

# Author attempts 21st century classic with 'Simply Christian'

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The late C.S. Lewis is winning new readers through "The Chronicles of Narnia," the successful movie version of his children's novel "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Lewis was also a heavyweight literature scholar, but his writings that explain Christianity from a layman's perspective are more influential.

The most popular of these, "Mere Christianity," collects 33 radio talks about basics of the faith he delivered during World War II. This little classic, only slightly dated decades later, continues to open inquiring minds to Christian claims.

Fellow Brit N.T. Wright attempts a 21st-century counterpart in "Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense" (HarperSan Francisco). It's doubtful anyone will soon match Lewis' achievement, but Wright's offering is notably clear, readable and thought-provoking.

Like Lewis, Wright is an Anglican who has taught at Oxford and Cambridge and writes both popular-level books like this one and scholarly tomes.

(One Wright fan is Anne Rice, the vampire novelist who now writes about Jesus; they'll appear together May 14 at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral during Wright's book tour.)

Unlike Lewis, a one-time atheist and a layman, Wright is a lifelong Christian and a clergyman. He's now bishop of Durham, the Church of England's No. 4 post.

The world Wright addresses continues to suffer war and devastation like Lewis' listeners experienced, but features new forms of skepticism. For instance, influential Harvard sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson writes that the purposeless "blind force" of Darwinian evolution has eliminated God so humanity should "drain the fever swamps" of religion.

Many find that constricted outlook leaves too many questions unasked and unanswered, such as Lewis' starting point: How to explain humanity's universal sense of right and wrong.

Wright is dubious about classical arguments for God's existence: "The difficulty is that speaking of God in anything like the Christian sense is like staring into the sun." Instead, he says we all hear "echoes of a voice" that hint things are imperfect and there's a better world.

His starting points:

**Justice**  
Rather like Lewis, Wright says even children on playgrounds have an inborn sense of justice and its absence. "That's not fair!" We know matters are wrong and should be put right. Is this fantasy, or is there a just realm to which we truly belong? Is "someone

speaking to us"? Judaism and Christianity (and Islam) say there is, and it's God.

(Yes, Christians have been unjust throughout history; he acknowledges, but they've also acknowledged sins and strived to overcome injustices.)

**Spirituality**  
Some innate sense points us "away from the bleak landscape of modern secularism and toward the possibility that we humans are made for more than this." That underlies widespread religious experience, the "haunting possibility of another world," and realization that humans are badly damaged by evil and need "rescue from outside themselves."

**Relationships**  
With this universal human hunger, "we all know we are made to live together; but we all find that doing so is more difficult than we had imagined." As part of it, humans see that all bonds within the present world are transitory. The fact of death provides a stark, constant reminder. Are relationships God-given? Can they be ennobled?

**Beauty**  
We all realize "the world is full of beauty," yet also sense that this beauty is incomplete and feel somehow dissatisfied. "Whose glory is it? God's, perhaps? Wright contends that "beauty points away from the present world to a different one altogether."

PRAISE

The Rev. B.J. Cloud participates in a praise and worship service at Chapel Memorial Baptist Church's pre women's conference praise party. The event was held last Friday at the church on Bradford Drive.



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

## Human remains at construction site

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GEORGETOWN, S.C.—Construction on a home in a Georgetown County subdivision has stopped after workers recovered bone fragments likely from a former church cemetery.

This kind of discovery will happen more often as coastal development reaches into rural lands where people used to bury their dead, Coroner Kenny Johnson said.

The remains were unearthed last week by heavy equipment. Workers plan to look for more bones Thursday. Local and state experts will then try to find descendants and figure out where to bury them.

The construction site is on

the former cemetery for St. Marys Chapel, a black church that likely existed in the 1700s, Johnson said.

The church moved its graveyard in 1977, but apparently some unmarked graves were left behind.

"It does not appear that it will be a large amount of bones," Johnson said. "I'm not anticipating finding a large number of human remains."

Some bones were found more than a week ago, but Johnson was not contacted by deputies until two days later.

It is a felony to move a graveyard without permission or desecrate a grave and the coroner must be called when any human remains are found, even those in a former cemetery, Johnson said.

But the workers and deputies won't face charges in this case because they did not know about the law, Johnson said.

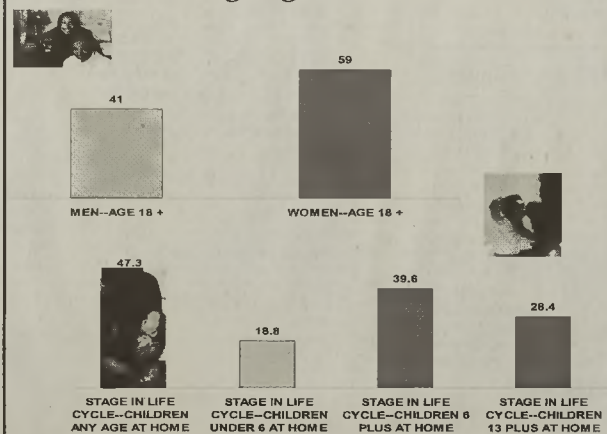
"I've talked with the sheriff to make sure that we go in together and make sure it's not a crime," the coroner said.

The church no longer exists and its records have not been found, so Johnson plans to advertise in local papers to determine if there are descendants of the people buried in the cemetery.

Property owner Ariane Lieberman said the discovery will not change construction plans for the house.

"We had known when we bought the property that it might have been an old grave site," she said.

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