

The background of the entire cover is a classical-style painting. It depicts Jesus Christ with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe, embracing a man from behind. The man has dark hair and is wearing a brown tunic. In the background, a large wooden cross stands against a hazy, golden-brown sky. The overall mood is intimate and contemplative.

DAVID O. HARRISON

A VITAL
UNDERSTANDING OF
CHRISTIANITY

A MODERN-DAY *MERE CHRISTIANITY*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Born and raised in England, David Harrison immigrated to Canada in 1973 at the age of 21. Life took a decisive turn when, at 35, he became a follower of Jesus Christ—a shift that would shape everything to come.

For 25 years, David was active at a Brethren Bible Chapel in Scarborough, serving ten of those years as an elder. At the same time, he ran a thriving audiovisual integration business in Toronto, equipping universities, law firms, and financial institutions with cutting-edge communication technology.

In 2006, David launched Bus Stop Bible Studies¹, a national outreach that placed Scripture-based messages on public transit systems across Canada—it's estimated that those messages were seen more than 1.25 billion times, each offering the hope of God's Word. He also served as Board Chair for Daystar Native Christian Outreach on Manitoulin Island for a decade.

"Retired" in name only, David and his wife Wendy host guests at their award-winning Airbnb in Muskoka, Ontario—recognized as Ontario's Most Hospitable Hosts in both 2021 and 2023. They attend Muskoka Community Church in Port Sydney.

The man who once failed English in school has since discovered a calling he never expected: writing. To date, David has authored six original titles and published six group study guides. He is also passionately working on a lifelong project to "translate" the entire library of C.S. Lewis into everyday

¹ See bit.ly/bsbsimagine

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English—seven volumes completed and counting, three of which became Amazon bestsellers. Yet among all his work, he considers *Fresh Start – Church, God’s Way*, to be his most important book to date: a heartfelt call for the Church to recapture the simplicity, clarity, and vitality of the early believers.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CITATIONS

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CITATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

EXPLORING JESUS, THE BIBLE, AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

I have admired C.S. Lewis for as long as I can remember. Few writers combined intellect and imagination as he did. Oxford and Cambridge recognized his genius, but for the ordinary reader, Lewis can sometimes feel like hiking uphill in heavy snow – majestic, yes, but exhausting. Unless you were raised on the rhythms of British prose, some of his sentences can feel less like reading and more like decoding.

That is what led me, quite unexpectedly, into the project of translating Lewis into everyday English. What began as a simple exercise grew into an ongoing labour of love. *Mere Christianity* and *The Screwtape Letters* came first, followed by *Surprised by Joy* and *Acquainted with Grief*. To my astonishment, they resonated widely, even reaching bestseller lists. I also reworked the entire seven-volume *Chronicles of Narnia*. Copyright laws prevent me from distributing these versions everywhere, but here in Canada they may be freely available.²

Wendy and I recently watched *The Most Reluctant Convert*, a film drawn from *Surprised by Joy*. Lewis describes his reluctant surrender to God – an atheist who became, in his own words, “the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.” As I listened, I felt as though he were telling my own story. Another place, another century – but the same hesitant journey toward Christ.

² Outside of Canada these books are available through ebay.ca/str/thrivebooks

INTRODUCTION

Like Lewis, I wrestled with the staggering thought that God would descend into flesh, suffer, die, and rise again—for *me*. It felt unthinkable, too personal. My own road was long, winding, and filled with detours, but like him, I finally reached the feet of Jesus.

One detail Lewis mentions caught me unexpectedly: his walks to Leatherhead. My family moved there when I was eight. I knew the station he described, its timbered roof, its long platform, and the hills near Dorking. By then, steam had given way to electric, but I must have travelled that line to school and back countless times. To think that his footsteps and mine overlapped, even faintly, still moves me.

Lewis was in his thirties when faith took hold. So was I. He could read Latin, Greek, and French with ease. I stumbled



through English with Cs and Ds, and my French was barely better. In 1973, I crossed the Atlantic to Canada and slowly shed my English accent, taking on Canadian tones as naturally as I

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took on its citizenship. Five decades later, the formal English of my youth sometimes feels foreign to me. No wonder Lewis can seem difficult to those untrained in that world.

And yet, his words endure. Thirty books, translated into more than thirty languages, with millions of copies sold. *The Chronicles of Narnia* alone have leapt from page to stage and screen. His theological writings continue to shape Christians around the globe. He married late, loved deeply, and grieved profoundly. He died the same day John F. Kennedy was assassinated, November 22, 1963. In 2013, his name was inscribed in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner—a place reserved for those whose words changed the world.

I often imagine what it would be like to sit across from him at a small café table—his tea, my coffee, books scattered between us. I think we would have gotten along just fine. Lewis once said he wrote not simply to inform but to hint at something deeper. I know that longing. Writing, when done honestly, is sacred work.

pages that follow are shaped by that same pursuit: timeless questions, eternal truths, told not only through reason but through story, Scripture, and lived experience. And though I stand in Lewis's shadow, I do so not to mimic, but to honour. His words have helped guide many Home. This book is my humble attempt to do the same for someone else by offering a clear guide to Christianity for seekers and believers alike.

In the never-ending wonder of grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1 — A LEGIBLE LAW:
HEARING THE MORAL MUSIC

It still long enough in a room — any room — and you'll hear it. In a meeting about budgets, over dinner with teenagers, or beside lockers between classes, someone will inevitably say, "That's not fair." It may come with a huff or a tremble, spoken in jest or anger, but it always points to the same thing: something invisible has been tripped. A line, unspoken yet recognized, has been crossed. And whether anyone can fully articulate it or not, everyone seems to have some understanding of it.

That, right there, should make us pause.

Children aren't taught to scream "Unfair!" with the same certainty they learn the alphabet. Yet they do. And grown adults — educated, seasoned, sensible — still bristle when wronged. Different cultures have different customs, but the experience of injustice is strangely familiar wherever you go. It's as though humanity carries within itself a shared awareness, a compass that may wobble at times but never quite loses true-north.

We call it by many names — conscience, morality, natural law. But whatever name we use, the thing itself feels strangely borrowed, as though we're following music we didn't compose but still recognize. It doesn't drag us like gravity or digestion. It invites, and we must choose. We can live in harmony with it, or strike out of key. But the moment we falter — snap in anger, shade the truth, cut the corner — we feel it. Something inside

CHAPTER 1 — A LEGIBLE LAW: HEARING THE MORAL MUSIC

recoils, not because someone scolded us, but because something holy in us knows we've fallen short.

And then we do the strangest thing: we justify. "I was tired." "They misunderstood." "It's complicated." Why? We don't justify falling down stairs or slipping on ice. But we do when we stumble morally. It's as if we know someone is listening. As if, deep down, a verdict is pending.

Even the most adamant moral relativist can't escape this reality. Tell a man that right and wrong are just social constructs, and he may nod philosophically — until someone lies about him or steals his job. Suddenly, "wrong" isn't relative anymore. When the wound is personal, the moral scale reappears.

And so we arrive at two truths, both sobering and universal. First, we seem to know, instinctively, that there is a right way to live. Second, we all fall short of it. The ache of that failure is not limited to criminals or hypocrites — it's human. No matter our best efforts, we miss the mark. Regularly. Repeatedly.

But here is the wonder: that ache — that gap between what we are and what we were meant to be — is not the end of the story. It's the beginning of grace.

Because into that space of longing and failure, Jesus steps. Not as a judge with a ledger, but as a Saviour with open hands. He doesn't lower the standard to make us feel better. He meets it on our behalf. He doesn't ignore our failures. He covers them. He hears our off-key cries and offers to teach us a new song, not composed in guilt, but written in mercy.

So if you've ever felt the weight of that invisible standard — or the sorrow of falling short — don't despair. That's not shame. That's grace, whispering your name. It's the Saviour saying, "I

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hear the discord. Come, let Me tune your heart to Mine.
Welcome home.”