
By Humphrey Carpenter

Easter, 1926, and Oxford's literary Trollope Society is meeting in the Quadrangle. Among them is a twenty-one-year-old newcomer, J.R.R. Tolkien, who is charmed by the reverberating echo of the Hall, its ancient stone walls, and its sense of mystery. As Tolkien looks around at the gathered scholars, he is struck by the camaraderie and intellectual enrichment of the Inklings, a literary discussion group connected to the University of Oxford, England. They were exclusively literary enthusiasts who championed the merit of literature and placed the social and literary gatherings of Lewis, Tolkien, and Williams above the superficial. They treasured the time they spent together, during which they could discuss literature, art, and their religious beliefs.

Tolkien, an Oxford student, had been an ardent Catholic who had attended the University College at Oxford. However, his faith had been shaken by the experience of the Great War, and he had turned his attention to literature as a means of expressing his ideas and emotions. He had been drawn to the Inklings by their love of literature and their desire to understand the deeper meanings of the human experience.

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at the heart of the Pauline mission. The pastor's central calling, then, is to mediate Christ in everything. McKnight explores seven dimensions that illustrate this central calling: friendship, siblings, generosity, storytelling, witness, subverting the world, and wisdom—as he calls pastors to be conformed to Christ in every situation. McKnight's emphasis on the role of friendship in Christian ministry is profound. McKnight's work is a must-read for anyone who is interested in understanding how the church can effectively live out the gospel in the context of contemporary culture.

Bibliography:

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