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Review of Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season

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policies. “Lewis’s political thought,” the authors rightly argue, “is so imbued with concerns about governmental overreach that even a positive portrayal slips back into warning about the dangers of abuse” (102). In the end, it was public morality, individual decisions and not corporate ones, which alter the cultural climate. Dyer and Watson highlight this aspect well throughout the text, highlighting Lewis’s contrast to Barth, as well as his connections with Plato, Aristotle, Milton, John Stuart Mill, and perhaps most substantially, John Locke (Social Contract Theory).

C. S. Lewis on Politics and Natural Law is a fine work of scholarship. The authors are thoroughly knowledgeable, underscoring the importance of past social theories which shape Lewis’s response to World War II (both his nonfiction and fiction works), as well as his perceptions surrounding governmental limitations, the idea of equality, and thoughts on democratic and totalitarian governments. With its premise rooted in theory, this book is not recommended for the casual reader, but Lewis fans and scholars who enjoy in-depth, philosophical examinations of Lewis’s perspective should certainly add this text to their library.

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Heidi Haverkamp, *Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2015). ix + 100 pages. \$16.00. ISBN 9780664261269.

The idea has crossed the minds of church workers for over half a century: how can the Chronicles of Narnia be used as a springboard to encourage Christian spiritual formation? Different curricula have been developed with young people in mind, including the ill-fated 1978 attempt *Voyage to Narnia: Chronicles of the Christian Faith from C.S. Lewis*,³ which quickly became unavailable due to copyright infringements. More recent and successful attempts have integrated excerpts from various film adaptations of the Narnia stories into their lesson plans, from the 1979 animated version of *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* to the big

¹ Denny Rydberg, Kathryn Lindscoog, and Marshall Shelley, *Voyage to Narnia: Chronicles of the Christian Faith* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1978).

screen theatrical release *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* in 2010. Besides these approaches for children, new adult classes always seem to be forming in churches around the world for group reading and discussion of the Narnia tales.

Heidi Haverkamp has managed to produce in one single volume a resource for Christian multi-generational learning which combines the best of past Narnia-themed curricula. The story arc of *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* involves themes that echo the New Testament Easter story: betrayal, a life for a life, a willing victim, death, and resurrection. However, there are other story elements which call to mind the great winter festival of the Christian calendar, especially to those in the northern hemisphere: Father Christmas, snow laden landscapes, ancient prophecy, and the coming of one who was long-promised. Haverkamp uses these story elements and others to great effect in the three-pronged approach of her *Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season*.

The largest portion of the book consists of twenty-eight devotional readings for adults. Short Scripture readings are combined with periodic directions for reading through *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, chapter by chapter. Her brief commentaries for each day often provide a refreshing insight into a well-known story. Consider for instance this choice of words: “The Witch doesn’t give Edmund real Turkish Delight. She gives him a kind of opiate” (Reading 6). Her easy prose occasionally catches the reader off guard: “We may identify more with Susan, Peter, or Lucy, but we all have something in common with Edmund” (Reading 11). Each devotional ends with questions for further reflection.

Advent in Narnia also includes an adult small group discussion guide (four sessions with optional directions for showing movie clips), and instructions for a multi-generational family night program with activities, crafts, and even costume suggestions. Appendices list the various movie versions of Narnia and give an easy recipe for “Mrs. Beaver’s Sticky Marmalade Roll.” That recipe will be a welcomed change for all Sunday School teachers tired of trying to produce a palatable plate of Turkish Delight. In this and many other ways, *Advent in Narnia* is a delightful way to prepare for Christmas.

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