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Letters

Donne E. Puckle

Susan Owens

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Fr. Donne E. Puckle             Chippewa Falls, WI

Re: Lee Speth's review of Derrick's book, C. S. Lewis and the Church of Rome. It
must be remembered that Lewis was a member of the Church of England, and as such, a
member of the Catholic Church. True, he was not a Roman Catholic, but according to the
教学 of the Church of England (and the Episcopal Church in this country) the Roman Church is
not the only Catholic Church. Popular usage has caused the confusion. "Protestant" origi-
inally meant "non-Roman"—now it appears to mean "non-Catholic." The Church of England
holds to the former, not the latter. To those who wonder why Lewis did not go "over"
to Rome—I suspect that there was no need to go over to Rome. He, like many of us, is
already a Catholic. In the long run we are left with speculation—but also with the
fact that Lewis evidenced a sound Christ centered, sacramental life. One could not
ask for more from any Catholic: Anglican, Roman, or Orthodox.

Susan Owens           St. Paul, MN

Mr. Lee Speth's review titled "From the Fisherman's Chair" in Mythlore 36 struck a
strange tone on several points. It indicates one's reaction to Christopher Derrick's C. S.
Lewis and the Church of Rome will "pretty automatically mirror one's attitude towards
Derrick's religion." While this may be the case for Mr. Speth, I doubt it is true for
all. This presupposes quite a bit, along with the prediction that Anglicans may react
"angrily defending" their position, or that those who do not share Derrick's views would
rather not deal with their "own latent anti-Catholicism." Theoretical strawmen are
doorly predicted and put down before they appear.

I am neither Anglican or Roman Catholic, and found the review's digression on the
proportionately few references by Lewis to the "C. of E." beside the point. My reading of
Lewis shows he did down play the denomination differences which would have little
importance to a secular audience for which he largely wrote. Because he does not lavishly
prize the "C. of E." begs the question of his not joining the Roman Church. Lewis was born
into the Church of Ireland (non-Roman) and after his adult conversion joined the English
Church which was, surely, a more "middle of the road" stance in the world he lived in.
He avoided the puritanism of Ulster for what is in the British viewpoint a more ecumenical
position. Why berate the man, however lovingly and respectfully, be he alive or
dead, for not going "all the way" to Rome?

Can we expect books asking why Lewis didn't become Presbyterian, Baptist, or Pentecostal?
Having read Derrick's book, I find it repeatedly claims Lewis did not seriously or clearly
explain his reasons for not being Roman. Yet the book gives several instances where
Lewis does exactly that, particularly in his personal letter, printed on pages 95-96,
where he uses the analogy of the Platonic society. Derrick undermines most of his book
by refusing to take seriously Lewis' clear reasons, however candidly given. Derrick
seems double minded, since he is honest to give these reasons, but, perhaps out of his
own devotion to this Church, cannot deal with them objectively.

Lastly, there is the slighting (to be kind) reference to the "Lewis Industry." If
Mr. Speth means that a number of books written on Lewis are redundant, exploitative, and
perhaps that some were better not printed, I agree. The "Lewis Industry" allusions seems
to deny that there are a number of very solid, original, and insightful books on
Lewis, more than I could list here in justice. There are also books that take advantage
of Lewis' name and popularity to examine some special theory, which without his popu-
ularity would probably not see the light of day. I leave it to the other readers to
decide where to classify Mr. Derrick's book, and whether it is part of Mr. Speth's clever-
ly imaginary "Lewis Industry."