



Newsletter C.S. Lewis Society of Central Massachusetts

Exploring Mere Christianity in Science, the
Arts, and Culture

Fall 2012 (Volume 4, Issue 1)



Dear Reader,

We are pleased to share with you the fall 2012 Newsletter of the C.S. Lewis Society of Central Massachusetts. We have many interesting books to discuss at the Book Club. We hope you have a chance to connect with us from time-to-time. The Society promotes the exploration of ideas from science, the arts, culture, and everyday life as they intersect with what C.S. Lewis called "mere Christianity." Our objective is to facilitate engaging discussion and reflection of topics of enduring value for Christians and non-Christians alike. To learn more, we invite you to visit our web site at www.lewisma.org. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at info@lewisma.org.

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I. Book Discussion Club to Resume in September

During the fall term, the Book Discussion Club will sometimes meet at the Auburn Public Library at 369 Southbridge Street and sometimes at the Worcester Public Library at 3 Salem Street. This change is due to alterations in the scheduling policies at the Auburn Public Library. The dates and times are listed below. In November, we may try out an alternative location. We'll keep you posted.

Saturday, Sept. 8, 9:00-10:30 AM, "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Horse and His Boy," Auburn Library

Saturday, Sept. 22, 9:00-10:30 AM, "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Horse and His Boy," Worcester Library

Facilitator: Monica Nelson

Used copies of "The Horse and His Boy" are available for \$4-\$5 at amazon.com (including shipping). We have three used copies available at \$5 (our cost); email your address to info@lewisma.org if you are interested in acquiring a copy from us.

Saturday, Oct. 6, 9:00-10:30 AM, "The Pope & the CEO: John Paul II's Leadership Lessons to a Young Swiss Guard," Auburn Library

Saturday, Oct. 20, 9:00-10:30 AM, "The Pope & the CEO: John Paul II's Leadership Lessons to a Young Swiss Guard," Worcester Library

Facilitator: David Chu, Director, Entrepreneurial Studies Program, College of the Holy Cross

New copies of "The Pope & the CEO" are available at amazon.com for \$8. We are planning to order several copies through the Society. Email your address to info@lewisma.org if you are interested in acquiring a copy from us at cost.

Saturday, Nov. 3, 9:00-10:30 AM, "A Grief Observed," location to be determined
 Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:00-10:30 AM, "A Grief Observed," location to be determined

Facilitator: Ellie Kraner, Pastor, Brookfield Congregational Church

During the winter/spring 2013 Book Club, we plan to discuss "The Last Battle," "Till We Have Faces," and a selection of poems from Irma Frey Stevens' new book, "Golden Glory."

II. News (Narnia, Lewis, Events, etc.)

[Newly discovered Lewis letters donated to Queen's University Belfast](#)

[Redeeming Susan Pevensie](#)

[Heath McNease returns with C.S. Lewis inspired album](#)

[Narnia book sells for \\$47,000](#) (30,000 pounds is equal to about \$47K)

[Plans for Belfast C.S. Lewis Centre move forward](#)

[Narnia Actor William Moseley struck by lightning](#)

III. Books of Interest

Here we summarize a variety of books at the intersection of mere Christianity and science (S), arts (A), culture (C), and everyday life (L). We also include recent books on the life and work of C.S. Lewis (designated "Lewis") and books for kids (K). Unless otherwise indicated, summaries are from amazon.com or the publisher's web site. Please note that some of the books delve into controversial issues. While the books in the Newsletter are not officially endorsed by the Society, they can be good starting points for further discussion and reflection.

The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why (S,A,C,L)

Phyllis Tickle, Baker Books, 2012

"North American Christianity is presently undergoing a change every bit as radical as the Protestant Reformation, possibly even as monumental as its natal break with Judaism. And it's right on schedule. Tickle...observes that Christianity is holding its semi-millennial rummage sale of ideas. With an elegance of argument and economy of description, Tickle escorts readers through the centuries of church history leading to this moment and persuasively charts the character of and possibilities for the emerging church. Don't let this book's brevity fool you. It is packed with keen insights about what this great emergence is, how it came to be and where it may be headed. Tickle issues a clear call to acknowledge the inevitability of change, discern the church's new shape and participate responsibly in the transformation. Although Tickle's particular focus excludes the dynamic forces of Asian, African and Central/South American Christianity, this is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the face and future of Christianity" (Reed Business Information).

God and the Cosmos: Divine Activity in Space, Time and History (S,C)

Harry Lee Poe and Jimmy H. Davis, IVP Academic, 2012

"This book will be of interest to anyone who has ever wondered how the Christian God, a nonphysical being, can interact with the physical universe of matter and energy. In a wide-ranging, engaging and insightful study, Harry L. Poe and Jimmy H. Davis investigate what kind of a God and what kind of a world would allow, even encourage, such interaction without violation of the laws of nature. The authors trace the development of complexity in the universe from the big bang to the emergence of self-conscious beings. They argue that fine-tuning in cosmology, quantum phenomena and chaotic systems in physics, epigenetics in biology, and the imaginative capabilities of the human person point to an open

universe that invites interaction with cognitive agents, including God. Their valuable study is rooted in a healthy respect for mainstream science and a solid knowledge of the biblical text" (Robert C. Fay, professor emeritus, Cornell University).

Golden Glory (A,C,L)

Irma Frey Stevens, CreateSpace, 2012

Irma Frey Stevens, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, was born in Brooklyn, NY, grew up in Clinton, MA, and presently lives in Auburn, MA. After earning degrees in Foreign Languages and Biblical Studies, she began a teaching career in New Hampshire which continued in several private schools in Worcester, MA and is finalizing at the American Language and Culture Institute of Clark University, Worcester, MA. She began writing poetry at an early age. Her inspiration is from life experiences and her enduring attraction to the simplicity of hymnody, the serious transcendental thinking of Ralph W. Emerson, the joyful "dancing with the daffodils" of Wordsworth, and the enlightenment from C.G. Jung's emphasis on the unconscious. Her poetry is appreciated for its clarity, trenchant language, and dedication to meaning over style.

Mysteries of the Jesus Prayer: Experiencing the Presence of God and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of an Ancient Spirituality (A,C,L)

Norris Chumley, HarperOne, 2011

For nearly two millennia, the holy men and women of Eastern Christianity have built lives of reflection, humility, and constant connection to God around a simple sentence, the Jesus Prayer. Now, Norris J. Chumley—a documentarian and professor—reveals the history, practices, and abiding wisdom of this mystical tradition to the rest of the world. Chumley traveled to some of the early Church's holiest sites with the Very Reverend Dr. John A. McGuckin, a priest and professor—to St. Anthony's Monastery in the Egyptian desert and St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, to convents in Transylvania and to monasteries in Russia, the Ukraine, and Greece—in search of Christianity's first mystical tradition and its modern-day practitioners. The monks and nuns he met taught him how to move through the stages of the Jesus Prayer, and how it can foster an unceasing, and ever deepening, conversation with God. Enriched with stunning color photographs of these holy sites, where photography is rarely allowed, *Mysteries of the Jesus Prayer* reveals the powerful theology packed into this prayer's few words.

Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us (C,L)

Christine D. Pohl, Eerdman's, 2011

Every church, every organization, has experienced them: betrayal, deception, grumbling, envy, exclusion. They make life together difficult and prevent congregations from developing the skills, virtues, and practices they need to nurture sturdy and life-giving communities. In *Living into Community* Christine Pohl looks at four specific Christian practices — gratitude, promise-keeping, truth-telling, and hospitality — that can counteract these destructive forces and help churches and individuals build and sustain vibrant communities. Drawing on concrete congregational experiences and interacting with the biblical, historical, and moral traditions, Pohl thoughtfully discusses each practice, including its possible complications and deformations, and points to how these essential practices can be better cultivated within congregations and families.

The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City (C,L)

Alan Ehrenhalt, Knopf, 2012

In *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City* we travel the nation with Alan Ehrenhalt, one of our leading urbanists, as he explains how America's cities are changing, what makes them succeed or fail, and what this means for our future. Just a couple of decades ago, we took it for granted that inner cities were the preserve of immigrants and the poor, and that suburbs were the chosen destination of those who could afford them. Today, a demographic inversion is taking place: Central cities increasingly are where the affluent want to live, while suburbs are becoming home to poorer people and those who come to America from other parts of the world. Highly educated members of the emerging millennial generation are showing a decided preference for urban life and are being joined in many places by a new

class of affluent retirees. Ehrenhalt shows us how the commercial canyons of lower Manhattan are becoming residential neighborhoods, and how mass transit has revitalized inner-city communities in Chicago and Brooklyn. He explains why car-dominated cities like Phoenix and Charlotte have sought to build twenty-first-century downtowns from scratch, while sprawling postwar suburbs are seeking to attract young people with their own form of urbanized experience. *The Great Inversion* is an eye-opening and thoroughly engaging look at our urban society and its future.

Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women (C,L)

Carolyn Custis James, Zondervan, 2011

Women comprise at least half the world and usually more than half the church. But so often Christian teaching for women either fails to move beyond a discussion of roles or assumes a particular economic situation or stage of life.... Does the church's message for women stake out the middle ground or lead the way to something much better? Is that message strong enough to withstand the worst realities women suffer in this broken world? Carolyn Custis James unpacks three transformative themes the Bible presents that invest the lives of *every* woman and girl with cosmic significance that *nothing* can destroy. These new images of what can be in Christ come with a blazing call for them to join their brothers in advancing God's gracious kingdom on earth. Carolyn offers readers a positive, kingdom approach to the changes, challenges, and opportunities facing women throughout the world today.

Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen (C,L)

Christopher McDougall, Vintage, 2011

Isolated by Mexico's deadly Copper Canyons, the blissful Tarahumara Indians have honed the ability to run hundreds of miles without rest or injury. In a riveting narrative, award-winning journalist and often-injured runner Christopher McDougall sets out to discover their secrets. In the process, he takes his readers from science labs at Harvard to the sun-baked valleys and freezing peaks across North America, where ever-growing numbers of ultra-runners are pushing their bodies to the limit, and, finally, to a climactic race in the Copper Canyons that pits America's best ultra-runners against the tribe. McDougall's incredible story will not only engage your mind but inspire your body when you realize that you, indeed all of us, were born to run.

In Defense of Sanity: The Best Essays of G.K. Chesterton (C,L)

G. K. Chesterton (Author), Dale Ahlquist (Editor), Ignatius Press, 2011

G.K. Chesterton was a master essayist. But reading his essays is not just an exercise in studying a literary form at its finest, it is an encounter with timeless truths that jump off the page as fresh and powerful as the day they were written. The only problem with Chesterton's essays is that there are too many of them. Over five thousand! For most GKC readers it is not even possible to know where to start or how to begin.... So three of the world's leading authorities on Chesterton - Dale Ahlquist, Joseph Pearce, Aidan Mackey - have joined together to select the "best" Chesterton essays, a collection that will be appreciated by both the newcomer and the seasoned student of this great 20th century man of letters.

A Hobbit Journey: Discovering the Enchantment of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth (A,C,L)

Matthew Dickerson, Brazos Press, 2012

The Lord of the Rings trilogy has delighted millions of fans worldwide.... With the theatrical release of the two-part film *The Hobbit* slated for 2012 and 2013, attention will once again turn to...Tolkien's classic works. In a culture where truth is relative and morality is viewed as old-fashioned, we welcome the chance to view the world through hobbit eyes: we have free will, our choices matter, and living a morally heroic life is possible. In this engaging and thought-provoking book, Tolkien expert Matthew Dickerson shows how a Christian worldview and Christian themes undergird Tolkien's Middle-earth writings and how they are fundamentally important to understanding his vision. This revised and expanded edition of *Following Gandalf* includes new material on torture, social justice, and the importance of the body.

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