

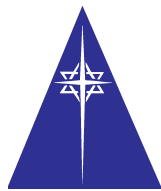
Volume XIV
Number I

Winter
2006

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See insert describing
important information
regarding your subscription
to Pen & Sword!



CHURCH
WRITING
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Pen & SWORD

Discipling Our Nation in this Generation

Who would you be in Narnia?

By Jan Merop, for the Amy Syndicate

Box office sales have proven once again that movies with solid, moral values are desirable. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* from C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* continues to draw large crowds.

Though other versions have been made, this big-screen creation has drawn us into Narnia with new fascination. Before its debut, radio interviews and commentaries encouraged me to discover Narnia for myself by not looking for the symbolism; rather asking if I was one of the characters, which one would I be? And, with that in mind, I entered Narnia.

Though an allegory and fantasy, the story unfolded in the realism of history: World War II and the bombing of London.

This frightful time had necessitated the transporting of children from the city to the countryside. Mothers sacrificially placed their children on trains—tagged so that they would not get lost—and sent them into an unknown they hoped would be safer than the dangerous city under siege.

From the start, the viewer was introduced to sullen Edmund; responsible, yet not always confident, Peter; mother-hen Susan; and, wide-eyed, believing Lucy whose childlike faith would continually be challenged by her siblings.

This historical backdrop sets the

stage for an adventure like nothing the children could have imagined. Under the domineering oversight of the housekeeper in the prestigious country manor house of a single professor, the children tried to amuse themselves.

While playing a game of hide and seek, Lucy hid in an old wardrobe and discovered Narnia. Or, perhaps,

Narnia discovered her—as such a place could only come to one with unsullied belief.

Though captivated by the scenery and wonder of this spectacular place, I was quickly drawn into the plight of Narnia's inhabitants. Only the sacrifice of a descendent of Eve could break the perpetual winter curse.

Edmund, in his selfish, resentful

Continued, page 3 ▶

Amy Syndicate returns

by Don Lindman

After a year's absence The Amy Syndicate returned to the internet February 13. Under the names of *Crossroads* and then *Real Answers*, the Syndicate ran for over seven years as The Amy Foundation's attempt to apply Amy Writing Awards and Church Writing Group principles to the delivering of columns ready made for newspapers to download and use.

The ministry was suspended at the end of 2004 due to financial constraints. With the situation improved, The Amy Foundation Advisory Board recommended restarting the Syndicate. Many of the previous columnists are back, and editor Don Lindman has resumed his duties.

At the time of its suspension the Syndicate was being published regularly in around 25 newspapers across the country. The heaviest concentration of use was in middle America: Tennessee, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Missouri.

Columnists are either professional journalists or winners of an Amy Writing Award. The Syndicate was started by the late Jim Russell with the idea of supplying newspapers with free columns written in the style and quality of AWA winners.

Pen and Sword readers who are acquainted with the editor of their local newspaper can share in this ministry by encouraging the editor to take a look at the columns being offered at www.amyfound.org and then click on the Syndicate tab.

Jan Merop has written a weekly inspirational column for over ten years, published in the *News-Sun* (FL). As a freelance writer, she has been published in *Decision*, *Clubhouse*, and *Launch Pad*. She has served as an Amy Internet Syndicate columnist and is a previous Amy Writing Award winner.

These excerpts are recently published letters to the editor. We thank the Lord for the ministry of these authors.

► Faithful individuals move mountains

Fears of a pandemic, the slow reaction to Hurricane Katrina and the failure to prevent illegal aliens from crossing our borders are raising grave doubts among Americans about who is protecting them. One survey shows only 54 percent expressing confidence in the federal government's ability to handle a future crisis.

The same distrust exists in our own back yard as Detroit's population continues sinking. With the unabated exodus, vacant buildings litter the landscape and budget woes deepen.

While policymakers grapple with these problems, let's remember that individuals, not just governing bodies, are crucial in aiding others.

George Muller remains a shining example of such a servant, and that's why it's worth marking the 200th anniversary of his birth. Amid the clamor for increased government, his outreach illustrates the scriptural promise that someone with faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.

The devotion described in Matthew 17:20 helped Muller save thousands as he pushed away mountains of poverty and indifference without government assistance. The greatest of Muller's endeavors was building and maintaining orphanages [caring for more than 10,000 children over decades]. He started with only two shillings in his pocket and without solicitation he received the funds needed to feed the youngsters day by day.

One of Muller's favorite Bible verses was Psalm 81:10: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The words of the psalmist were prophetic. The children never went without food during the 20,000 or more days Muller worked with the homes until he died at 92 in 1898.

Common conditions in 19th-century England were similar to the horrors following Katrina's destruction: poor sanitation, open sewers, unclean drinking water and rubbish

piled in the street. Through prayer and action, Muller protected his orphans from the storms of filth and degradation despite a slow-acting government.

Federal leaders will always be pivotal in guarding a nation's borders and protecting citizens from natural and man-made disasters. And municipal officials have an obligation to help their ailing cities prosper again.

But as the push continues for increased government involvement, Muller's life reminds us that individuals can make a difference, even when the public sector is powerless.

Muller's faith is being reenacted today as Good Samaritans risk everything to be their brother's keeper. Each of us should look in the mirror and get directly involved, especially in our own neighborhoods.

Kendall Wingrove
East Lansing, Mich.
The Detroit News

► Help heal the angels' laryngitis

Angels are a special part of the Christmas experience. Watch for the presence of angels. You can observe angels on Christmas cards, candy boxes, gift wrapping, ornaments and as candle holders.

Take time to notice and enjoy the angels. Seeing angels so often [during the holidays] may result in our ignoring them. Another reason we ignore angels during this holy season is their silence. Angels in our holiday celebration do not communicate. If it were possible for these supernatural beings to be sick, they would show signs of permanent laryngitis.

Biblical angels always have their voice. Angels in the Scriptures showed up with something important to say. Their message to Zechariah, to Joseph, to Mary, to the shepherds and to all mankind is eternally relevant. The angels' appearances reveal that God has not given up on humanity as a lost cause. The almighty father is still trying to get his message through our hard heads and cold hearts.

If our decorative angels were given a voice, they would trumpet the news that today is the time to turn away from selfish living and to worship the living God. We can take time to read in the Scriptures the unchanging words of the angels. During the season of Christmas, give the angels back their voice by meditating on these supernatural messengers' words found in Matthew 1:20-25, Luke 1:11-20, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:8-14 and Revelation 5:11-14.

The angels are God's messengers for your life. The angels of Christmas are proclaiming hope, truth, peace, forgiveness and a better way to live.

Cliff Rawley
Springfield, Missouri
Springfield News-Leader

► Following the best example

Recent letters have shown me that people still don't understand why Christians have been so upset by the "Christmas controversy" this year. In my opinion, it's because we've finally gotten fed up with the way this holiday has been hijacked—lock, stock and barrel—by the "politically correct."

This year, it seems almost indecent to utter the word Christ in connection with what once was considered a holy day. In doing so, they have not only made a mockery of the babe of Bethlehem, but have sought to strip the impact of his life here on earth as well, reducing him to some sort of a fictionalized character from a children's nursery fable—if he is mentioned at all.

In truth, that babe of Bethlehem did exist. He was so real to the authorities at the time and considered to be such a significant figure in history that King Herod sent soldiers to kill all male Jews under the age of 2 to ensure that this "Christ" never came to power.

Herod knew that the baby was

Continued on back of insert ►

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SWORD

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► Narnia

continued from page 1

spirit, fell victim to the temptation of the witch and betrayed his brother and sisters as well as all of Narnia's citizens. Aslan, the Lion, was the only hope for Narnia and word had it that he was coming.

When he did, he sacrificed himself in place of Edmund and died, only to come back to life. By his authority he entrusted Narnia to their care for the time he would be gone before returning again.

Though captivated by the scenery and wonder of this spectacular place, I was quickly drawn into the plight of Narnia's inhabitants.

The symbolism isn't lost on one who is familiar with the salvation account of Jesus Christ in the Bible, "...the Lion of the Tribe of Judah..." — who came to our world, died a sacrificial, substitutionary death for the sin of mankind; rose triumphantly from the dead; authoritatively entrusted the gospel message to his followers; ascended to heaven; and, will return again.

Yet, in wondering which of the characters I would be, my perspective broadened to which character traits I possessed in my own world, my "Narnia."

Am I like Edmund who sees his wrong, repents and becomes honorable; Peter who responsibly rises to the occasion and sees what Aslan sees in him; over-protective Susan who develops a truly caring heart; or, bold-spirited, believing Lucy who puts all of Narnia before herself?

Which one pleased Aslan most?

According to the new, distinctive names with which he crowned them, each had a special place in his heart; Edmund, "The Just;" Peter, "The Magnificent;" Susan, "The Gentle;" Lucy, "The Valiant."

We each have a purpose. We'd do well to emulate these characteristics in our own "Narnia." ◀

Learn what works: Practice writing well

By Shaunna Howat

Since the time Aristotle taught Rhetoric, young writers through the ages have used the technique known as imitation to learn a form of writing. It sounds like what we discourage in schools: plagiarism. Rest easy; imitation is not taking someone else's words or ideas and claiming them to be one's own.

Imitation writing is taking something written by a skillful, proficient writer and using the form and style of his or her words to inspire what you write. Michelangelo, like many Renaissance painters, learned how to paint by copying what great artists before him had painted. Just like he did, we will learn to write better by copying the form of other writers.

What are you trying to write? If it's an opinion piece, then find the opinion pieces of professionals you admire. Go to the opinion pages of newspapers online, click on the writer you admire, and most likely you'll find a link to more articles by that same writer, or by writers in his or her syndicated group. Read as many as you can, to get a feel for someone's style. Then follow these steps to create your own writing clinic.

Analyze the writer's style. How does he begin—with a narrative, a ques-

tion, a bold statement? Is he satirical, informational, funny? Does he move his reader to action, make his reader angry, cause his reader to sit back and think deeply?

Analyze the writer's form. Usually a good writer will vary his form. Some will stick with what works, using a similar introduction, bringing in examples and quotes to support his view, sticking a strong thesis statement into the beginning, and wrapping up with a strong exhortation for readers to take action.

Choose a topic you want to write about, with which you are comfortable.

Write your own piece, using your topic. Craft each paragraph just like your example writer would. Sentence for sentence, try to imitate the form. Use your own voice, but use the writer's style. Think of this as getting inside the writer's mind, to think like he thinks and write like he writes. As you closely adhere to that style, your own style will grow.

Don't limit yourself to imitating the work of one author. Once you've begun imitation, branch out and find another writer you appreciate. Imitate hers and see how your own writing will improve. ◀

lambs who are ROARING!

Final Roaring Lambs awards

...go to the writers whose letters are excerpted on page two.

1st prize/\$200:	<i>Kendall Wingrove</i>
2nd prize/\$100:	<i>Cliff Rawley</i>
3rd prize/\$100:	<i>Brenda J. Hansen</i>

Attention writers!

This will be the last issue of *Pen & Sword* to feature **Power of the Pen** and the **Lambs who are ROARING** awards. As the newsletter moves into new directions, watch for other award programs and features. Thanks to all the writers who have so faithfully sent us copies of the letters and op-ed pieces they have published in their local newspapers and journals. We encourage you to keep writing discipling messages that include scripture to your local media. Your efforts do make a difference to readers and editors alike.

Several Amy Writing Award winners were asked: What are some winning strategies Christian writers can use when presenting biblical truth through the secular media?

Here is a summary of some of their answers:

- Make your points with facts and logic that the audience will respect.
- Temper your righteous anger with subtlety and wit, grace and eloquence.
- Read—a lot. You must know something before you have something important to say.
- Send timely topics. Good editors want helpful information on subjects that are headlining the daily news.
- Use the telephone to talk to editors.
- Document thoroughly. Don't just state opinion and analysis. Present strong research and let the facts speak for themselves.

THE AMY FOUNDATION

Winter 2006



Church Writing Group Newsletter

Pen & SWORD

Discipling Our Nation in this Generation

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The United States—A Discipled Nation

Eight Biblical tools for making disciples

There is no higher priority than our accountability to the one who created us. The one who called us to the work of a specific purpose, and will hold us individually accountable for our performance in this work. Our calling is to bring glory and honor to our heavenly Father by doing the work of building His Kingdom here on earth. His Kingdom is that realm in which his will is done. The work of Kingdom building is that of making disciples by teaching obedience of everything Jesus commanded us to do. This work is to be done in self, family, congregation and neighborhood.

Here are eight biblical tools we are to work with in making disciples.

1. Love. It should be clear to every believer that love reigns supreme as a disciple-making tool. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

There is no commandment greater than these."

2. Prayer. We faithfully pray for the work of teaching obedience—to ourselves, our family, our congregation, and our neighbor. "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray."

3. Truth. We share biblical truth with ourself, our family, our congregation, and our neighbor. Jesus explained, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, and you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

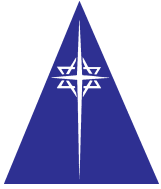
4. Righteousness. We identify the blatant and subtle sins in our lives and know that, while God loves us, He hates the sin barrier that blocks a bonding of righteousness between us. However, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Righteousness increases our discipling effectiveness.

5. Faith. "According to your faith it will be done," Jesus promised. Faith in the truth always calls for the work of putting its principles into practice.

6. Obedience. "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.'" To disciple our nation, we begin with teaching obedience in myself, my family, my congregation, and my neighborhood.

7. Wisdom. The biblical definition of wisdom is *knowing and doing what is right*. Knowledge by itself is a dusty, lifeless book on a mindless shelf. Doing by itself is loose-cannon energy expended

Continued on Insert 1 ➤



Changes in store for *Pen & Sword*

Changes are coming to the *Pen & Sword* in 2006. Subscribers will now receive the newsletter four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). The quarterly newsletter will still address issues of interest to Christians who seek to make disciples by writing for the secular media. It will also include news and information about all the ministries of the Amy Foundation, including the Amy Syndicate, Discipled Nation Plan, Amy Writing Awards and more.

Watch for these regular features:
Writers' Toolkit—a practical column offering advice on how to be a better writer.

Winning strategies—simple tips for turning your writing into more powerful discipling experiences.

Amy Syndicate—news, updates, and samples from the Syndicate team.

Amy Writing Awards—Excerpts of the 2006 Amy prize-winning articles.

Discipled Nation Plan—Sample strategies from the Discipled Nation Plan—Discipling...Myself, My Family, My Church, My Neighborhood.

Amy Foundation Outreach—profile the ministries to which the Amy Foundation contributes.

Amy Foundation Sponsors highlights.

More, including—tips, books for review, writing tools, useful web sites, etc.

Amy Foundation Newsletter Subscription

Please help us save resources and postage by letting us know whether or not you would like to keep receiving *Pen & Sword* four times per year. **Subscriptions are free** and available to anyone interested in improving writing skills and making disciples thought the secular media.

Please complete the following reply and mail or fax back to the Amy Foundation. Or send a quick e-mail to AMYFOUNDTN@aol.com, including your name, current mailing address, and your interest in receiving the newsletter.

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Mail to: Amy Foundation, PO Box 16091, Lansing, Michigan 48901; or FAX to 517-321-2572.

► Discipled Nation *continued from back page*

with little effect. The active expression of wisdom is knowing and doing what is right.

8. Work. In prayer Jesus said to his heavenly Father, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4). The work Jesus had just completed was that of making 12 disciples. Lovingly and patiently He had invested three years in the task of teaching His disciples to obey all His commandments.

Our heavenly Father is holding believers accountable for discipling this nation. Faced with our incredible failure, revealed in the shame of our spiritual impotence, cultural and moral degeneracy, we simply cannot afford to misunderstand any part of our assignment.

This article excerpted from the Amy Foundation’s self-contained brochure “The United States—A Discipled Nation in this Generation,” which outlines a biblical plan for discipling our nation by the year 2025. You can read the entire Discipled Nation Plan at www.amyfound.org or call 517-323-6233.

► Power of the Pen *continued from page 2*

more than a mere human being. The Christ that had been foretold by Old Testament prophets would be God in human flesh—a Messiah to save all people. This scared Herod and apparently it scares some people today, too. Otherwise they wouldn’t be fighting so hard to eliminate his very name from the public forum.

I think the best thing any of us can do who believe in Jesus is ignore all the hoopla over the holiday debate and use our right of free speech to declare the true story of Christ’s birth emphasizing who he is and why he came rather than how he got here. That’s what Jesus did himself when he said in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” I think that’s our best example to follow.

Brenda J. Hansen
Clintonville, Wisconsin
Waupaca County Post

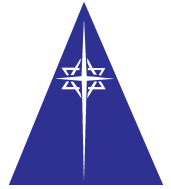
Prayer Requests

We believe that “The prayers of the righteous availeth much.” Therefore, each issue we will invite you to pray with us about various aspects of The Amy Foundation Ministry.

Please join us in asking for God’s direction and for the leading of the Holy Spirit as we work to help Christians obey Christ’s mandate to make disciples by teaching obedience of all His commandments.

Amy Prayer List:

- Amy Internet Syndicate—1000 users by year end.
- Christian writers mobilized and equipped to use their skills in obedience to Christ’s call to make disciples.
- Wisdom as the Amy Foundation Advisory Board plans for the future.



Submit Today!

15 writers will receive
\$34,000 in cash prizes

The Amy Foundation Writing Awards program recognizes writers who skillfully and creatively present the biblical position on issues affecting the world today in a sensitive and thought-provoking manner. Qualifying non-fiction entries must have been published in a mainstream non-religious publication.

Winning entries will be re-published in an annual collection of prize-winning entries.

For rules, sample articles and submission forms, visit www.amyfound.org or call 877-727-4262.



The Amy Foundation
Discipling Our Nation in this Generation

