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Getting Ready for *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Tuesday, November 29, 2005

The Walt Disney Company and Walden Media are set to release *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* on December 9 — so get ready for a major cultural event. I'll provide much more material about the series, the movie, C. S. Lewis, and the cultural impact of this film in coming days. For now, I want to draw attention to two excellent articles published in the new edition of *Reformation 21*, the online journal of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

In C.S. Lewis: Apologist with an Imagination, Andrew Hoffercker of Reformed Theological Seminary argues that the release of the movie offers a unique opportunity for theologically-minded evangelicals. In his words: *The appearance of the Narnia stories in film in December, 2005 provides an opportunity for the Reformed community to reflect on our unique constitution as thinking, imaginative beings. Lewis viewed his task as an apologist to defend Christianity in two ways: by appealing to our rational capacity and to our imagination. Christianity is something to be assented to as true. It also something to be received imaginatively. Through his allegory, The Pilgrim's Regress we witness Lewis' "apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism." Though the recent plethora of works on Lewis do not often refer to it, the Regress will reward those interested in how Lewis refuted modern philosophies and worldviews and perhaps spur writers to take a try at Christian allegory. The Narnia chronicles, on the other hand, receive frequent attention. Seeing them as Christian fantasy reminds those of us who are able to take up Lewis' challenge and join him by creating additional imaginative stories which may work their way into the modern consciousness and thus help convert the modern mind.*

In Reading the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe with C.S. Lewis, Leland Ryken of Wheaton College offers several points of interest and insight. Helpfully, Ryken the literary scholar demonstrates a keen theological insight as well: *The theological themes of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe are primarily three in number. The most important theological fact about The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe is its Christological focus. The figure of Aslan dominates our experience of the book, and Aslan, as every reader of the book knows, is representative of Christ. The redemptive acts of Aslan, coupled with his coming back to life after an atoning death, retell the story of Christ's passion and resurrection. This story of salvation history is told with theological precision and with a continuous eye on the Gospel accounts of the life and death of Jesus.*

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