



Newsletter

C.S. Lewis Society of Central Massachusetts

Exploring Mere Christianity in Science, the Arts, and Culture

Winter 2010 (Volume 1, Issue 2)

Dear Reader,

It is our pleasure to share with you the Winter 2010 Newsletter of the C.S. Lewis Society of Central Massachusetts. The Society is dedicated to promoting the exploration of ideas from science, the arts, culture, and everyday life as they intersect with what C.S. Lewis called "mere Christianity." It is our hope that we can 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 feel free to email us at info@lewisma.org.

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I. Special Event: "Art By the Heart" Business Partners to Speak at Holy Cross College

The Entrepreneurial Studies Program at Holy Cross College and the C.S. Lewis Society of Central Massachusetts will co-sponsor a special event at Holy Cross on Wednesday, January 27, 7:00-8:00 PM in the Hogan Campus Center. The event will feature presentations by Lin Bourie and Joanne Spurr about their business partnership "Art By The Heart." Lin and Joanne's business is a wonderful integration of Christian inspiration and vocation, artistic beauty, mission to children living in abject poverty, and entrepreneurship. For further information about Art By The Heart, click [here](#).

The event is free and open to the public. All are welcome to attend.

II. Book and Film Discussion Club: Winter/Spring Schedule

In the winter/spring term, the Book and Film Discussion Club will continue to meet at the Auburn Public Library at 369 Southbridge Street at the dates and times listed below (for directions click [here](#)). **All are welcome to attend and you do not need to own the books to participate.**

1. Saturday, February 13, 9:00-10:30 AM, We will view and discuss documentary film segments about C.S. Lewis's life from the PBS series, "The Question of God."
1. Saturday, February 27, 9:00-10:30 AM, We will continue to view and discuss film segments about Lewis's life. We will also discuss what may be one of the greatest sermons of all time, Lewis's "The Weight of Glory," delivered at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, June 8, 1942.
2. Saturday, March 13, 9:00-10:30 AM, C.S. Lewis "The Screwtape Letters," letters 1-14

2. Saturday, March 27, 9:00-10:30 AM, C.S. Lewis "The Screwtape Letters," letters 15-31 and "Screwtape Proposes a Toast"

3. Saturday, April 10, 9:00-10:30 AM, Lewis or related book to be determined by attendees

3. Saturday, April 24, 9:00-10:30 AM, Lewis or related book to be determined by attendees

III. C.S. Lewis College to Open in Northfield, Massachusetts

Subject to approvals, the C.S. Lewis College will begin instruction in fall 2012. Located in Northfield, Massachusetts, the C.S. Lewis College will be a fully accredited Christian institution of Great Books and Visual and Performing Arts. For further information, visit the College's web site [here](#). For an article about the College, click [here](#).

IV. News (Narnia, Lewis, etc.)

[Diana Glycer and "Planet Narnia" author Michael Ward to Speak at C.S. Lewis and Inklings Conference](#)

[A universe drenched in meaning: a review of Ward's "Planet Narnia"](#)

[Douglas Gresham interview on Dawn Treader causes stir](#)

[Three official images from Voyage of the Dawn Treader film](#)

['Screwtape Letters' returns for a run at Shakespeare Theatre Company](#)

[Actor explains attraction of "The Screwtape Letters"](#)

[Review of Lewis's 'Surprised By Joy'](#)

[Washington Post columnist draws on Lewis in explaining the hope of Christmas](#)

[Festival of Faith and Writing at Calvin College, April 15-17](#)

[St. Paul pummels C.S. Lewis in three sets :\)](#)

V. Lewis Society Advisors Ellie Kraner and Lin Bourie Publish "The Birthday Gift"

"A popular pastor is sharing her grandmother's mighty childhood lesson in a recently published book, "The Birthday Gift," a tender, heart-filled story of "furry friend finders keepers." The Birthday Gift is a childhood memory of Ellie Kraner and is published by PlaidSwede Publishing.... Her story is of little Ellie and the surprise she finds for her mother's birthday. It is illustrated by Lin Bourie. A portion of the proceeds go to helping the Sugar Cane Kids go to school and eat at least one meal a day." For further information about "The Birthday Gift" visit the publisher's web site [here](#). For information about the Sugar Cane Kids, click [here](#).

VI. 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.

Questions of Truth: Fifty-one Responses to Questions about God, Science, and Belief (S,C)

John Polkinghorne and Nicholas Beale, Westminster John Knox, 2009

"How did the universe begin? Can God's existence be proven? Do humans matter more than animals? For many years people from across the world have sent the scientist-turned-priest John Polkinghorne these and other questions about science and belief. In question-and-answer format, Polkinghorne and his collaborator Nicholas Beale offer in accessible prose their highly informed opinions about some of the most frequently asked questions."

The Nature of Nature: Examining the Role of Naturalism in Science (S)

Bruce L. Gordon and William A. Dembski (eds.), Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2010

This book "brings together some of the most influential scientists, scholars, and public intellectuals—including three Nobel laureates—across a wide spectrum of disciplines and schools of thought. Here they grapple with a perennial question that has been made all the more pressing by recent advances in the natural sciences: Is the fundamental explanatory principle of the universe, life, and self-conscious awareness to be found in *inanimate matter* or *immaterial mind*?"

Alfred Russel Wallace's Theory of Intelligent Evolution (S)

Michael A. Flannery, Erasmus Press, 2009

"Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), co-discoverer of natural selection, was second only to Charles Darwin as the 19th century's most noted English naturalist. Yet his belief in spiritualism caused him to be ridiculed and dismissed by many, leaving him a comparatively obscure and misunderstood figure. In this volume Wallace is finally allowed to speak in his own defense through his grand evolutionary synthesis *The World of Life* published nearly a century ago in 1910....Though based upon very different formulations of natural selection, the Wallace/Darwin dispute as presented by Flannery shows a metaphysical clash of worldviews coextensive with modern evolutionary theory itself - design and purpose versus randomness and chance."

Imagination and the Journey of Faith (A,C,L)

Sandra M. Levy, Eerdmans, 2008

"What makes us open to mystery, to glimpses of the Transcendent in our daily lives? The power of the imagination, according to Sandra Levy -- a power that has been seriously depleted in today's postmodern culture. To address and redress this situation, Levy first explores how the imagination expresses itself -- through ritual, music, poetry, art, and story -- and then focuses on specific practices that can exercise and enrich our spiritual capacity, thus opening us up to divine encounter."

Word Pictures: Knowing God Through Story & Imagination (A,C,L)

Brian Godawa, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"Brian Godawa reveals the importance God places on imagination and creativity, and provides a biblical foundation for Christians to pursue image, beauty, wonder and mystery."

Forgotten Girls: Stories of Hope and Courage (C,L)

Kay Strom, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"Think of the little girls you know: your daughter, a niece, a friend's child. And then think about this: little girls are tossed away every day. All over the world, women and girls face: starvation, displacement, illiteracy, sexual exploitation, abuse. In fact, statistics show that the world's most oppressed are overwhelmingly female. These pages hold those girls' stories: stories of deep pain and suffering, inspiring courage, and incredible hope. They are the stories of girls who have discovered their value in God's eyes, in the midst of cultures that have rejected them. They are stories of rescue and redemption by God working through compassionate people--people like you."

The Street Stops Here: A Year at a Catholic High School in Harlem (C,L)

Patrick J. McCloskey, University of California Press, 2009

"*The Street Stops Here* offers a deeply personal and compelling account of a Catholic high school in central Harlem, where mostly disadvantaged (and often non-Catholic) African American males graduate on time and get into college. Interweaving vivid portraits of day-to-day school life with clear and evenhanded analysis, Patrick J. McCloskey takes us through an eventful year at Rice High School, as staff, students, and families make heroic efforts to prevail against society's expectations. McCloskey's riveting narrative brings into sharp relief an urgent public policy question: whether (and how) to save these schools that provide the only viable option for thousands of poor and working-class students—and thus fulfill a crucial public mandate."

Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible (C,L)

Manfred T. Brauch, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"Manfred Brauch defends the Bible the way one defends a lion: by simply letting it out of its cage. Once out, it can take care of itself quite well, thank you. But there are those who would cage the Bible with obscurantist, selective and bowdlerized readings. And worse, they are the Bible's friends, not its avowed enemies. Like dysfunctional families, they abuse the one they think they love. Brauch loves the Bible, and he uses his considerable skill as a scholar to invite us once more to really hear the Lion roar."--Ben Patterson, campus pastor, Westmont College

Toxic Spirituality: Four Enduring Temptations of Christian Faith (C,L)

Eric W. Gritsch, Fortress Press, 2009

"G.K. Chesterton long ago observed that real Christianity had in some ways never really been tried. Eric Gritsch, a renowned historian, a pastor, and a theologian for half a century, offers Christianity a reality check, exposing four historical movements that have weakened and abused the core of the Christian tradition. These movements represent wayward views on the relationships between Christians and Jews; between the authority of Scripture and tradition; between the church and worldly power; and between faith and morals. Readers encounter these wayward traditions in their historical trajectories, in the ways these traditions have diminished the gospel, and in the ways they have been impediments of an effective contemporary Christian witness. They represent the enduring temptation to be "like God "(Gen. 3:5), a temptation marked by a zeal for secure, unchanging, and ultimate Christian life on Earth. The author confronts these wayward traditions with the enduring challenge of faithful, cruciform, penultimate discipleship in the time between the first and second advent of Christ."

Lost Women of the Bible: The Women We Thought We Knew (C,L)

Carolyn Custis James, Zondervan, 2008

"The women of the Bible have a strong, relevant message for women today that has been lost underneath layers of traditional interpretations and the expectation that God does his most important work through men. Crucial dimensions of their lives have been muted, forgotten, or passed over. Their strong voices are silent at a time when women are searching for answers that will hold up under the pressures and challenges confronting them today. This book brings the women of the Bible into the twenty-first century by recovering their powerful message for contemporary women."

Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies (C,L)

Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, Eerdmans, 2009

"McEntyre opens *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* with a sobering chapter on the current state of American public discourse. Pointing to the commercial and political forces that affect language use in American culture, McEntyre counters with twelve constructive "strategies of stewardship" -- such activities as challenging lies (even widely tolerated forms of deception and spin), practicing the art of conversation, and encouraging playfulness and prayerfulness in tending to the word. Drawing on a wide range of sources, both critical and literary, *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* is an engaging address to all thoughtful users of language concerned with preserving the vitality and precision of the spoken and written word."

Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional (C,L)

Jim Belcher, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"Bringing insight from both sides of the debate between traditional and emerging church models, Jim Belcher paints a picture of an alternate church, what C.S. Lewis called "deep church": a missional church committed to both tradition and culture, valuing innovation in worship, arts and community but also creeds and confessions."

Introverts in the Church: Finding Our Place in an Extroverted Culture (C,L)

Adam S. McHugh, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"Adam is addressing a huge number of folks in the church. Read it and heal." John Ortberg

Friendship at the Margins (C,L)

Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, Intervarsity Press, 2010

"In our anonymous and dehumanized world, the simple practice of friendship is radically countercultural. But sometimes Christians inadvertently marginalize and objectify the very ones they most want to serve. Chris Heuertz, international director of Word Made Flesh, and theologian and ethicist Christine Pohl show how friendship is a Christian vocation that can bring reconciliation and healing to our broken world. They contend that unlikely friendships are at the center of an alternative paradigm for mission, where people are not objectified as potential converts but encountered in a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity."

I Told Me So: Self-Deception and the Christian Life (L)

Gregg A. Ten Elshof, Eerdmans, 2009

"Think you've ever deceived yourself? Then this book is for you. Think you've never deceived yourself? Then this book is really for you." "Socrates famously asserted that the unexamined life is not worth living. But Gregg Ten Elshof shows us that we make all sorts of little deals with ourselves every day in order to stave off examination and remain happily self-deceived. Most provocatively, he suggests this is not all bad!....In the tradition of Dallas Willard, I Told Me So is a wonderful example of philosophy serving spiritual discipline. A marvelous, accessible and, above all, wise book."--James K. A. Smith.

The Good and Beautiful Life (L)

James Bryan Smith, Intervarsity Press, 2009

"I have never met a person whose goal was to ruin his or her life. We all want to be happy, and we want it all of the time." So begins James Bryan Smith in *The Good and Beautiful Life*. The problem is, he tells us, we have bought into false notions of happiness and success. These self-centered decisions lead us further into the vices that cause ruin: anger, lust, lying, worry and judging. Eventually we find ourselves living a beautifully packaged life of self-destruction. Following the Sermon on the Mount, this...[book] guides us to look behind these character flaws and to replace our false beliefs with Jesus' narratives about life in the kingdom of God."

The End of Suffering: Finding Purpose in Pain (L)

Scott Cairns, Paraclete Press, 2009

"With the thoughtfulness of a pilgrim and the prose of a poet, Scott Cairns takes us on a soul-baring journey through "the puzzlement of our afflictions." Probing ancient Christian wisdom for revelation in his own pain, Cairns challenges us toward a radical revision of the full meaning and breadth of human suffering. Clear-eyed and unsparingly honest, this new addition to the literature of suffering is reminiscent of *The Year of Magical Thinking* as well as the works of C. S. Lewis. Cairns points us toward hope in the seasons of our afflictions, because "in those trials in our lives that we do not choose but press through—a stillness, a calm, and a hope become available to us.""

Letters from the Land of Cancer (L)

Walter Wangerin Jr., Zondervan, 2010

"Walter Wangerin Jr. offers his profound insights into the greatest challenge we face: confronting our own mortality. Diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer in January 2006, Wangerin began writing letters to his friends and family members. Now he offers these intimate letters to all who ask questions about living

and dying well....Seldom has the great adventure of life and death been as beautifully presented as it is in this testimony to faith, love, and the shocking reality of hope."

Forgiveness: Following Jesus Into Radical Loving (L)

Paula Huston, Paraclete Press, 2008

"Are you able to forgive those who have hurt you? If you find it difficult to forgive, this book is your encouragement. If you're having trouble accepting forgiveness for something you have done, this is your inspiration. With honesty, writing about her own failings, Paula Huston examines the intellectual, psychological, social, and spiritual meanings of forgiveness. She asks tough questions and then offers possible solutions, drawing a portrait of a truly forgiving person."

Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina (L)

Thelma Hall, r.c., Paulist Press, 1988

"Retrieves from obscurity the lost art of contemplative prayer as practiced for sixteen centuries in monastic tradition, and provides 500 thematically arranged scripture texts as rich resources for this intimate prayer."

C.S. Lewis on the Fullness of Life: Longing for Deep Heaven (Lewis)

Dennis J. Billy, CSsR, Paulist Press, 2009

"Uses the concept of "Deep Heaven," an image borrowed from C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*, to discuss the basic Christological truths of the faith in the context of human happiness."

C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy (Lewis)

Sanford Schwartz, Oxford University Press, 2009

"C.S. Lewis's celebrated Space Trilogy - *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength* - was completed over sixty years ago and has remained in print ever since. In this groundbreaking study, Sanford Schwartz offers a new reading that challenges the conventional view of these novels as portraying a clear-cut struggle between a pre-modern cosmology and the modern scientific paradigm that supplanted it.... *C.S. Lewis on the Final Frontier* highlights the enduring relevance of Lewis's fiction to contemporary concerns on a wide variety of issues, including the ethical problems surrounding biotechnology and the battle between religious and naturalistic worldviews in the twenty-first century."

Fool Moon Rising (K)

Kristi Fluharty and T. Lively Fluharty, Crossway Books, 2009

"This rhyming, rollicking tale tells of a crime of cosmic proportions: the moon, blinded by pride, fails to see the true source of his abilities-the light provided by the sun. He boasts of his ability to shine, to change shape throughout each month, and to swell the tides. One day, overwhelmed by a piercing ray of sunshine, the moon repents of his pride and changes his ways, and from that point on he is happy to reflect the sun's light. This beautifully illustrated book introduces the concept of humility to children. Readers will be reminded that everything we have, including our gifts and talents, is from God."

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