

PEW RESEARCH PROPOSAL

(Use the space necessary to present your proposal clearly to the committee)

1. **Title of the project.** *Young Jack Lewis: The Formation of C. S. Lewis, 1909-1917*
2. **Statement of the end product(s)** (book, chapter, article, play composition, exhibit, or other dissemination means appropriate to your discipline).

The purpose of this project is to write a biography of the adolescent C. S. Lewis and the importance of this period of his life for the person he became in adulthood. Crossway has agreed to publish the book upon completion.

3. **Explanation of the scholarly activity.**

(In this section, you make the case for the funding of your proposal. Begin with a statement of the specific research question or project/activity plan, depending upon the discipline. Present a clear, but concise, description of the project and its major goals. Special attention should be given to the theoretical framework upon which the research/project/activity will be based along with a brief examination of surrounding scholarly literature, stressing how the project qualifies, extends or otherwise engages existing knowledge or practice.)

I. Statement of the Scholarly Activity

The scholarly activity involves researching the formative adolescent years of C. S. Lewis and writing a biography of his teenage years.

The Pew grant is needed to help fund my visit to the Marion Wade Center of Wheaton College and to the Bodleian Library of Oxford University.

II. Description of the activity and its goals

Most biographies of Lewis rush through his adolescence even though Lewis devoted 172 pages of his 224 page spiritual autobiography (*Surprised by Joy*) to his early life. Though Lewis abandoned his family's faith during this period, this was the period in which all the pieces were put into place that would lead to his conversion. Though Lewis told much in *Surprised by Joy*, his friend Dr. Havard joked that the book should have been entitled *Surpressed by Jack* for all he left out.

The major biographies of Lewis invariably mention the important writers that influenced Lewis during his adolescence, but they never explain how and why they influenced him. This book will give an explanation of who these writers were. Edwardians might have been familiar with the work of William Morris, G. K. Chesterton, and Rider Haggard, but few modern readers know them. Few modern readers know the story of Wagner's *Ring*. Few modern readers know what was enchanting about the stories of George Macdonald. This book will describe the authors and their work, and will draw the connection between their work, the young Lewis, and the mature Lewis.

This biography will also answer questions and provide explanations for critical passages in Lewis's life. In the famous passage in which Lewis described being met at the train by W. T. Kirkpatrick, Lewis related how his new teacher prodded him to explain why he was surprised to find Surrey a wild place. Lewis never gives an explanation in *Surprised by Joy*. He only meant to describe Kirkpatrick's method. The answer, however, lies in Lewis's habit from this period of discussing in his letters what he had been reading. He had read Jane Austen's *Emma* which is set in Surrey near where Kirkpatrick lived. When the new Mrs. Elton had her first interview with Emma, she declared that Surrey was the garden of England. Lewis had an idea of Surrey implanted in his mind by a most unreliable lady.

Another episode that has plagued biographers and Lewis's brother and friends was his profound dislike of Malvern College which brother Warnie had adored. The letters of Lewis to his father lift the veil. Warnie left Malvern before the Irish troubles had started in earnest. Jack Lewis, with his strong Irish accent, came in for the full blow of English animosity toward the Irish when the Irish problem was the biggest issue in British politics.

The letters also reveal how Lewis developed the skill to think "the other way around" in his apologetics. Arguments that he would later refute in his published apologetics are the arguments he gave to Arthur Greeves for why he did not believe in God. He also learned the art of writing for the "common man" through his letters to Arthur Greeves who needed a little extra help in following any deep intellectual matter.

The manuscript is in process, and currently numbers about 90 pages. I expect the finished manuscript to be in 250-300 page range (double spaced). The published book will include some photographs of the places and people in the story that were taken during Lewis's teenage years. The images all come from my personal collection and illustrate passages from the biography, including the train wreck at Watford, the small villages that Lewis visited on his afternoon rambles through Surrey, the Castle of Dunluce which inspired Cair Paravel in the Narnia stories, and the environs of Malvern.

III. Theoretical Framework

This book explores the significance of the adolescent development of C. S. Lewis and how his formative years contributed significantly to his career in later life. The biographies have mentioned his experience of "joy," his love of Norse mythology, and his hatred of public school from these years, but they have failed to do any more than establish that he had a childhood. This book explains what that childhood had to do with the man that Jack Lewis became. During this period, young Lewis moved from childhood to young adulthood. In his early adolescence, we see how the theme of self-esteem played such an important part in his life at school where he was cut off from any caring relationships and where his inability at sports made him a social outcast. In his middle adolescence, we see how the theme of independence manifests itself as Lewis abandons his family's faith in God and abandons the public school system to go it alone. In his late adolescence, we see how the theme of identity played out with Lewis's determination to become a great poet and have an academic career as a philosopher.

Relying on the extensive body of letters that young Jack wrote to his father, his brother, and to his only friend Arthur Greeves, this biography of the young Jack Lewis will connect the dots of his adolescence with his body of writing in later life. For instance, he first had his vision of Narnia as a teenager living in the wild country of Surrey. The train disaster that ended the lives of the children in *The Last Battle* actually happened in Wantage where Lewis was interned in what he called the “concentration camp” that passed for his first school.

IV. Brief examination of scholarly literature or context of the activity within your discipline

No one has undertaken a biography of the young Lewis, but several significant biographies have been written which do not dwell on his youth. These include:

Green, Roger Lancelyn and Walter Hooper. *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

Sayer, George. *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Wilson, A. N. *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.

McGrath, Alister. *C. S. Lewis: A Life*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2013.

The most important resources for this study are the dairies of Warren H. Lewis, the borther of C. S. Lewis, and the letters of C. S. Lewis:

Hooper, Walter, ed., *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, Vol. I. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Kilby, Clyde S. and Marjorie Lamp Mean, eds., *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.

The most important unpublished material consists of letters and dairies in the collections of the Marion Wade Center at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois and the papers in the Lewis Collection of the Bodleian Library of Oxford University in Oxford, England.

4. An essay (500 - 1000 words) describing how the Christian faith relates to your understanding of your discipline and how it relates to this scholarly endeavor.

As a minister of the gospel, I teach as an expression of that ministry. In the context of a Christian university, I teach to prepare young Christians to live out their lives in service to Christ through their local churches and their lives' vocations. I view the academy as a strategic force within culture for good or evil; therefore, I consider my active involvement in higher education as a major avenue for communicating the gospel to my culture.

First and last, teaching for me is a personal relationship with other people, whether one on one, in a small group, or in a large group. I was a teacher in the church before I was a teacher in an institution. There were no grades except those given by life. There were no assignments

except for life itself. My concern for all my students is that they grasp the connection between their academic lessons and the lives they are living.

Higher education as it is known in the West grew out of the church. The pursuit of learning for learning's sake would have been an alien idea to those who gathered to pursue learning for the glory of God. The idea of a university depends upon a universal basis for knowledge. Christians believe that God himself provides the basis for all knowledge. In fact, he is the source of all knowledge.

In the modern era, knowledge and the university have fragmented as they lost their basis for unity. With the general expulsion of God from the academy, the academy was left with the trappings of religion (hoods, degrees, communal life) without the substance. In the emerging postmodern climate, people crave integration and wholeness, but the primary public institutions contribute to the fragmentation and disintegration of life. In this climate, Christian colleges and universities have a unique opportunity to show the way out. Rather than sacrificing learning and scholarship for the sake of faith, the Christian academy as the opportunity to demonstrate that faith provides the basis for universal knowledge, interdisciplinary study, integration of various fields of human experience (including but not limited to faith), and the ability to live life.

Every sphere of human knowledge has some relationship to the particular doctrines of Christian faith. The doctrines of Christian faith are expressions of revealed truth found in the Bible. Christians of each generation have applied these truths as doctrine to their own time and culture. The creeds represent a distillation of the essence of Christian doctrine. More simply, the creeds represent a statement of the gospel. The disciplines of the liberal arts curriculum relate directly to the affirmations of the creeds. The fact that a creator God exists makes knowledge of a real world possible. Other worldviews and religions that lack this basic affirmation have no basis for the development of scientific knowledge. One of the crises of science today related to quantum theory and chaos theory involves the loss of certainty. While other cultures have made scientific discoveries, the doctrine of God and Creation made the study of creation a desirable good within the church.

The humanities depend upon what it means to be made in the image of God. The human tendency toward creativity and communication found in art, music, literature, and drama illustrate the spiritual dimension of people. The social sciences depend upon a realization of the Fall and the Doctrine of Humanity to account for the human condition. Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, International Relations, History, and Philosophy explore from different perspectives the Doctrine of Humanity. In terms of calling in life, the professional disciplines apply the Doctrine of Humanity. Education, Business, Nursing, Social Work, and Physical Education explore how faith expresses itself in the market place.

The integration of faith and learning begins when the disciplines begin to see that the basis for their relationship lies in the gospel itself. Integration cannot be a forced structure, but rather a discovery of the underlying unity of knowledge made possible by the Creator. Education can be just as fragmented in a school with required chapel attendance, dorm curfews, and drinking prohibitions as in the most secular of schools. Education becomes Christian not by prayer before class, but by recognizing God's concerns within a discipline.

In terms of this particular project, faith arises in different lives in different ways. At the end of this biography, the young Irish lieutenant who leaves Oxford to fight for King and Country is an atheist. All of his collected preferences, however, are inconsistent with the perspective of atheism. By the choices young Lewis has made about music, art, literature, and such values as courage, integrity, and honor, the young Lewis has boxed himself into a

metaphysical corner. He believes in right and wrong, which are ideas that do not fit in a materialistic universe. The conclusion of the book will draw the string to show that Lewis adolescent experiences created the track on which his conversion played out a decade later.

5. **A time frame for the completion and a plan for the dissemination of the project.**

My contract with Crossway calls for submission of the completed manuscript by the end of August 2018.

6. **A brief budget.**

Flight to Oxford	\$1200
Lodging in Oxford for one week	700
Food	350
Mileage to Wheaton (1060 mi. @ 54¢)	572
Food	350
Lodging in Wheaton for one week	<u>700</u>
TOTAL	\$3872

7. **A current *curriculum vitae*.**

(attached)

8. **Two letters of recommendation should be submitted directly to chair of the Research Committee.**

(submitted separately)