

Dear fellow pilgrims,

Last week we spent some time exploring the pivotal role of the Rev. James ("Jimmy") Welch in bringing to fruition the broadcast talks by C.S. Lewis that eventually became the book we know today as *Mere Christianity*. With the advantage of hindsight, it is abundantly clear that absent the agency of Jimmy Welch, *Mere Christianity* would probably not exist, and thus its Gospel impact on the lives of millions would never have happened.

As we looked at Welch's role and the difference one person can make, we noted the following factors that made him available for the use of the Holy Spirit at this crucial time:

- passion for the Truth of Christianity and for communicating it to the world. To quote Welch, "In a time of uncertainty and questioning it is the responsibility of the Church – and of religious broadcasting as one of its most powerful voices – to declare the truth about God and His relation to men. It has to expound the Christian faith in terms that can be easily understood by ordinary men and women, and to examine the ways in which that faith can be applied to present-day society during these difficult times."
- unwillingness to give up or settle for mediocrity
- thinking outside the box to take a bold and innovative step of faith to get the Gospel out to people by approaching Lewis, an unorthodox choice of spokesperson
- a mindset that would not allow him to "settle" or to focus just on his own safety and doing what was minimally necessary in his job

Additionally, we examined the important role that Lewis's ministry to the men and chaplains of the RAF (Royal Air Force) played in preparing and equipping him to be a skilled communicator in the context of the talks he gave for the BBC. Key points we touched on included the following:

- Lewis's deep commitment to this ministry, despite how exhausting it was both emotionally and physically. In one letter Lewis said "...owing to my itinerant lectureship to the RAF (a map of my 'missionary journeys' w[oul]d be as complicated as those maps of St. Paul's wh[ich] haunted our childhood), I am hardly ever home for more than three consecutive nights and unable to arrange anything." According to Chaplain Stuart Babbage, Lewis felt called by God and said that "...it was worth it to bring encouragement to some lonely chaplain who had been finding the going hard."
- The RAF mission caused Lewis to drastically alter his speaking style so as to be able to connect with the air crews, a very different audience from effete Oxford dons and sophisticated students. His very first address ("Pauline Soteriology and Linguistic Analysis") was a disaster until he departed from his notes and embarked on a more conversational style.
- This work with the RAF helped Lewis to develop a more approachable and engaging speaking style, one that ended up being especially well-suited to the live radio broadcasts that became the book *Mere Christianity*.

Here are links for listening to or watching last week's class:

<https://www.stphilipchurchsc.org/mediaPlayer/#/episodeaudio/384>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/mere-christianity-timely-truth-for-a-hurting-world/id1537579476>

(if you are a podcast listener, it would be great if you could rate or write a review on the Apple site, as it will make it easier for others to find the podcast)

Here is a link to watch last week's class on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4m5hKcQ3QY>

Here is a link to the intro music we chatted about: Sandy Macpherson on the BBC organ: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dN1Ka_4JCQc

And, last but not least, here is the link for class tomorrow evening at 7:15 p.m. ET: Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/99307536525>

I look forward to seeing you then!

Further up and further in,

Brian+