Why do young people walk away from their faith when they leave home? Key reasons include their lack of strong faith as a child and their parents not having lived a vibrant faith.

Parents tend to focus, almost by default, on raising kids who will exhibit good behavior, succeed in school and eventually in employment, and become decent citizens. If they accomplish this, most feel, they have parented well.

While these are important outcomes, they are not the most important. What do I desire most for my children? For them to grow in the knowledge and love of their Savior Jesus Christ and articulate, defend, and joyfully live out their faith in whatever calling God has for them.

Helping disciple our children on this journey should be a parent’s urgent priority.

Deuteronomy 6:5–8 tells us that we are to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength, and commit wholeheartedly to God’s commands. We are to repeat these commands again and again to our children when we are home, on the road, when going to bed and getting up.

Proverbs 22:6 notes that we parents are to train our children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it.

The Bible is clear that parents are chiefly responsible for helping their children become effective disciples. The church can help. Youth groups can help. Godly friends can help. But parents are on the front line, and they need help.

Parents deal with so many seemingly urgent and important things, managing their jobs, helping kids with school, taking them to sports, music, or play practices, church activities, hobbies, vacations . . . At times, just surviving the daily grind can seem like an impossible goal.

But if we fail to intentionally prepare the hearts of our children to fall in love with the Creator of the universe and find joy in following Him, our work as parents will fall dreadfully short of God’s plan for us to lead our children. Likewise, as a church, if we neglect the work of equipping parents to disciple their children, we have forfeited a foundational responsibility.

Recent studies from a variety of reputable sources have confirmed that parents, in general, are not properly preparing children to have a solid faith. Here are just a few summary comments:

Not surprisingly, homes modeling lukewarm faith do not create enduring faith in children. Homes modeling vibrant faith do. So these young adults are leaving something they never had a good grasp of in the first place. This is not a crisis of faith, per se, but of parenting.

The drop-out problem is, at its core, a faith-development problem; to use religious language, it’s a disciple-making problem. The church is not adequately... (continued on page 10)
by Kerry A. Knott

President, C.S. Lewis Institute

Dear Friends,

As we go into this Christmas season, it is wonderful to celebrate not only the birth of Jesus Christ, but also celebrate all the blessings God has given each of us.

Here at the C.S. Lewis Institute, we have much to celebrate:

Joel Woodruff will be the new President of the Institute starting January 1. God has anointed Joel for this role, and I’m confident that God will use Joel and the entire team to make this an even more effective ministry. Please pray for Joel as he leads the Institute to fulfill its mission.

Randy Newman, author of *Corner Conversations, Bringing the Gospel Home* and other books, has joined the Institute as Senior Fellow, Evangelism and Apologetics. Randy is a long-time lecturer in our Fellows Program and will be devoting significant time to teaching, training, and apologetics projects. Randy leaves his position with Campus Crusade where he served for more than three decades.

For parents and grandparents, we have an exciting announcement. The *Aslan Academy*, our new program to help parents disciple their children, has launched (see article on page 1). Through an intentional Seven Step Plan we will equip and encourage parents to raise up the next generation of disciples of Jesus.

Our newest city, Belfast, Northern Ireland, is underway, led by Royce Johnson. A variety of activities are planned, including conferences, a Fellows Program, and hosting the Belfast leg of our 2015 Summer Tour of Oxford and Belfast. This is the tenth city to have a branch of the C.S. Lewis Institute, putting us well on the way to having branches in twenty plus cities by 2020, and where we can train 1000 plus Fellows each year. These Fellows are spiritual change-agents in churches, business, government, families and neighborhoods in their cities.

You may notice that we’ve made some changes to *Knowing & Doing*. Through your feedback, we’ve reshaped *Knowing & Doing* to have a better mix of theology, apologetics and practical discipleship, with articles of varying lengths.

On a personal note, as I step down as President after five years, I want to thank everyone in the larger C.S. Lewis Institute family. I’ve seen God work through our Fellows, mentors, volunteers, supporters, pastors and many others as we all share in God’s work to “go and make disciples.” There is no greater need today than to develop a growing number of people who will fully surrender their lives to Christ, who will go and advance His Kingdom, and, by so doing change the world.

Gratefully,

Kerry A. Knott | K.Knott@cslewisinstitute.org
The human race has a character flaw: sin. We have a “sinful nature.” In the Greek the word is sarx; in older translations it is rendered as “the flesh.” The Bible portrays us as spiritually and genetically addicted to sin. It is a virus that infects everything. Whatever sin infects turns terminally malignant. Sin is a power that addicts, infects, enslaves, and destroys.

The presence, actions, and power of sin are described by the apostle Paul in the context of his own character struggle.

When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (Rom. 7:21–24)

The answer to Paul's desperate plea, who will rescue me from slavery to sin? is God.

Salvation is the comprehensive term we use to describe God's rescue. We have terms to expand and explain the process of God's rescue; two of these are justification and sanctification. Justification is what God does for us, and sanctification addresses what we must do in response. By means of justification and sanctification, we are empowered to fight the battle of sin and be enriched by God's blessings.

Justification

Briefly, justification can be defined as God's saving actions in Christ applied to sin-infected beings. Justification is a rich and complex term that needs to be unpacked. We will look at it from two different angles: the blood of Christ and spiritual union with Christ.

The Blood of Christ

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (Rom. 3:23–25).

I used addiction and infection as metaphors to introduce the need for justification. But there are other helpful ways to think about the sin problem. In the preceding verses, the apostle Paul used three:

- Justified is a legal term taken from the courts. To be justified means that the accused is declared innocent of the charges—not guilty. The prisoner is released and given a clean record.

- Redemption is a term taken from the slave markets. To be redeemed means that someone paid off the slave master, and the slave is now a freed person.

- Propitiation is a Greek word, translated in the New International Version as sacrifice of atonement. The word is taken from the temple system. The consequences for failing to keep the stipulations of the covenant fall on the substitutionary sacrifice; the worshiper is pronounced clean and is reconciled to God.

Putting together these three images, justification means that an amazing change has taken place: the sinner is no longer guilty of sin; the slave is no longer a slave; the covenant breaker is no longer estranged from God.

Justification means that there is a change of status: from guilty to not guilty, from slave to free, from foul to clean. This change of status takes place by means of the blood of Christ. The centrality of the death (continued on page 12)
Islam is the second biggest religion in the world. In 2014 there are 1.6 Muslims worldwide. Most do not live in the Middle East. There are more than 210 million people in Indonesia who say Allah is God and Muhammad the chief and seal (last) of the prophets; 150 million in India, 170 million in Pakistan. As you can see, far more Muslims live in south- and southeast Asia than in the Middle East. Sub-Saharan Africa contains more than 130 million, with 75 million in Nigeria alone.

How many Muslims live in the United States? It depends on who answers the question. Scholars at City College of New York say 1.1 million, while the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Muslim organization, claims 6 to 7 million. The best estimate is probably between 1 and 2 million.

The 2007 Pew survey of Muslim Americans found that two-thirds are foreign-born. Among the foreign-born, most had immigrated since 1990. Of the roughly one-third of Muslim Americans who are native-born, the majority were converts and African American.

There are about 1,200 mosques in the United States, which provides further evidence that the numbers are considerably less than reported by CAIR. If there were actually 5 million Muslims in the United States (and CAIR claims more), each mosque would serve nearly 4,200 Muslims. Yet many mosques are storefronts, and the nation’s largest mosque, Dar al-Hijrah near Washington, D.C., has only about 3,000 weekly attendees.

Rapid Growth

Islam is one of the world’s fastest-growing world religions. (Christianity is growing almost as quickly.) Several factors account for this: Muslims are aggressive in their evangelism (especially in Africa), their message is easily understood (Muslims say Christian theology is complicated and hard to believe), and they offer the politically alienated the prospect of national transformation. But until recently the most significant factor in Islam’s rapid growth rate has been birthrate. In 1997 the United Nations estimated that the average woman in developed countries typically bore 1.6 children during her lifetime, while the average woman in the largest Muslim countries gave birth to 5.0. But according to demographer Nicholas Eberstadt, Muslim birthrates have fallen dramatically in recent years to around replacement rate or just above in many Muslim countries.

Central Theme

The Arabic word Islam (lit., “submission”) points to the central idea of the religion—submission to the total will of Allah. The word Allah is Arabic for “the god.” Muslims proclaim to the world that God alone is great and rules with absolute control over every atom of the universe. Therefore it only makes sense for each of us to submit every detail of life to God’s will as it has been revealed to his final prophet, Muhammad.

Muhammad (570–632 AD)

The founder of Islam endured a troubled childhood. He lost his father before he was born, and his mother died when he was six. Then he lived with his grandfather, who perished two years later. The orphan then lived out the rest of his childhood with his uncle. Perhaps because of his own heartbreaks, Muhammad became a religious seeker, often retreating to mountain caves above Mecca for meditation. When he was forty, Muhammad said, the angel Gabriel began delivering to him messages from Allah. These first messages terrified...
Muhammad. But he received reassurance from his wife Khadijah and her Christian cousin, who assured Muhammad that he had been visited by the same being who had visited Moses, that God was calling him to be a prophet to his people. The earliest messages emphasized that there is only one God (before Muhammad, the Arab tribes had worshiped 360 different gods, the chief of whom had been called Allah) and that every human being would face the judgment of this God. These messages and later revelations, all of which the illiterate Muhammad dictated to his disciples, make up the Qur’an.

The Qur’an

The Qur’an is about the same length as the New Testament, but the similarities end there. It was dictated by only one man (the New Testament was composed by many writers) and is neither a book of history (as the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles purport to be) nor a life of Muhammad (in contrast, the Christian gospels aim to provide the theologically significant events of Jesus’ life) nor theological treatise (as Paul’s Letter to the Romans could be considered). Instead, it is a book of proclamation—that God is one and sovereign, judgment is coming, and we need to submit to Allah.

Inspiration

You can also find these themes in the Bible, but Muslims and Christians have very different conceptions of the nature of scriptural inspiration. While Christians believe the Bible is a joint product of both human and divine agency, Muslims believe their holy book contains not a shred of human influence. Christians usually want to distinguish Paul’s personal writing style or cultural influences from the divine Word, for example, but Muslims deny that Muhammad’s personality or cultural affinities had anything to do with the words of the Qur’an. Muslims, then, accept a dictation theory of inspiration that nearly all Christians reject for their Bible. This is one reason why the Muslim community was so outraged by Salman Rushdie’s Satanic Verses. The novel insinuates that the Qur’an is not the Word of Allah, but has been altered by either the angel Gabriel or Muhammad’s followers who first recorded the revelations entrusted to the Prophet. Rushdie’s title is even more sinister; according to Islamic tradition, very early versions of the Qur’an contained verses that suggested the worship of three goddesses alongside Allah. Muhammad soon had them removed, explaining that the devil had given him disinformation. They have been known ever since in Islamic lore as the “satanic verses.” So the implication of Rushdie’s title is that the entire Qur’an, which for Muslims is as sacred as the person of Jesus is to Christians, has been corrupted.

(continued on page 17)
The first of two articles dealing with the life and significance of the British evangelical social reformer, the seventh earl of Shaftesbury

A year after the veteran antislavery campaigner William Wilberforce left Parliament in 1825, the future leader of evangelicalism in England entered the House of Commons. Anthony Ashley Cooper, known as Lord Ashley until his succession as seventh earl of Shaftesbury upon his father’s death in 1851, was a very different character from Wilberforce. Although less well known, he is, potentially, of greater importance. In two articles we will examine his life and significance.

Shaftesbury’s evangelical Christian vision of society was remarkable. He understood the role of government but also that it was limited. He believed in both the conversion of the soul and the transformation of society. This was primarily to be achieved by the actions of Christians working together in voluntary societies. He was driven by a combined sense of deep call from God and English aristocratic paternalism. He often felt the world to be against him and suffered from introspection that bordered on the depressive. Indeed, Florence Nightingale once commented that had the earl of Shaftesbury not been committed to the reform of the asylum he would have been in one. Yet this same man was offered a cabinet office by both political parties of the day, three times in 1866 alone, and he declined on each occasion (though not without some anguish). Thousands of people lined the streets of London for his funeral. He was associated with hundreds of Christian voluntary societies. His motivations were profoundly theological. With an acute sense of the duties implied by a belief in the Second Advent of Christ, Shaftesbury successfully negotiated his way through the minefield of eschatology to produce a rounded, dynamic, and biblical understanding of Christian responsibility in society. His vision is one we would do well to recover.

This first article will set the scene and look at his early years, the campaigns for the mentally ill, the conditions of children in factories and mines, and the role of Christian voluntary societies. In the second article we will consider his theological motivations, his sometimes controversial ecclesiastical campaigns, the struggle for the “climbing boys,” and his place in history.

Upbringing, Conversion, and Call

Anthony Ashley Cooper was born on April 28, 1801. The family comprised English aristocrats with landed estates, which he would in due course inherit. The family’s politics were Tory. Ashley’s childhood was less than congenial. His parents displayed little affection toward him, and he regarded his mother as guilty of dereliction of duty and harshness. The key influence in his early years was the family housekeeper, Maria Millis. She not only showed him the love that his parents lacked toward him, but also, as a committed Christian, she introduced the young aristocrat to evangelical devotion. The effect was to be long lasting. Maria prayed with Ashley and read him the Bible. Shaftesbury later recalled that Maria provided him with his first memories of prayer and piety.

Ashley hated school but eventually emerged with a first-class honors degree in Classics from Oxford.

There was nothing particularly unusual about the early life of the young aristocrat. His father had become the sixth earl of Shaftesbury in 1811, and the natural course for Ashley would be to enter politics. Ashley was duly elected the Tory member of Parliament for Woodstock, near Oxford, in the general election of 1826, a contest notorious as the “no popery” election. The is-
sue at large was that of increasing civil liberties for dissenters and for Roman Catholics. Ashley was emerging as a rather fervent “high Tory.”

In October 1825, Ashley, looking to the forthcoming election, wrote in his diary, “I have a great mind to found a policy upon the Bible.” The question was how to distinguish the stirrings of faith from the classic position of Tory Protestantism. There are clear signs in this period that Ashley was going beyond the traditional positions of a Tory aristocrat.

With the death of John Wesley in 1791, evangelicalism in England was moving into a second generation of leaders both within and outside of the Church of England. In 1797 Wilberforce published his devastating comparison of “real Christianity” and “nominal Christianity.” His book *A Practical View* sold more than seventy-five thousand copies in fifteen editions up to 1837. Wilberforce and his “Clapham Sect” were closely involved in the foundation of early societies such as the Church Missionary Society (1799) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804) and a newspaper, the *Christian Observer* (1802).

However, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, evangelicalism underwent some changes in emphasis that formed an important backdrop to Shaftesbury’s emergence. First, evangelicals came to place increased stress on the supernatural intervention of God. Hence eschatology, the theology of the end times, became more prominent in evangelical thought. This had significant impact upon Shaftesbury and his combined efforts in evangelism and social concern. The second development was a hardening of the Protestant Reformed heritage of evangelicalism. The two were linked. When Christ returned, he would expect to find purity in his church. The beast and the whore of Babylon in the book of Revelation came again to be explicitly linked with the papacy. In 1828 a hard-line newspaper was founded, *The Record*. An increasingly large number of Protestant evangelical members of Parliament began to gather around the paper and were known as Recordites.

This was the context of Lord Ashley’s conversion and call to public life. Ashley refers to his reading Philip Doddridge, a noted nonconformist writer of the previous century, seeing it as “one of the first things that opened my eyes,” and also to evangelical Thomas Scott’s renowned *Commentary on the Bible* and noting the contrast between its views and “those to which I had been accustomed. I began to think for myself.” In addition he was beginning to see the hand of God intervening in natural events, including the financial crash of 1825–26 and the unexpected death of Prime Minister Canning in 1827. By 1829 he was being referred to as a “saint.” Although this was a term of abuse rather than endearment aimed at evangelicals by their critics and Ashley disavowed the appellation, it illustrates that he was now displaying sufficient evangelical characteristics for others to call him such.

Ashley was also now occupying a minor office in government. All of this came together in the clear call of God on Lord Ashley’s life, an essential prerequisite to a life of Christian service. In 1827 he had written in his diary: “I desire to be useful in my generation, and die in the knowledge of having... (continued on page 23)
Witnessing to Family Is Like Witnessing to Everyone Else . . . Only More So

by Randy Newman, M.Div.
Senior Teaching Fellow for Apologetics and Evangelism, C.S. Lewis Institute

The Jewish community collects stories that highlight their minority identity in a predominantly Gentile world. One memorable tale tells of a young boy who asked his rabbi, “What’s the difference between Jews and other people?” The rabbi replied, “Oh, Jews are just like everyone else . . . only more so.”

I often wonder if witnessing to family is just like witnessing to everyone else . . . only more so. Witnessing takes time. With family, it takes even more time. Witnessing involves the expression of love. With family, that love flows deeper but requires clearer expression. Witnessing encompasses a comprehensive worldview. With family, we have a wider range of common experiences in which to shine the glow of the gospel.

I keep this in mind when people ask me for a nutshell summary of my book “Bringing The Gospel Home”. I offer the memorable slogan, “Witnessing to family takes TLC.” I hope they catch my reference to “Tender, Loving Care” but then I tell them I mean something else. “T” stands for time, “L” stands for love, and “C” stands for comprehensiveness. These three were the common denominators I heard in the stories people told me. You need a longer-term perspective when it comes to family. You need a deeper reservoir of love. And you probably need to come in the side door by presenting the gospel as comprehensive in its effects, not just as a ticket into heaven.

But I hope you won’t settle for a nutshell summary. Some topics are far more complex. That is certainly true of the expansive topic of the kingdom of God, of which evangelism is just a part. Jesus offered numerous illustrations and parables to help us grasp the kingdom’s scope. On one occasion, He asked, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?” (Mark 4:30). He wanted His hearers to realize that no solitary image captures the complexity and enormity of the topic.

Surely witnessing to family shares similar complex dynamics.

In Mark 4, Jesus tells three kingdom-illustrating parables that all talk about seed—how seed falls upon different kinds of soils, how some seed grows even without constant human attention, and how some seed has the potential to grow far beyond our imaginations. Some reflection upon these parables can help us sustain the long-term, loving, comprehensive perspective we need as we witness to family members, close friends, and others who know us well.

The first parable encourages us that even though some seed falls on ground that cannot produce a crop, other seed does produce seed:

And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 4:2–9)

Fortunately for us, Jesus gave us the interpretation we need to understand this parable. When asked to explain it, He said,

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown...
in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who heard the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty-fold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. (Mark 4:14–20)

Note that the sower sows the same seed on different soils. You can say the exact same words, gift wrap the exact same books, share the exact same tracts, and doodle the exact same diagram on a napkin, and one relative will not even give you the time of day while another asks you to elaborate.

Some of your relatives may be deceived by the devil so it feels like your words are falling upon deaf ears. Spiritually speaking, they are. Some respond positively at first, but after time, with the realities of life’s inevitable disappointments or pressures from skeptical outsiders, they show their true colors as ones who never really got it. Others show a similar positive response at first, but get sidelined by other things—not the negative ones, like trials or persecutions, but the positive ones, like prosperity, success, pleasure, and positive approval ratings from this world. It’s amazing how long those drugs can seem to satisfy.

Ed must have wondered which soil represented his father. Even though Ed’s mother was a godly woman who brought her son to church every Sunday, his dad stayed at home and smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol, and watched television. Ed shared two memories of what those Sundays were like: At church, he and his mother sat up in the balcony where they could hide due to the shame of not having the “man of the house” accompany them. (Such was the culture in parts of our country many years ago.) At home, his father was particularly grumpy on Sundays, more so than during the week.

When Ed was in high school, his mother died, prompting further depression and destructive behavior by his father. So when Ed got the chance to escape and move away to go to college, he did just that, rarely going back home to visit the father he didn’t care for or respect. But then Ed came to faith in Christ during graduate school. All those seeds sown in church during his childhood apparently had fallen on good soil. Some seed takes more time to germinate than others. Ed’s heart toward his father started softening, prompting him to go home on weekends and visit.

One Saturday night while back home, Ed jotted a note on a piece of cardboard to his father who had already gone to sleep. With little hope of it making any difference, he wrote, “Dad, if you’d like to accompany me to the 11 a.m. service at church tomorrow, wake me a little before 10:00.”

To his great surprise, his father did wake him. Ed told me, “It was more out of surprise than delight that I went to church with my father that morning. I still had a long way to go in feeling any fond

(continued on page 28)
Announcing The Aslan Academy
(continued from page 1)

preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture.2

If parents have a vibrant, strong faith and model that faith for their children, it is much more likely for those children to develop a similar vibrant, strong faith that is maintained throughout their lives.

The culture of a typical middle school, high school, or university seems almost designed to pull children away from their faith. With the plethora of information on the web and through influential messages on TV, movies, music, and other entertainment options, it is more important now than ever for parents to help children fully understand and defend their beliefs. The world is intentional about worldliness. Parents need to be intentional about discipling their children.

Unfortunately, churches are not, and cannot, fulfill the role of discipling our children. Even churches that make this a priority will get a small percentage of a child’s time during the year. Without a parent being fully engaged, a child is left to be pulled away in the general cultural tide.

To help address this urgent need for discipling our children, the C.S. Lewis Institute has created the Aslan Academy, a new program designed to provide parents access to quality resources to begin and sustain the discipleship process with their children.

There are thousands of books and other resources—many helpful, many misguided or even harmful—on the subject of raising godly children. Sorting through the options can be a daunting challenge. At the Aslan Academy, we’ve identified a small number of highly effective resources to help parents on this exciting journey of discipleship with their children. And each month, through our new Dawn Treader News, we will highlight additional resources and provide helpful ideas for the journey.

The Aslan Academy fills part of our larger vision of developing effective discipleship resources for people at each key stage of life. So much of a person’s worldview and so many opinions are set before the teenage years, making it crucial for parents to recognize the urgent importance of shaping their child’s spiritual growth. As parents, we can’t guarantee our children’s salvation, but we can help shape their characters and model a vibrant faith that can capture their imaginations and understanding.

For parents who have not been actively discipling their children, it is never too late to start. The Aslan Academy program will help you get started no matter where you are in this process.

The program features a biblical overview of the Aslan Academy approach and essential parent preparation, including the following:

• Reviewing the fundamentals of faith
• Understanding and encouraging heart change
• Developing character in our children
• Learning what makes faith stick, and how to begin living it out
• Teaching the Bible to children
• Introducing spiritual disciplines to children
• Helping children understand and explain their faith
• Resources for family and individual activities
• Monthly updates through the Dawn Treader News, with further resources to equip and challenge parents and children

To best use the resources of the Aslan Academy, we’ve produced the Seven Step Plan to guide parents on this journey. Each step is broken down in categories that include: Pray, Read & Study, Apply, and Family Activities.
Parents can work through these steps at a pace appropriate for their family.

In addition, we’ve also launched Aslan Academy Gatherings, designed to build a community of parents within a church body who will commit to proactively discipling their children. These regular gatherings are a place to share ideas, exchange resources, pray for families, and encourage one another. Children today are seeking authenticity in their lives and most desire to be challenged. Developing a community of parents who share a real commitment to discipleship can not only dramatically improve their children’s lives, but also change the overall culture of the church. These gatherings can be led by children’s directors on church staffs or by committed parents within churches or in small groups.

C.S. Lewis knew the importance of helping children learn and grow in their faith. Lewis’s Narnia series has proven to be one of the most enduring and helpful tools for children to see insights into God’s story. These stories are included in the Aslan Academy reading recommendations, as well as discussion guides that will help parents reinforce Lewis’s core messages.

Lewis’s example helps us extend our reach beyond our own children. He spent countless hours responding to letters from children, and his care and love for these children—most of whom he never even met—can inspire us as we focus on being intentional with our own children and with others in our extended families, our churches, or our neighborhoods. Toward the end of his life he wrote to a child, “If you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you, and I hope you may always do so.”

For parents, or grandparents who can play the role, the process of discipling their children should be one of excitement and joy, helping their children come to understand God’s nature, His plan for us, and His power to help us live bold, fruitful lives. To walk with a child and help that child learn to love God and then see that love unfold over many years is something we all want to experience. No matter where you are in that process, we believe the Aslan Academy can equip and encourage you to be more effective in that journey.

The Aslan Academy program is available on the C.S. Lewis Institute website at www.cslewisinstitute.org/aslanacademy and in workbook form on the CSLI webstore at www.cslewisinstitute.org/products. A free subscription to the Dawn Treader News, the Aslan Academy monthly update, is available on the Aslan Academy page as well.

Notes:


We feed children in order that they may soon be able to feed themselves; we teach them in order that they may soon not need our teaching.

C.S. Lewis
of Christ is in view when we speak of the “cross of Christ.”

There is something mystical in the blood of Christ, some spiritual power at work. Sin is fatal. No one gets out of this world alive. For reasons that we can barely glimpse, Christ’s death is an acceptable substitute to God for the consequences of our sin; his death unleashes spiritual, transforming power.

Gospel-hymn writers of earlier centuries embraced the blood of Christ in ways that can seem strange to twenty-first-century readers.

“What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus” (Robert Lowry).

“There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the blood of the Lamb” (L.E. Jones).

“There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins” (William Cowper).

Living in a world preoccupied with the dimension of the physical makes it hard for us to grasp such a spiritual power available by means of the blood of Christ. To really embrace the wonder of Christ’s blood that produced justification, we need the broader rationality that allows us to take out all the pieces in the puzzle box, not just the ones that are acceptable to a materialistic and rationalistic age.

C.S. Lewis, in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, used the death of Aslan to portray the mysterious power of the blood of Christ. Aslan dies in the place of the traitor, Edmund. Susan and Lucy are filled with grief. They are shocked and thrilled when they discover Aslan alive the next morning. Aslan explains:

“It means,” said Aslan, “that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic still deeper which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back . . . before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor’s stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards.”

The power of justification is activated by faith. We must believe it. Martin Luther unleashed the Reformation because the teaching of justification by faith captured his heart. He understood that no power on earth, not even good intentions and good works, was enough to save us from sin. Faith was the power that opened the soul’s door to receive salvation. Luther said:

Faith is God’s work in us that changes us and gives new birth from God (John 1:13). It kills the Old Adam and makes us completely different people. It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith.
Faith is a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain of God’s favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God’s grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures.3

Faith in the justifying blood of Christ changes our status and has soul-shaping power. Peter Haile, in his little classic on the Christian faith The Difference God Makes, writes of a friend who was feeling out of touch with God and consequently upset, disturbed, and edgy.

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“Spiritual Union with Christ

But really, how is it that what Jesus Christ did two thousand years ago makes a difference today? In Mere Christianity (Book 4) C.S. Lewis notes that we have to have a new view of time in order to make sense of Christianity. The Greek word chronos refers to time as a succession of moments. The Greeks had another word for time that is more than a succession of moments: chaires is an eternal view that transcends the moment.

A graphic can help us see this.

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The New Testament writers understood that it was possible to be “in Christ” and for Christ to be in us in a way that leaps over the moments. It is this eternal time and spiritual connection that makes Christ’s blood work for us. When we view time in this way, we have a true and immediate connection of to Christ.

Although he was not present at Christ’s crucifixion, the apostle Paul could say: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

In these words we have spiritual participation in the person and work of Christ that is not restricted by time or by space. This way of seeing life in Christ is pervasive in the New Testament. Consider:

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* (2 Cor. 5:17)

*If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.* (Rom. 6:5)

Believers are in Christ and with Christ in all that has happened to Him. “God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions . . . And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4–6).

This mystical union was at the heart of the teaching of the great Reformer John Calvin.

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell with us.5

“In Christ” is a mystical/spiritual union that becomes a believer’s new identity. Origen, a teacher in the early church, wrote, “He became what we are that we might become like He is.” Because Jesus died to sin, those who believe in Him have died to sin as well. Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, we are raised from the dead. Because God has raised Christ to the heavenly realms and seated Him at His right hand, we too have been raised to the heavenlies and are seated at God’s right hand.

As a result of our mystical union with Christ, my identity is now that of Christ; this means I am justified and no longer guilty of sin, no longer estranged from God, no longer a slave to spiritual forces that would overpower and deform me.

**Sanctification**

Now that we are justified, we can share in the process of sanctification: growth in holiness and character development.

The apostle Paul’s teaching of justification by faith raised questions: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” (Rom. 6:15). In other words, “If I am eternally declared ‘not guilty’ by God, can’t I now do anything I want to do?” This of course misses the point. Justification is not about “fire insurance”—believing in Jesus so you won’t go to hell; it’s about character development.

Sanctification means that we are now free to make moral choices that prior to justification we were not able to make. Sanctification means that we now can say no to that which is not good and right and yes to that which is pleasing to God.

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.* (Rom. 6:12–14)

Character requires restraint. Some years ago in a famous study, researchers put young children in a room and placed a marshmallow in front of each of them. They were left alone and told not to eat the marshmallow until the researcher returned. If they were able to restrain themselves, they would get the marshmallow and a reward.
Some of the children were able to restrain themselves; others were not. Over the next thirty years the children who participated were tracked. Many of those who were not able to restrain themselves lived in poverty and prisons. Most of those who were able to restrain themselves became professionals and lived what most would describe as successful lives.

Morality of course is about more than restraint. It is about saying no to sin and yes to God. The Greek word *sanctify* means to “make holy.” To become holy means that we grow so close to God that we share in the character of God and live in ways that are pleasing to God.

Good character has “traits,” ways of thinking and acting that we can identify. Perhaps the most comprehensive list of character traits listed in the New Testament is the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23).

It is important to note that these traits are indeed the fruit of the Spirit; that is, they are not the result of merely doing one’s duty by the exercise of willpower. The fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of the character of Jesus Christ that grows in our lives as, by faith, we live in Him and He lives in us.

A person of good character used to be described as *virtuous*. A virtuous person is skillful, even artful, in doing good. In his book *After Virtue*, Alistair McIntyre traced the sources of the moral crises of modern culture to the loss of virtue.

For the individual, in *Mere Christianity* (Book 3) C.S. Lewis addressed what sort of behavior God expects of Christians. He explored the four classic virtues and added the three theological virtues; these seven provide a helpful picture of good character: prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, faith, hope, and love.

Jonathan Edwards, a leader of the First Great Awakening in colonial America, described the character produced by sanctification in his classic *Religious Affections*. “The strength of a good soldier of Jesus Christ appears in nothing more than in steadfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behavior and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world.”

Sanctification is about the process of becoming holy. Holy people are whole, full, complete, valuable, centered, and strong; they bring God’s presence as they bear the image of Christ.

**Conclusion**

One of my sons is a heroin addict. He has been clean for a number of years, but each day brings new challenges; he never takes his sobriety for granted. He lives in Seattle but recently came back home to Cincinnati for a visit. He was careful about whom he called, as he didn’t want to be exposed to “friends” who might tempt him. He was also cautious about where he went; he even made sure that he went to bed before he became too stressed and tired. His goal is to live a healthy life, free from the power of addiction. He has been down the road of addiction and knows that it is a dead end. He doesn’t want to go that way anymore. His healthy choices and clean life take work; I am proud of him.

Justification and sanctification are the means by which we have been empowered by God to face our sin problem head-on. It’s a battle for us too. Our goal should be to live so that God will be proud of us, and one day in the light of heaven we hear the divine accolade, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21).

I have come to believe everything we experience is a vehicle for shaping our character. By
God’s Plan for Our Growth

every choice we make and in every action we take, we are either formed to be more like God’s Son, Jesus, or we are being deformed to something less than human.

I close with a sobering proposal by C.S. Lewis:

*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 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.*

Notes:

1. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version, 1984.

Almost certainly God is not in Time. His life does not consist of moments following one another. If a million people are praying to Him at ten-thirty tonight, He need not listen to them all in that one little snippet which we call ten-thirty. Ten-thirty – and every other moment from the beginning of the world – is always the Present for Him. If you like to put it that way, He has all eternity in which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes in flames.

*C.S. Lewis*

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**RECOMMENDED READING**

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

In the classic *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis explores the common ground upon which all of those of Christian faith stand together. Bringing together Lewis’ legendary broadcast talks during World War Two from his three previous books *The Case for Christianity*, *Christian Behavior*, and *Beyond Personality*, *Mere Christianity* provides an unequaled opportunity for believers and nonbelievers alike to hear this powerful apologetic for the Christian faith.
A Thumbnail Sketch of Islam for Christians
(continued from page 5)

The Message of the Qur’an

The Qur’an tells its readers and listeners (it was meant to be recited out loud) that human beings are created by God to serve God and avoid idolatry, which involves giving first allegiance to anything other than God—money, family, race, success, or earthly life itself. There are two final destinations—hell (which punishes with boiling water, pus, chains, searing wind, and food that chokes), for those who reject the message of the Prophet, and Paradise, which offers wide-eyed damsels, wine, and luscious fruits to those who prove to be faithful Muslims. Modernist Muslims say the same thing about these passages that many Christians say about biblical descriptions of heaven and hell—that they are simply metaphorical ways of saying that the presence of God is delightful and absence from God will be horrible.

The Qur’an teaches that Islam is the simplest and clearest of religions and stands as the essential core of every other religion; it is the revelation that was given originally to Abraham but was later distorted by the Jewish and Christian traditions. This is why God needed to give it once more to Muhammad.

Jesus in Islam

American Christians are generally surprised when they learn of the extraordinary respect that Muslims hold for Jesus. He was the greatest of all the prophets, they say, until Muhammad. The Qur’an even recognizes Jesus as “Messiah,” “word from God,” “a Spirit from God,” and the son of Mary who was “strengthened with the Holy Spirit.” It teaches the Virgin Birth (Mary is said by Muslims to have been the purest woman in all creation) and accepts the historicity of all the gospel miracles but one—Jesus’ resurrection.

How Jews and Christians Went Wrong (according to Muslims)

Muslims regard the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, but they quickly add that Jews and Christians have corrupted the texts at critical points. Jews perverted the original revelation, Muslims claim, by an act of communal narcissism. They took a message intended for every nation and turned it into an exclusive proclamation of salvation for themselves alone—that they alone are the Chosen People. Although the Qur’an is silent on the issue, some Muslims believe that Jews substituted Isaac’s name for Ishmael’s in the book of Genesis and thus concealed for centuries the Arabian connection in the history of salvation.

Christians, Muslims believe, made the mistake of turning Jesus into a god and therefore reverting to the polytheism that Allah forbids. Most Muslims deny that Jesus was crucified, because the Qur’an states that the Jews did not kill Jesus and that God “raised [Jesus] to himself” in a manner reminiscent of Elijah. More important, Muslims deny that Jesus was the Son of God, imagining that that would mean that God had engaged in sex, which is unimaginable. Islam also denies that Jesus was a savior because of its conviction that each of us must be responsible for our own sins. To imagine that someone else can save us from our sins seems to Muslims to be spiritually irresponsible. Most of them are convinced that no one can receive such spiritual benefits from another. I say “most,” because many mystical Muslims (Sufis) believe they need the help of the Prophet and his family for salvation.

Muslim tradition teaches that eventually both Judaism and Christianity will wither away, as most of the world accepts Islam’s version of monotheism.

The Five Pillars

These are the five practices that every faithful Muslim wants to observe.
A Thumbnail Sketch of Islam for Christians

1. **Profession of faith:** “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” Simply reciting this in public makes one a Muslim. Notice how important Muhammad is. Many Muslims believe he never sinned and performed many miracles, though there is no record of these in the Qur’an. His sayings and deeds, recorded with varying degrees of authenticity in the Hadith (many volumes), contain miracle stories. These sayings and deeds, after being weighed for their relative authenticity, serve as precedents for Islamic law (shari’ah). At the same time, it is insisted upon that he was only a man.

2. **Prayer five times daily.** Believers are to face Mecca and pray in the early morning, at noon, midafternoon, sunset, and in the evening. But before prayer at each of these times, there is to be washing of the arms, feet, mouth, and nostrils—and three times for each of these body parts. The prayers are generally set prayers of praise and adoration. There is a prayer service every Friday (which is not a holy day as Sunday is for Christians and Saturday for Jews), with two sermons by trained laymen. Women sit separately from the men, but most women do not attend.

3. **Almsgiving.** Sunnis give 2.5 percent of their income to support Muslim needy, but Shi’ites are told to contribute 20 percent.

4. **Fasting during Ramadan.** Ramadan is a month in the Islamic calendar, which is based on the moon, and so the month is at a different time from year to year. It marks the time when the Qur’an was first revealed to Muhammad. During this month Muslims are to abstain from all liquids, food, tobacco, and sex between first light in the morning and full darkness at night. They say the purpose of this fasting is to practice self-restraint.

5. **Pilgrimage to Mecca.** Muslims believe Mecca (in today’s Saudi Arabia) is the navel of the world, the location of Eden, and the one point on planet Earth closest to Paradise. Here they say Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael built a house of worship, which still exists as a giant stone cube, draped in black. It was also from here that Muhammad is said to have taken his “night journey” to Jerusalem and then Paradise and back—all in one night. Some Muslims say this was allegorical not literal. Few Muslims actually make the pilgrimage to Mecca; those who do not are blame-worthy only if they can afford it and are healthy enough but neglect to do so.

**Sunnis and Shi’ites**

Since September 11, 2001, most Americans have heard of Sunnis and Shi’ites but have little idea of what makes them different. Here are the essentials.

Sunnis are far and away the most numerous, representing about 85 percent of all Muslims in the world. Their interpretation of the faith is based on what the ulama have said. These are the Islamic scholars who have reached consensus on what is true and right, based on their understanding of the Qur’an and Hadith—the collected record of what the Prophet said and did. Sunnis think revelation stopped with the decisions of the early ulama centuries ago. Their consensus judgments were infallible. Some modernist Muslims blame Islamic radicalism on this belief in infallibility. They say the ulama should never have taken
away Muslims’ right to think independently (ijtihad) based on the Qur’an and Islamic law.

Sunnis also believe Muhammad did not designate a successor, and so the first leaders after the Prophets (caliphs) were legitimately chosen by the early Islamic community. Shi’ites disagree with this, as you will see.

Sunnis have generally had the upper hand in Islamic history, so they have an optimistic view of history. They believe Islam is steadily growing and winning ascendency in the world. The last fifty years, in which Muslim nations have found great oil wealth under their sands, seems to have confirmed this view for many.

Shi’ites, on the other hand, are only 15 percent of the world’s Muslims and live mostly in Iran and southern Iraq. They get their name from the battles over Muhammad’s successor, after which they split from the majority to form their own distinct party (shia). Shi’ites believe Muhammad’s successor should have come from his family, and that the Prophet had chosen Ali, his cousin and son-in-law to succeed him. But since the Muslim community chose Abu Bakr and several other caliphs from outside the family, Shi’ites consider three of the first four caliphs (one was Ali) to have been illegitimate.

The most important event in Shia history was the martyrdom in AD 680 of Ali’s son Hussein, who led an uprising against one of the “illegitimate” caliphs. Hussein has become the Shi’ite symbol of resistance to tyranny, and to this day participation in the annual re-enactment of his martyrdom is the central act of Shi’ite piety.

The largest group within the Shi’ite faith is known as the “Twelvers.” They believe the leader who stood at the end of Muhammad’s line, the Twelfth Imam (prayer leader), is still alive invisibly and is going to return visibly at the end of history to rid the world of evil. The recent president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has said publicly that the purpose of the Iranian revolution (started in 1979 by the Ayatollah Khomeini) is to pave the way for the Mahdi’s return.

Other prominent Shi’ite leaders, however, disagree. Iraq’s Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani teaches that the Mahdi’s coming cannot be hastened by human activity.

For most of their history, Shi’ites have been powerless, marginalized, and oppressed—often by Sunnis. They have not held much hope for the success of their movement in this world. Therefore their recent success in Iran and now Iraq, and the hope of some for the early return of the Mahdi, is fairly new.

Islam and Violence

Some have attributed the horror of September 11 to Islamic jihad, which is usually translated as “holy war.” But this is misleading. Jihad is divided by Muslims into two categories: the greater and the lesser. The greater jihad is the war within oneself against one’s own evil. The lesser jihad is defense against aggressive attacks on Islam. These actions do not necessarily involve armed conflict but may simply be expressions of the pen or tongue. While radical Islam today thinks jihad should be carried to all the world, mainstream Islam through most of its history has said that armed conflict is to be primarily defensive and strictly regulated.

Muhammad wrote, “In avenging injuries inflicted on us, do not harm non-belligerents in their homes; spare the weakness of women; do not injure infants at the breast, or those who are sick. Do not destroy the houses of those who offer no resistance, and do not destroy their means of subsistence, neither their fruit trees, nor their palms.” The Qur’an says that if you kill one person without reason it is as if you slew all of humanity (5:32).

At the same time, the Qur’an commands its readers to “slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them” (9:5). Some Muslim scholars say this was a command given in the heat of the first community’s struggle for survival. They point to passages in the Qur’an such as the

Muslims also tend to view the West, particularly the United States, as irrele
famous one condemning religious coercion in 2:256: “There is [should be] no compulsion in religion.” They also say the Qur’an promotes religious diversity, such as 5:48: “To each of you [peoples] We [God] have given a law and a way and a pattern of life. If God had pleased He could surely have made you one people (professing one faith). But He wished to try and test you by that which He gave you.” This is the translation in the Princeton University Press edition of the Qur’an, and the phrase “professing one faith” is not in the Arabic. This edition’s translator thinks it is implied, and that is the interpretation which El Fadl (see the box) and other Muslim “liberals” see in this and similar passages (11:118–19, 49:13).

But while many Muslims condemn the terrorism used by their militant co-religionists, there is a historical link between Islam and aggressive military and political action. Muhammad was a military and political—as well as religious—leader. He served as both prophet and commander, preacher and soldier, imam and magistrate. The first community of Muslims was a socio-politico-religious amalgamation, and traditional Islam has taught that government should enforce Islamic law (shari’ah), which is why Islam has usually shown greater organic unity between this- and other-worldly concerns than in Christianity. Muslim leaders have sometimes exploited passages such as the “slay the idolaters” verse (as well as the Islamic teaching that warriors who die in a holy war will go straight to Paradise and skip over years of suffering in a purgatory-like existence) when they have tried to muster a people for war.

Islam and the West

While some of the strongest expressions of disdain (“America is the Great Satan,” for example) speak for only a minority of Muslims, many Muslims nevertheless regard the West with ambivalence. They appreciate and use its technology but consider Western culture as a threat to their own because it represents modernization without moral control. Muslims place great emphasis on the integrity of the nuclear family and pride themselves on the stability of their families. They see our Western values of atomistic individualism and sexual permissiveness as destructive of family life. They are fully aware of America’s soaring rates of divorce, abortion, pornography, crime, and chemical addiction (much of which is broadcast to their countries through movies, TV, and the Internet) and wonder why Americans regard Muslim culture with self-righteous disdain.

Muslims also tend to view the West, particularly the United States, as irreligious and godless because of our separation of church and state. If God is sovereign over the cosmos, Muslims argue, then every aspect of life—including the state—ought to come under the rule of his laws. Islamic law (shari’ah) should therefore serve as a set of fundamental principles informing the laws of every nation on the earth.

More militant Muslims feel the West is out to destroy Islam (despite the fact that the past
few major American interventions abroad, in Kuwait, Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and even Iraq were conducted in defense of Muslims). As a Western-educated Muslim engineer once asked me (before Pakistan’s acquisition of nuclear weapons), “Why does the United States permit India, Israel, and South Africa to have nuclear weapons, but not Iraq or Pakistan?” Many Muslims believe there is a Zionist-American conspiracy to reduce the Muslim nations to their former colonial status under Western control. They see Israel as America’s client state and believe that the American government is controlled by Jewish lobbies. As the war in Iraq progressed, more and more Muslims concluded the United States was out to control oil and the Middle East.

Yet even these suspicions fall far short of the venomous hatred required to teach young men to fly jetliners as missiles into skyscrapers in order to purposely destroy thousands of innocent people. The genesis of this barbarity lies not with Islam but Islamism, the term some scholars use to distinguish mainstream Islam from the twentieth-century terroristic ideology first seen in the Ayatollah Khomeini. Islamism is preferable to the popular term Islamic fundamentalism, which was coined by the Western media to denigrate conservative Christians in the West by associating them with Islamic violence. Jeffrey Goldberg described in the New York Times Magazine the way that Islamism takes boys as young as eight years old out of dire poverty and puts them in special schools, isolated from all secular learning, art, music, women, and mainstream Islam. There they are indoctrinated, day in and day out in the theology, ethics, and worldview of violent Islamism. There is no consideration of different views of the Qur’an, only simple rote learning of prescribed views, and liberal doses of venomous anti-Semitism. A worldwide terroristic network gives these boys an education at no cost to them—paying for their room and board and clothing, and their teachers and buildings, and then giving them jobs in organizations like the Taliban.

Your Muslim Neighbor

Perhaps you have a Muslim neighbor or co-worker. How do you share the love of Christ with him or her? Here are a few ideas.

1. **Show real interest in their faith.** Study it. This article is a good start.

2. **Be slow to criticize.** A recent Muslim convert to Christian faith in India said, “Don’t discuss any of the faults or weaknesses of Islam or speak ill of Muhammad or the Qur’an. Speak to the Muslim of Jesus and his stories and miracles.” You may be surprised to learn that Jesus is the most developed character in the Qur’an. As we saw earlier, Muslims typically have huge respect for Jesus. Build upon this respect, and ask your friend if she’d like to read the injil (gospel) that tells more about Jesus.

3. **Muslims have a very difficult time understanding how Jesus could be God.** It seems polytheistic, or even blasphemous to say God has a Son. As I have suggested, most Muslims think this would require God to have engaged in sex, which is unthinkable. But you can explain that Christians agree that God did not engage in sex, that even the Qur’an calls Jesus the Messiah (Qur’an 3:45), and the Gospels say Jesus is Lord and claimed the authority to forgive sins. Only God has that authority.

4. **The Incarnation is equally difficult for Muslims.** Charles White, a missionary to Muslim parts of Africa, used to tell his students about the man who became an ant. He saw ants going into a house where they would be poisoned. He told them over and over not to enter, but they didn’t listen. Finally, the man became an ant, and now they could hear and understand. By becoming one of them, this man was able to save ants from destruction.

5. **The Incarnation might be a bit easier for Shi’ites to understand, because they believe a divine substance from Muhammad passes from imam to imam.** They can be told that in a

The Qur’an says that if you kill one person without reason it is as if you slew all of humanity (5:32).
similar way the divine substance passed—as it were—from the Father to the Son.

6. White also told his Muslim students of two kinds of greatness. One is of the king who sits on a high throne and has scores of servants scurrying around to do his bidding. The other kind of greatness is of a brilliant student who works hard in medical school and graduates with the ability to go anywhere he wants. But rather than following other top graduates to lucrative practices in the suburbs, he goes to work among the poor in the inner city. That is what God did, in His power and greatness, when He came to live among sinful men.

7. The message of forgiveness, and power from the Holy Spirit, can be appealing to a Muslim who feels crushed by the demands of the law. He is told that he can never know for sure if he will reach Paradise, and because he knows the weakness of his heart, he is in despair. The gospel message that Christ came to save sinners not the righteous, and that He gives power to live a righteous life nonetheless, can be liberating for such a conscientious soul.

8. Like all our neighbors, our Muslim neighbors and friends should be shown respect and love. We should recognize the religious truth they already have and not assume they would need to throw out everything they’ve ever believed in order to come to Christ. If they sense this kind of respect in you for them, they may, like Cornelius who already feared God and prayed regularly to God before he heard about Jesus (Acts 10:2), “come to listen to all the Lord tells you to say” (Acts 10:33b).

For further reading:

Islam denies the Incarnation. It will not allow that God has descended into flesh or that Manhood has been exalted into Deity. . . . It stands for all religions that are afraid of matter and afraid of mystery. . . .

C.S. Lewis

RECOMMENDED READING
Nabeel Qureshi, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity (Zondervan, 2014)

In Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, Nabeel Qureshi describes his dramatic journey from Islam to Christianity, complete with friendships, investigations, and supernatural dreams along the way.

Providing an intimate window into a loving Muslim home, Qureshi shares how he developed a passion for Islam before discovering, almost against his will, evidence that Jesus rose from the dead and claimed to be God. Unable to deny the arguments but not wanting to deny his family, Qureshi’s inner turmoil will challenge Christians and Muslims alike.

Engaging and thought-provoking, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus tells a powerful story of the clash between Islam and Christianity in one man’s heart—and of the peace he eventually found in Jesus.
Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer
(continued from page 7)

advanced happiness by having advanced true religion.”12 He had earlier declared, “I want nothing but usefulness to God and my country.”13 His mood oscillated between his self-deprecation at his lack of fitness for service and his increasing sense of call.

Every one chooses his career and it is well if he chooses that which is best suited to his talents. I have taken political life because I have, by God’s blessing, many advantages of birth and situation which, although of trifling value if unsupported, are yet very powerful aids if joined to zeal and honesty. It is here, therefore, that I have the chief way of being useful to my generation.14

In 1830 he married, Minny Cowper, a very happy marriage considering the dysfunctional nature of both families concerned. Minny’s mother was the long-term mistress of Viscount Palmerston, whom she eventually married in 1839. So a future Whig prime minister became step-father-in-law to the ardent evangelical Tory reformer. This was to be significant in later years. In fact Palmerston may have been Minny’s father.

The Early Campaigns

Ashley’s first campaign was somewhat unusual but influenced the whole of his life. The lunatic asylums of Victorian England were dark and dismal places where the inconvenient could be forgotten. Ashley’s first parliamentary speech was concerned with the protection of the mentally ill. Unfortunately he mumbled his speech to such an extent that not even the parliamentary recorder could hear what he said. He often reflected in his diaries on society’s treatment of the mentally ill. Unfortunately he mumbled his speech to such an extent that not even the parliamentary recorder could hear what he said. He was appointed a metropolitan commissioner of lunacy in 1828, becoming chairman in 1834 and served on it and its successor body until his death in 1885. His role was primarily to visit the asylums for random inspections, and he carried out his duties with great diligence.

More well known among the early campaigns are those concerned with the welfare of children in factories and mines. The poet Robert Southey referred to “the white slave trade.”15 This campaign was already in the hands of the evangelicals in Parliament before Ashley took it on. He did so after the defeat of the evangelical Tory MP Michael Sadler in the 1832 general election. Ashley was approached by another evangelical MP, Sir Andrew Agnew, whom he knew from the parliamentary committee to protect the Sabbath. For over ten years, Ashley battled to ensure that children were given proper protection. Ashley moved first of all to prevent the employment of children under the age of nine years and then restrict the hours of employment to those younger than eighteen years to ten hours per day and eight on a Saturday. The government sought to delay proceedings by establishing a commission (by 74 votes to 73).

The first piece of legislation to emerge, the Factory Act of 1833, was a compromise. Various aspects of the Act were not operative until 1836. In the intervening time, the government fell from office and the new prime minister, Lord Melbourne, attempted to ease some of the restrictions. Ashley was furious. He poured scorn on the government’s claims and pressed the charge of hypocrisy. It was a powerful performance by Ashley, still only thirty-five years old. The government survived the ordeal by just two votes and then gracefully withdrew its proposals. Ashley’s guerrilla tactics continued. In 1840 Ashley secured a commission into the operation of the earlier legislation. Ashley was appointed chairman, and this comprehensive report is a testament to his untiring commitment. In this same period, he was already actively involved in campaigning for the protection of the “climbing boys” (we will consider this in the second article) and the employment of children in mines. This latter form of exploitation was particularly harrowing. Children as young as five years old were employed in mines.
to push the trucks along roadways often only twenty-four inches high and attached to chains, to ventilate the mine shaft, and in various other tasks. Mines were dangerous places. Poisonous gases, high temperatures, cramped conditions—all contributed to what, in this instance, amounted to a public outcry. Males and females worked together, often scantily clad, and there was moral outrage also at the inevitable consequences. In an unusually receptive House of Commons, Ashley moved a bill that, after a struggle, passed into law in 1842, prohibiting, among other things, all female employment in mines and the employment of boys under the age of ten. The battle over factories continued for another five years until the ten-hours principle was finally secured in 1847.

How did Ashley view these early campaigns? Although they had long been led by the Protestant evangelical Tories, it led to some strange bedfellows. On one occasion Ashley shared a platform with the trade unionist Robert Owen. To Ashley, socialism and trade unionism were anathema. Part of the explanation lies in the utopian Tory vision of rural England in which different classes of society all knew their place but the landowners cared for those who worked on their land. This utopia, if it ever existed, was swept away by the Industrial Revolution, but it remained a motivating factor for the high Tories. The other key factor was Ashley’s Christian faith. The combination of an acute sense of human sin alongside an understanding of Protestant constitutionalism became a powerful driver. Ashley regularly visited the mining and industrial districts to gain firsthand evidence. In 1838 he claimed the country would face the judgment of God for the less-favourable treatment of its own children compared to recently freed slaves in the West Indian plantations. The situation in the mines he referred to as “a mass of sin and cruelty.” He commented in Parliament:

some of the evils of so hideous a nature, that they will not admit of delay—they must be instantly removed—evils that are both disgusting and intolerable—disgusting they would be in a heathen country, and perfectly intolerable they are in one that professes to call itself Christian.
This speech lasted two hours. He asked God to keep him humble, saying, “without thee I am nothing worth, and that from Thee alone cometh all counsel, wisdom, and understanding for the sake of our most dear and only Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ.” In 1842 Ashley linked this understanding of sin and Protestant constitutionalism to a wider eschatology. He noted in his diary, “our prayer must be for the Second Advent, our toil, ‘that we be found watching.’”

To that key motivation we must return.

The Voluntary Societies

If we left our investigations at this point, we would have a picture of a dynamic Christian social campaigner who secured many important and necessary protections for young people. However, we would also be left with an incomplete portrait and many questions unanswered. Shaftesbury believed that it was entirely appropriate for government to legislate for the protection of the vulnerable. However, he also viewed the role of government as extremely limited and potentially damaging to the wider Christian and social cause. This was the reason why the Christian voluntary society came to play such a significant role in his thinking and why he lamented, particularly around 1870, government taking over functions previously undertaken by such Christian societies.

Shaftesbury was committed to the voluntary principle in both evangelism and social concern. He was the chairman of the meeting that founded one of England’s premier home mission agencies in 1836, the Church Pastoral Aid Society. He worked across denominational boundaries in the London City Mission, founded in 1835. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Ragged School Union in 1844, a rather quaint Victorian title representing the union of voluntary Christian schools serving the poor. He was closely associated with the Church Missionary Society, the Bible Society, the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews, and numerous local societies. In essence his view was that both evangelism and social reform were best executed by Christians working together on the ground across the usual boundaries of denominational divisions. This is what he told the annual meeting of the London City Mission in 1863:

*put all that aside, and let all establishments and all distinctive churches sink into the ground, compared with the one great effort to preach the doctrine of Christ crucified to every creature on the earth, to every creature that can be reached on this habitable globe.*

A quite remarkable statement for the times. Shaftesbury worked closely with the City Mission and the Ragged School Union to achieve his objectives. He walked the streets of London with the City Missionaries, gathering evidence for his parliamentary campaigns, encouraging the Christian workers and preaching the gospel. The City Mission had been founded on the principle of taking the gospel to the urban poor of London, primarily through home visitation. The work grew into reaching out to particular employment groups (e.g., flower girls and cab drivers) and many missionaries were involved in founding schools. Although there were some tensions between the evangelistic and social outreach, to Shaftesbury the objectives were all of a piece. The City Missionaries met poverty on a daily basis, and Shaftesbury used this evidence in his wider campaigns. The City Missionaries were often the only people who could penetrate a London slum containing perhaps twenty thousand people living in cramped, damp, and dangerous conditions. On one memorable occasion in 1848, a City Missionary, Thomas Jackson, called Ashley in to address a meeting of 394 convicted felons. In fact, three meetings were held in the depths of a slum district. The sight of an English aristocrat preaching the gospel of salvation to such a group must have seemed incongruous. Ashley not only preached but launched a scheme (perhaps a rather ill-fated attempt) of emigration to help these individuals start a new life.

Food, even lodging, was often provided for those in need, but faith and education were not seen as separate.
Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer

Ashley described these missionaries as his fellow-workers and laborers. He noted that in all his investigations, they were his first recourse “because we knew that their inquiry would be zealous and immediate, and their report ample and trustworthy.”

Shaftesbury viewed his work with voluntary Christian schools with especial care and favor. They became places where education was shaped by the Bible. Food, even lodging, was often provided for those in need, but faith and education were not seen as separate. He believed the movement to be for nothing less than the glory of God. All the more reason why Shaftesbury was aghast at the proposed governmental intervention in 1870 with legislation for compulsory state education. Quoting his diary entry on the matter at length illustrates both the passion, but also allows us, in our next article, to move to a discussion of the underlying theological motivations that uniquely combined governmental legislation with the primacy of the Christian voluntary society.

The godless, non-Bible system is at hand; and the Ragged Schools, with all their divine polity, with all their burning and fruitful love for the poor, with all their prayers and harvests for the temporal and eternal welfare of the forsaken, heathenish, destitute, sorrowful, and yet innocent children, must perish under this all-conquering march of intellectual power. Our nature is nothing, the heart is nothing, in the estimation of these zealots of secular knowledge. Everything for the flesh, and nothing for the soul; everything for time, and nothing for eternity.”

Notes:

1. The British Parliament in 1825 consisted of a lower house, the House of Commons, elected on a limited franchise, and an upper house, the House of Lords, consisting of the holders of aristocratic seats and titles.
2. The title Lord Ashley will be used for reference to the period prior to 1851, Shaftesbury for the post-1851 years. Shaftesbury will also be used for generic description and assessment.
4. The two main political parties in this era were the Tories and the Whigs, though there was a sizable independent constituency and much fluidity at the edges. In essence, the Tories represented the traditional landed interest, and the Whigs the more reform-minded merchant classes.
5. Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 16.
6. Dissenters was the term used for religious independents who “dissented” from the
established Church of England. They were also sometimes described as nonconformists.

7. A “high Tory” was one who gave special weight to the responsibilities as well as the privileges of the landed interest, not least toward the less fortunate. It was often combined with a position known as Protestant constitutionalism or national Protestantism, a view of the centrality and importance of the Protestant constitution to the British nation.


9. The full title was A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in This Country Contrasted with Real Christianity.

10. The rather inappropriate title was coined by later critics; it referred to the group of mainly lay Christian business leaders and politicians who gathered around Wilberforce in Clapham, then a village some three miles from London.


12. Lord Ashley, Diaries, April 22, 1827; cited in Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 24.


15. Ibid., 76.

16. Ibid., 87.

17. Lord Ashley in the House of Commons, June 7, 1842; cited in Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 88.

18. Lord Ashley, Diaries, June 9, 1842; cited in Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 89.

19. Lord Ashley, Diaries, August 8, 1842; cited in Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 90.

20. Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 216.

21. Ibid., 139.

22. Shaftesbury, Diaries, March 16, 1870; see Turnbull, Shaftesbury, 151.

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift; We have hard work to do and loads to lift; Shun not the struggle-face it, ‘tis God’s gift.

Lord Shaftesbury

RECOMMENDED READING

Richard Turnbull, Shaftesbury, The Great Reformer, Lion Hudson, London 2010

Shining new light on one of Britain’s most celebrated figures, this new biography insightfully explores the beliefs underlying Shaftesbury’s passion for the poor

Drawing extensively from Lord Shaftesbury’s private journals, this accessible biography shows not just the story of his life—from his happy marriage and many children to his acts of Parliament—but also how his faith led and equipped him to fight for justice in society. Lord Shaftesbury was one of the best loved politicians and social reformers of nineteenth century England. His deep compassion for the poor was legendary, as were his tireless campaigns to limit factory hours, stop the use of boys as chimney sweeps and children in coalmines, and to develop universal education. As a result he changed the character of English society forever. Revealing a moving portrait of a sensitive thinker, areas covered in this important biography include his upbringing and education; his work as a politician and his campaign for mental health; his contribution towards the founding of the Bible Society; his role as a defender of the Protestant faith; his personal theology; and much more.
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Witnessing to Family Is Like Witnessing to Everyone Else
(continued from page 9)

affection for him.” This was one of those churches that offered an invitation for people to receive Christ every week. Every sermon ended with the words, “If you’d like to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want you to slip out of your seat right now and come to the front of the church.” Using that same phrase, Ed said to me, “More out of surprise than delight, I saw my father walk forward and kneel at the railing in the front of the church.” After the service was over, when Ed asked him what prompted him to go forward, his father said, “Chains could not have held me back.”

Perhaps Jesus’ second parable about seed in Mark 4 can help us understand Ed’s father’s story better. Or, more helpful still, maybe this parable will enable you to hold out hope, pray with expectation, and look for signs of growth that may have escaped your notice before now. Jesus said,

\[
\text{The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come. (Mark 4:26–29)}
\]

Do you note how ordinary this process seems? Commentator James Edwards observes,

\[
\text{A more banal comparison could not be imagined. The kingdom of God should be likened to something grand and glorious: to shimmering mountain peaks, crimson sunsets, the opulence of potentates, the lusty glory of a gladiator. But Jesus likens it to seeds. The paradox of the gospel—indeed, the scandal of the Incarnation—is disguised in such commonsplaces.2}
\]

In the daily rhythms of ordinary life, sleeping and rising, night and day, the kingdom of God advances, even if we know not how. Ed wonders how much the weekly rhythm of his mother and his going to church may have spoken volumes to his grumpy father. The seed of the kingdom can break through the hardening forces of alcohol, tobacco, television, and even the affectionless disdain of a son who goes off
to college and wants little to do with a father back home.

The third parable may be the most encouraging of all. Jesus told us the kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade (Mark 4:31–32).

Here, Jesus offers a more illustrative way of saying what the parable of the soils told numerically, that some seed will bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. What starts out as just a phone conversation, an e-mailed question, a mention of “I’ll be praying for you,” a gift of a book or DVD, or a note scribbled on a piece of cardboard, can bring about a widespread harvest beyond all dreams.

As Ed packed up to return to graduate school, he suggested that his father might want to call the pastor of the church and see what he recommended for growth in his newfound faith. Never would Ed have expected the program of discipleship the pastor laid out for this now sixty-year-old babe in Christ.

“Do you read the daily newspaper?” the pastor asked Ed’s father. He replied that he did—every day.

“I want you to look up the listings of all the people who had babies or announced their marriages. Send them a note of congratulations along with one of these tracts.” He handed him a stack of tracts and sent him on his way. That started the daily writing of notes to dozens of new parents and brides and grooms. It also inspired him to start writing tracts of his own.

At age sixty-six, Ed’s father married a godly Christian woman, sold his house, bought an RV, and travelled all over the country with his new bride, distributing thousands (that’s not an exaggeration!) of tracts he had written. For eighteen more years, he lived as a fearless evangelist, sharing his story and praying that his words would fall upon soil where “chains could not hold people back” from believing and, ultimately, bearing fruit a hundredfold.

My highest priority in writing Bringing The Gospel Home was to encourage hope for Christians as they witness to their families. One final story girds me up as I pray for, extend love to, and search for words to say to those I know and love who still don’t know the Savior.

For two whole years during World War II, the Nazis surrounded the city of Leningrad (now known by its former name, St. Petersburg). They pummeled it with shells, trying to crush the spirit of the people who lived there. Of great concern to the citizens was the preservation of the masterpieces in the Hermitage museum. Before the siege took place, curators and volunteers packed up thousands of paintings and sculptures and shipped them east to be hidden in the rural countryside far from the urban museum. But they left the frames and pedestals where they were, in anticipation of someday reuniting them with the paintings and statues they once held.

To provide constant protection of the building, many of the staff of the museum, along with their families, moved into its basement. Together with Russian soldiers, they swept up broken glass, boarded up holes in walls, and removed snow that had come through holes in the roof, hoping to protect the beautiful parquet floors.

As a way of saying thank you to the soldiers, the staff of the museum conducted tours of the building—even though the artwork wasn’t there. Photographs depict knowledgeable curators standing before clusters of soldiers, pointing to empty picture frames and vacant pedestals. You can almost hear their voices describing beautiful works of art they had come to love and longingly miss. From memory, they would point out brushstrokes, marble contours, and the creative genius of the likes of Renoir, da Vinci, Monet, and Michelangelo.

The staff did this from the dual vantage points of happy memory and hopeful anticipation. They remembered what once was and looked forward to what they hoped would someday be again.3
It is right and inevitable that we should be much concerned about the salvation of those we love. But we must be careful not to expect or demand that their salvation should conform to some ready-made pattern of our own.

C.S. Lewis

We experience a similar duality as we live at this moment in salvation history. We remember what the world once was before the first man and woman's rebellion, and we anticipate what will someday be, after the return of Christ. We recall a creation before the fall, mostly through Scripture but also through an internal sense of how things ought to be. And we anticipate a consummation after the second coming, mostly through Scripture but also with a confidence assured by Jesus’ resurrection.

In between these two bookends of biblical history is the world we live in, full of reminders of beauty and evidence of corruption. We see people who display goodness, love, and the image of God along with sin, rebellion, and brokenness. Some of those people live with us, grew up with us, look a lot like us, and celebrate holidays with us. When we share the gospel with them, we point them to the God who created everything and the Savior who will make all things new.

In a sense, witnessing to family members, close friends, and others who know us well fits into our waiting for the second coming. It’s like the Hermitage staff waiting for the artwork to be restored . . . only more so.

Notes

1. All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.

RECOMMENDED READING

Randy Newman, Bringing the Gospel Home: Witnessing to Family Members, Close Friends, and Others Who Know You Well (Crossway, 2011)

Jesus is off limits for a lot of families and friends—or at least that’s how it appears sometimes. Why does sharing the good news with a stranger often feel less frightening than telling those you love most?

For the vast majority of Christians, evangelism does not come naturally. We find ourselves sounding like someone we’re not or beating ourselves up for not being bold enough, smart enough, or quick enough.

Randy Newman understands the complexity and consequences of this all-important task.
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