



August 2010—*Communicating Truth Through Story*

In today's world, it is increasingly common to find people who say they are "spiritual" but not religious. Many of these people have a thirst in their soul for the transcendent but have been injured or put off by the church. Because they have a distorted view of the God of the Bible, they look for a god they can live with. Of course, this is nothing new. People have been trying to make a god in their own image for as long as mankind has been on the earth. C.S. Lewis recognized this and sought to talk about the true God in various ways, some of them quite creative. One example is found in his book *The Silver Chair*, where Jill, who is all alone in an enchanted forest and is very thirsty, encounters the Great Lion, Aslan, who is resting between her and a refreshing stream.

"Are you not thirsty?" said the Lion.

"I'm *dying* of thirst," said Jill

"Then drink," said the Lion.

"May I—could I—would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill.

The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience.

The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.

"Will you promise not to—do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill.

"I make no promise," said the Lion.

"*Do* you eat girls?" she said.

"I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.

"I daren't come and drink," said Jill.

"Then you will die of thirst," said the Lion.

"Oh dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then."

"There is no other stream," said the Lion.

In about two hundred words, Lewis paints a picture that captures in the figure of Aslan something of God's majesty, goodness and absolute demands as they confront our thirst for his blessings on our own terms. Lewis winsomely presents the God of the Bible and his all-encompassing call to us in an engaging way and without compromise. Perhaps we have something to learn from Lewis here. The creative use of story may be a good way to communicate with some of our spiritually hungry friends and neighbors who have distorted ideas about God. And the good news is that in today's confused, postmodern world people (especially those under 40) are actually quite open to being approached in this way. Why not give it a try?

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C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, (New York: Harper Trophy, 2000), pp.22-23.