, when they also experience transcendence. The classical notion that potency lies in "being," has become our "natural" way of giving ourselves credit for powers beyond our sinful incapacity. [As Lewis explained in his essay on "Nature," the Greek *physis* as "a coming-to-be," was linked, with the Latin *natura*, the biological connotation of birth and growth.¹⁹] But Lewis anticipated with fear the further blindness which ensues when the advances of technology further extend human *hubris*, with the delusion of an endlessly expanding capacity to his selfhood. Thus *Till We Have Faces* challenges us deeply. It also helps to explain the contemporary conflicts and

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C.S. Lewis's Concern for the Future of Humanity

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chaos of our lives and of so much confusion within our society today. ■

- 1 C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001, p. 55.
- 2 Ibid., p. 308.
- 3 Ibid., p. 109.
- 4 Ibid., p. 128.
- 5 Ibid., p. 165.
- 6 Ibid., p. 115.
- 7 Ibid., p. 305.
- 8 Ibid., p. 306.
- 9 Ibid., p. 308.
- 10 Ibid., p. 11.
- 11 Ibid., p. 16.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 42-3, 81.
- 13 Ibid., p. 203.
- 14 Ibid., p. 294.
- 15 Ibid., p. 226.
- 16 Ibid., p. 245.
- 17 Ibid., p. 267.
- 18 See the important article by J. D. Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 28, 1975, pp. 401-448.
- 19 C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd. Edit., 1967, pp. 25, 33-34.

I Was Decided Upon

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Part two of an interview with C. S. Lewis by Sherwood E. Wirt. C. S. Lewis is one of the world's most eminent and popular writers on Christian themes. He is professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, England. Among his books are The Screwtape Letters, Mere Christianity and Reflections on the Psalms. The first half of this interview appeared in the September, 1963, issue of DECISION.

"Heaven, Earth and Outer Space"

The author of The Screwtape Letters speaks his mind on a variety of Christian issues

The hour and a half I spent with Mr. Clive Staples Lewis in his quarters at Magdalene College, Cambridge University, will remain a treasured memory. I found Professor Lewis in his modest establishment, surrounded by the historic atmosphere of the old university city, engaged in the quiet daily stint of teaching medieval classic literature. It was hard to realize that this unassuming man is probably the outstanding Christian literary figure of our age. I was prompted to say to him:

Professor Lewis, your writings have an unusual quality not often found in discussions of Christian themes. You write as though you enjoyed it.

"If I didn't enjoy writing I wouldn't continue to do it. Of all my books, there was only one I did not take pleasure in writing."

Which one?

"*The Screwtape Letters*.* They were dry and gritty going. At the time, I was thinking of objections to the Christian life, and decided to put them into the form, 'That's what the devil would say.' But making goods 'bad' and bads 'good' gets to be fatiguing."

How would you suggest a young Christian writer go about developing a style?

"The way for a person to develop a style is (a) to know exactly what he wants to say, and (b) to be sure he is saying exactly that. The reader, we must remember, does not start by knowing what we mean. If our words are ambiguous, our meaning will escape him. I sometimes think that writing is like driving sheep down a road. If there is any gate open to the left or the right the readers will most certainly go into it."

Do you believe that the Holy Spirit can speak to the world through Christian writers today?

"I prefer to make no judgment concerning a writer's direct 'illumination' by the Holy Spirit. I have no way of knowing whether what is written is from heaven or not. I do believe that God is the Father of lights — natu-

* *The Screwtape Letters*, Mr. Lewis' most popular and widely read work, has gone into some 27 printings. It consists of a series of letters written by an official of "his Satanic Majesty's Lowerarchy" to his nephew, who is a junior demon on earth. The letters seek to advise the nephew in ways to corrupt the faith of a human being who becomes a Christian. See also DECISION, July, 1963, page 2. — Ed.

I sometimes think that writing is like driving sheep down a road. If there is any gate open to the left or the right the readers will most certainly go into it.

ral lights as well as spiritual lights (James 1:17). That is, God is not interested only in Christian writers as such. He is concerned with all kinds of writing. In the same way a sacred calling is not limited to ecclesiastical functions. The man who is weeding a field of turnips is also serving God."

An American writer, Mr. Dewey Beegle, has stated that in his opinion the Isaac Watts hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," is more inspired by God than is the "Song of Solomon" in the Old Testament. What would be your view?

"The great saints and mystics of the church have felt just the opposite about it. They have found tremendous spiritual truth in the 'Song of Solomon.' There is a difference of levels here. The question of the canon is involved. Also we must remember that what is meat for a grown person might be unsuited to the palate of a child."

How would you evaluate modern literary trends as exemplified by such writers as Ernest Hemingway, Samuel Beckett and Jean-Paul Sartre?

"I have read very little in this field. I am not a contemporary scholar. I am not even a scholar of the past, but I am a lover of the past."

Do you believe that the use of filth and obscenity is necessary in order to establish a realistic atmosphere in contemporary literature?

"I do not. I treat this development as a symptom, a sign of a culture that has lost its faith. Moral collapse follows upon spiritual collapse. I look upon the immediate future with great apprehension."

Do you feel, then, that modern culture is being de-Christianized?

"I cannot speak to the political aspects of the question, but I have some definite views about the de-Christianizing of the church. I believe that there are many accommodating preachers, and too many practitioners in the

church who are not believers. Jesus Christ did not say, 'Go into all the world and tell the world that it is quite right.' The Gospel is something completely different. In fact, it is directly opposed to the world.

"The case against Christianity that is made out in the world is quite strong. Every war, every shipwreck, every cancer case, every calamity, contributes to making a *prima facie* case against Christianity. It is not easy to be a believer in the face of this surface evidence. It calls for a strong faith in Jesus Christ."

Do you approve of men such as Bryan Green and Billy Graham asking people to come to a point of decision regarding the Christian life?

"I had the pleasure of meeting Billy Graham once. We had dinner together during his visit to Cambridge University in 1955, while he was conducting a mission to students. I thought he was a very modest and a very sensible man, and I liked him very much indeed.

"In a civilization like ours, I feel that everyone has to come to terms with the claims of Jesus Christ upon his life, or else be guilty of inattention or of evading the question. In the Soviet Union it is different. Many people living in Russia today have never had to consider the claims of Christ because they have never heard of those claims.

"In the same way we who live in English-speaking countries have never really been forced to consider the claims, let us say, of Hinduism. But in our Western civilization we are obligated both morally and intellectually to come to grips with Jesus Christ; if we refuse to do so we are guilty of being bad philosophers and bad thinkers."

What is your view of the daily discipline of the Christian life – the need for taking time to be alone with God?

"We have our New Testament regimental orders upon the subject. I would take it for granted that everyone who becomes a Christian would undertake this practice. It is

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In a civilization like ours, I feel that everyone has to come to terms with the claims of Jesus Christ upon his life, or else be guilty of inattention or of evading the question.

I Was Decided On

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enjoined upon us by our Lord; and since they are his commands, I believe in following them. It is always just possible that Jesus Christ meant what he said when he told us to seek the secret place and to close the door."

Because Professor Lewis has written so extensively, both in fiction and nonfiction, about space travel (see his trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*), I was particularly interested in what he would have to say about the prospects for man's future.

What do you think is going to happen in the next few years of history, Mr. Lewis?

"I have no way of knowing. My primary field is the past. I travel with my back to the engine, and that makes it difficult when you try to steer. The world might stop in ten minutes; meanwhile, we are to go on doing our duty. The great thing is to be found at one's post as a child of God, living each day as though it were our last, but planning as though our world might last a hundred years.

"We have, of course, the assurance of the New Testament regarding events to come. I find it difficult to keep from laughing when I find people worrying about future destruction of some kind or other. Didn't they know they were going to die anyway? Apparently not. My wife once asked a young woman friend whether she had ever thought of death, and she replied, 'By the time I reach that age science will have done something about it!'"

Do you think there will be widespread travel in space?

"I look forward with horror to contact with the other inhabited planets, if there are such. We would only transport to them all of our sin and our acquisitiveness, and establish a new colonialism. I can't bear to think of it. But if we on earth were to get right with God, of course, all would be changed. Once we find ourselves spiritually

awakened, we can go to outer space and take the good things with us. That is quite a different matter."



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The great thing is to be found at one's post as a child of God, living each day as though it were our last, but planning as though our world might last a hundred years.

Three Book Reviews

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- There have been 85 million sets of Narnia sold since publication. (p. 139)
- The LWW was originally thought by Lewis to be a single 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. (p. 136f)
- After LWW, the rest of the books came quickly, published one per year after 1950. (p. 140)
- The last book written (though the next to last published) was *The Magician's Nephew*. This work was the hardest one for Lewis to write. He had to go back to it several times.
- 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 started to be broken. Second, the gifts he brings serve an important role in revealing insights into the characters of LWW: Peter—shield and armor; Susan—bow, quiver, and ivory horn; Lucy—bottle of cordial and small dagger. (p. 75)
- Strange mythological creatures present on Aslan's side—dryads, raiads, centaurs, unicorns, a bull with the head of a man, a

great Dog, animals with symbolic means (pelican, eagle, leopards) – indicate a historical continuity coming to its fulfillment in Aslan. (p. 84)

- The Witch’s army is decidedly sinister: giants, werewolves, Ghouls, Boggles, Ogres, Minotaurs, Cruels, Hags, Specters and people of the Toadstools. (p. 92)
- There is an interesting contrast between the Harry Potter series and the Narnia books. In the Narnia series, magic is part of the genre of fairy tale. It is actually an affirmation of the view that the supernatural is real. In the Harry Potter books, magic is the central focus and draws attention to itself. In the Narnia books, magic exists primarily in the fantasy world apart from our world (with a couple exceptions). In Harry Potter, the magic is located in our world. In LWW, magic is practiced primarily by supernatural agents, whereas in Harry Potter magic is the result of human spell casting and occult practice. In Narnia the children are not generally permitted to engage in magic but invited to call on Aslan for help. Lewis labels some attempts at magic as black sorcery (wicked dwarf Nikabrik in *Prince Caspian*). (p. 88-91)
- Although there is some violence in the Narnia series and in LWW (Peter’s fight, Aslan’s death, the final battle), Lewis defended its place in a children’s series. He argued that this world does contain violence, death, the need for courage, and a battle between good and evil. To shield children from such realities may give them “a false impression and feed them on escapism in the bad sense.” They are likely to meet cruel enemies so it is of value to have heard of brave knights. Lewis says: “Let there be wicked kings and beheadings, battles and dungeons, giants and dragons, and let villains be soundly killed at the end of the book. Nothing will persuade me that this causes an ordinary child any kind or degree of fear beyond what it wants,

and needs to feel. For, of course, it wants to be a little frightened.” (p. 87)

- The book advocates that you read the *The Chronicles of Narnia* in the order of publication (LWW first, etc.) rather than in the order of Narnian chronology (*The Magician’s Nephew* first). (p. 172-174)
- The section addressing the criticisms of the Narnia Chronicles is very helpful. (p. 142-154)
- Lewis believed that the battle between good and evil demanded that we 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.” (p. 165)

Overall, this is an outstanding book, helpful for teaching on LWW or for study groups on the book.

Jack’s Life:

A Memory of C.S. Lewis
by Douglas Gresham

This biography is a poignant, fascinating view of C.S. Lewis by his stepson, Douglas Gresham. It is unique because it is the only biography written by someone who actually lived with Lewis. Douglas is bright and insightful about Jack’s life as well as giving many personal family details not discussed in other works. He provides a window into Lewis’s daily life with Warnie (his brother, Warren), Mrs. Moore (the mother of his soldier friend Paddy who died in WWI; Lewis had promised to care for her if Paddy died), Paxford (who helped around The Kilns), and other visitors.

Douglas calls C.S. Lewis “the finest man and best Christian I have ever known. I loved him and deeply cherish his memory” (p. 1). Later, commenting on Lewis’s death, Douglas says, “He was the finest man I ever knew in my life, and I miss him to this

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The Narnian: *The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis*

by Alan Jacobs
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HarperSanFrancisco
October 1, 2005
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A Readers Guide Through the Wardrobe: *Exploring C.S. Lewis’s Classic Story*

by Leland Ryken and Marjorie Lamp Mead
192 pages
InterVarsity Press
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Jack’s Life: *A Memory of C.S. Lewis*

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Three Book Reviews

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day" (p. 164). This is a powerful testimony by one who lived with Lewis for a number of years.

Here are a few of the many insights Douglas gives in his book, many of which are not found elsewhere:

- As a small boy C.S. Lewis began to call himself "Jacksie" and would answer to nothing else. He took the name from a small dog that he liked that had been tragically run over. (p. 2)
- When Jack was hospitalized during WWI for war wounds, the only thing he could keep in his stomach was champagne, so for some time it was the only thing he consumed. "Never again would he willingly drink the stuff." (p. 48)
- When he was wounded, some shrapnel lodged close to his heart but was too close for an operation, so doctors left it there. (p. 49)
- He experienced regular nightmares about being back in the trenches. (p. 51)
- Before the war, Jack twice failed the Oxford entrance exam in math. After the

war, Oxford dropped the requirement. Otherwise, C.S. Lewis likely would not have been able to attend and later work at Oxford. His future would have been different. (p. 52)

- Jack drove a car to Oxford on their move to The Kilns. However, that was the first and last time he ever attempted to drive. (p. 70)
- Mrs. Moore treated Jack as her personal slave, and Warren resented her doing so; but Jack put up with it. (p. 77)
- Fred Paxford had a little private bungalow in the garden and lived there for 33 years doing odd jobs around The Kilns.
- Warnie struggled with alcoholism during much of his later life.
- Jack encouraged Tolkien when publishers were rejecting *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien, on the other hand, tried to discourage Jack from sending *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to any publisher. (p. 139)

More about Jack's Life is available on the Institute's web site along with reviews of other books on C.S. Lewis. Look in the section "C.S. Lewis – Life & Works."

2006 UPCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ **Fifth Annual Fundraising Banquet & 30th Anniversary Celebration**, Thursday evening, March 23, 2006, with an interview of co-founders 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, The Falls Church—Historic Church, Falls Church, Virginia.
- ♦ **Os Guinness Conference: The World is Far From Flat: Coming to Grips With Globalization and Its Human Challenges**, April 21-22, 2006, Cornerstone Church, Annandale, Virginia.

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