

# Did Disney and Walden Pull It Off?

by Don King

"They got it!" That was my first thought as the credits screened by at the end of Disney's and Walden Media's film version of C. S. Lewis' beloved masterpiece, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Like many others, I was both smiling with delight and breathing a big sigh of relief, buoyed by this latest attempt to translate Lewis' book to the screen. What I had most feared was that the makers of the movie would "dumb-down" Lewis' story into some kind of post-modern pabulum, effectively eviscerating Lewis' powerful tale of selfishness, love, sacrifice, and redemption. Certainly the temptation must have been there to sell out Lewis' intent; thankfully, however, the moviemakers "got it."

Specifically, here's what "they got." They "got" that squarely in middle of this wonderful tale of awe, wonder, and magic—what we feel with Lucy as she enters Narnia for the first time—is an accurate portrayal of the human heart. Edmund, angry, self-centered, proud, and mean-spirited, is actually Everyman or Everywoman, for whom among us fails to see in him our own self-love? Like him, we want the world to revolve around us—we want to be the smartest, the best off, and the one in control. And, like him, once bewitched by our own version of Turkish Delight, we'd willing sell out even our own family in order to please our lofty vision of ourselves.

The makers of the movie "got it" that Edmund's obsession with himself is moral center of the story.

They also "got" that this is a story of love, poignantly portrayed by Lucy, Susan, and Peter. Yes, their brother is a bit of a brat and needs a good boxing around the ears. But he is also their brother, and once they learn he has betrayed them, they refuse to abandon him to the hands of the White Witch. This is more than "blood is thicker than water"—this is love for the lost, compassion for unworthy, concern for the wretched. Again it is Lucy who best communicates this love, since who better to reject Edmund than she, especially after he lies to Peter and Susan about having been in Narnia with Lucy? His delight in making Lucy cry borders on the cruel and underscores his egocentricity. The movie makers "got" this and did not pander to postmodern equivocation about good vs. evil—Edmund's actions are evil and shown to be that. Yet Lucy never despairs of her brother, and she is the first to embrace him when he finally comes to his senses.

But perhaps best of all the moviemakers "got it" that Edmund's dark heart and even darker actions cannot be fobbed off as temperamental glitches in a basically good person. What he does is evil,



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plain and simple; what is not so plain and simple is what it takes to redeem Edmund and save all of Narnia from the consequences of Edmund's actions. Indeed, because of Edmund's betrayal, all of Narnia is at risk. The movie makers "got it" that waving a magic wand cannot trump the Deep Magic of Narnia—that the blood of all traitors is the rightful property of the White Witch. This is the hinge upon which the story turns, a key point the movie makers could have easily dumbed-down for fear of offending polite religious sensibilities, but they resisted such temptation and stayed true to Lewis' vision—evil can only be trumped by Deeper Magic, a magic that requires at its

very heart blood sacrifice and death. They "got it" that Lewis' story is more than a delightful tale of another world with talking animals, beautiful vistas, and heroic adventures—it is a story of sacrifice and redemption that steals past tired old sermons and stained glass windows. And in their portrayal of Aslan they "got it." Any viewer not moved by the scene of Aslan and the White Witch at the Stone Table is probably residing in the morgue. Even more to the point, the movie makers "got it" that in the end it takes Aslan to complete the redemption of Narnia as he and his newly breathed upon and renewed followers show up at

the last minute and destroy the White Witch, routing her army at the same time.

I, for one, am deeply thankful to Disney and Walden Media for what they have done with this adaptation of C. S. Lewis' first *Chronicle of Narnia*. I suspect that the guiding hand behind maintaining the integrity of Lewis' story was Douglas Gresham, co-producer and Lewis' stepson. The movie makers "got it" because Gresham made sure the integrity of Lewis' story would not be compromised or pandered to the lowest common denominator. For that we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

## Bono Gives Guitar to Brazil Cause

BBC News Press Release



Courtesy of BBC News

Rock star Bono will donate a guitar to Brazil's Zero Hunger campaign following U2's concerts this week in Sao Paulo.

The guitar will be auctioned to raise money for Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's campaign for all Brazilians to have three meals a day. Bono met the president on Sunday where they discussed poverty and renewable energy sources. About 70,000 fans saw U2 in Sao Paulo on Monday. "To beat poverty, we all have to work together," Bono said.

### Message

"Martin Luther King didn't just have an American dream, but an Irish dream, a Latin American dream - sing for Peru, for Chile, for Argentina, for Brazil," he told the crowd. But there were boos from the audience at the mention of Argentina and some jeered when pictures of Lula and US President George W Bush appeared on a large screen behind the band. Bono

ended the group's two-hour performance with an appeal for zero poverty and thanks to Lula for his hospitality. The Brazilian president wants to ensure all Brazilians get three meals a day by the end of his term of office on 31 December this year. His government also wants to expand Brazil's use of bio-diesel fuel based on tropical fruit seeds, sunflowers and soybeans. U2 will play another

concert at the Morumbi football stadium in Sao Paulo on Tuesday before more gigs in Chile and Argentina. It is not yet known when and where the guitar auction will take place. A guitar donated by Lenny Kravitz to Brazil's fight against poverty last year raised 322,000 reais (£87,239).