

Back to Narnia

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December 15, 2010



Aside from the Bible, The Chronicles of Narnia have been the most formative books in my life. My parents hung a Narnia map in my nursery, and my dad started reading the books to me at age three. Soon I was reading the books a couple of times a year.

Wheaton College houses C.S. Lewis's papers (and has [the](#) wardrobe), and we students lovingly referred to him as St. Jack. My husband and I got to know each other at the Wheaton Children's Literary Interpretation Society,

where we'd read children's books out loud during study breaks. The first semester we read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. My husband was Aslan; I was the White Witch.

So regardless of the [reviews](#), I am excited to go see the movie version of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The story is an integral part of my faith journey and I love it. But it's strange to encounter Lewis apart from the evangelical lens I've always seen him interpreted through in the past.

Evangelicals tend to claim Lewis as their own, often forgetting that he was an Anglican. Many progressive Christians are uncomfortable with him because he's been appropriated by the evangelicals. Yet as I return to his works, I am discovering complexities to his theology and deeper mysteries that he hints at--layers I never knew existed. I'm beginning to share Marcus Borg's [view](#) that progressive Christians need to take another look at Lewis.

For instance, my favorite scene in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is the undragoning of Eustace. A most unpleasant boy, Eustace has been turned into a dragon because of his selfishness and greed. Aslan, the savior figure, redeems Eustace's humanity by ripping away the layers of dragon skin and washing him until he is a boy again.

It is a poignant image of redemption, but when I read this through my old evangelical lens, I saw only the individual story.

Now I see that Eustace isn't the only one saved in this act. His friends and cousins find their relationships with him healed. Those on the ship the *Dawn Treader* are able to continue on their journey without the dragon holding them back. When Eustace sheds his dragonish ways, the community becomes whole again.

I'm happy to return to these stories. Their deep truth has a way of connecting with us regardless of how--or when--we come to it.