



# **Surprised by Faith: Conversion and the Academy A Collection of Papers Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Conversion of C. S. Lewis**

*Daryl McCarthy, Bob VanderVennen and Joy McBride*

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Surprised by Faith celebrates the 75th anniversary of C. S. Lewis kicking and screaming his way into Christianity his 1931 conversion. Lewis described himself as, 'the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.' But a convert, nonetheless, surprised by joy. This volume was inspired by Lewis's autobiographical account of the life-events which led to his coming to faith an event that had a profound effect on his work and his relationships. In Surprised by Faith, Lewis's conversion is explored as both a rational quest for truth and a romantic quest for meaning. This collection of essays commemorates Lewis's conversion, but also celebrates, examines and discusses what conversion means to us as scholars, academicians, and most importantly, as human beings. It's a kind of conversation about conversion. The conversation's participants are individuals from a variety of backgrounds who themselves have been converted in the classic Christian sense. Surprised by Faith hopefully will challenge the reader to think more deeply, biblically and theologically about the transformation that takes place in each life that embraces Christ and moves from unbelief to belief. The essays look at the influence of conversion on perspectives as they relate to various disciplines, such as anthropology, poetry, psychology, education, philosophy and culture. Surprised by Faith is a sparkling set of essays about the nature and experience of true Christian conversion, with detailed examples ranging from Abraham to John Wesley. This book will delight and challenge both the casual reader and the serious student of theology. It will surely be very widely read and discussed. Phillip E. Johnson, author of Darwin on Trial Truth be told, there are no unconverted people, because everyone, everywhere has turned to something in search of foundation for life. The big question, of course, is what we have been converted to! This fine book thoroughly examines the neglected but significant notion of Christian conversion in an interdisciplinary fashion, especially by and among scholars in the academy. The surprise of faith in Jesus Christ is that it not only results in redemption, but is accompanied by a transformation of one's entire life-system or worldview. This is just one of many insights in this book that celebrates the seventy-fifth anniversary of C. S. Lewis's turn from atheism to Christian theism. David Naugle, Professor of Philosophy, Dallas Baptist University, Author of *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Eerdmans 2002) This is a valuable contribution to the on-going conversation about the nature of conversion. We need this book; it is so urgent that we re-think the meaning of conversion and its implications for the church and for the academy. And this will be one of those resources that many will turn to. Gordon T. Smith, President, reSource Leadership International and adjunct lecturer at Regent College, Vancouver. Smith is the author of *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation* (IVPress 2001) and *A Holy Meal: the Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church* (Baker 2005).

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