

2022

## Review of The Leadership of C. S. Lewis: Ten Traits to Encourage Change and Growth

Jon Heeringa

*First Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cslewisjournal>

 Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Heeringa, Jon (2022) "Review of The Leadership of C. S. Lewis: Ten Traits to Encourage Change and Growth," *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal*: Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/1940-5537.1278>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cslewisjournal/vol16/iss1/16>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal* by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

Heck also makes extensive use of the records and writings of the friends themselves. Heck employs all the various anthologies of memories of those who knew Lewis e.g., *Speaker and Teacher*, *At the Breakfast Table*, *C. S. Lewis Remembered*, and a broad assortment of secondary articles from publications ranging from *VII* to *Sehnsucht* to *CSL*, to *A Pilgrim in Narnia*.<sup>1</sup>

*No Ordinary People* is no ordinary book.<sup>2</sup> Its scope and scholarship immediately commend it as a go-to resource for Lewis scholars.<sup>3</sup> Its subject matter makes it of great interest in a world where meaningful friendships—friendships that challenge us and make us grow into better people—are typically few in number. How did Lewis do it? *No Ordinary People* will inspire readers to pursue their own friendships further and to seek friendship in unexpected persons. It will also likely leave readers wanting to check out a book by Warnie, Sister Penelope, or Arthur Clarke. Or perhaps another book by Joel Heck. When can he write the sequel?<sup>4</sup>

JOSIAH PETERSON  
Chandler Preparatory Academy

Crystal Hurd, *The Leadership of C. S. Lewis: Ten Traits to Encourage Change and Growth* (Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2022). 232 pages. \$18.99. ISBN 9781935688334.

In *The Leadership of C. S. Lewis*, Crystal Hurd makes a winsome case that C. S. Lewis was and is a leader. This case is based on a concept of leadership as influence. Other forms and understandings of leadership

<sup>1</sup> Frustratingly, the formatting of the citations is quite inconsistent, making them harder to navigate.

<sup>2</sup> Publisher, Winged Lion Press, has been on a roll lately with Lewis scholarship. See, for example, *The Undiscovered C. S. Lewis* edited by Bruce R. Johnson and *The Leadership of C. S. Lewis* by Crystal Hurd.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis scholars already had much to be grateful for in Joel Heck's online publication, "Chronologically Lewis," a more than 1,000 page record of every known date of an event in Lewis's life, available at [JoelHeck.com](http://JoelHeck.com).

<sup>4</sup> Potential candidates for inclusion in a subsequent volume might include Fred Paxford, E.M.W. Tillyard, Ruth Pitter, Roger Lancelyn Green, William T. Kirkpatrick, and Douglas Gresham.

are acknowledged, but by leaning into the leadership as influence understanding, the case for viewing C. S. Lewis as a leader is unassailable, despite Lewis's own denials. Then having established Lewis as a leader, Hurd seeks to show how, from both a biographical and literary perspective, Lewis demonstrated and continues to demonstrate ten leadership traits.

The case for Lewis as a leader is winsome and strengthened by occasional explorations of how Hurd herself has been influenced by Lewis. Hurd makes it personal, for example, in talking about Lewis's courage when she acknowledges the scene of Reepicheep passing into Aslan's Country "nearly brings me to tears every time" (91-2). She also encourages her readers to make it personal by offering discussion questions at the end of each chapter. These discussion questions are a real strength of the book and encourage the book to be read in community.

However, the book would benefit by more clearly targeting the community it wants to engage. Is this a book for Christian fans of Lewis seeking to grow as leaders? Hurd seems to presume a Christian reader thus missing out on the opportunity to engage the broader audience Lewis himself commanded. At the same time, all are assumed to be leaders because everyone has influence, even though not everyone sees himself or herself as a leader (including Lewis) or desires to grow as a leader. It isn't clear how familiar one needs to be with leadership and the various approaches to and understandings of leadership to engage with the book. Similarly, it isn't clear how familiar one needs to be with both Lewis and his writings. The background of some of Lewis's books are provided and reiterated while looking at each leadership trait, but with other books much is presumed.

These aside, a Christian fan of Lewis will grow as a leader by examining and applying the lessons from Lewis's life and writings around each of the leadership characteristics considered. No rationale is provided as to why these particular traits were selected as opposed to others. Hurd acknowledges that "Duty is often an underrated aspect of leadership" (153) and that "creativity is an important, if often neglected, trait of successful leadership" (194). Nonetheless, the ten leadership qualities selected, including both duty and creativity, are evident in many effective leaders. They are also clearly evident in Lewis's life and writings as Hurd amply documents. Without being rigid in her approach, Hurd generally considers each of the leadership qualities covered through the lenses of the general

literature on the traits, how Lewis's life demonstrated each one, his fictional depictions of them and in his nonfiction treatment of the traits.

Early in the work, Hurd links leadership to obedience (22) and goes on to refer to leadership as a "call" (23). This understanding contributes to the consideration of the leadership characteristic of duty as particularly noteworthy. Lewis himself attributes our actions to the motivation of either duty or pleasure (141-2). Yet in Christ, duty is transformed into a pleasure, and this is the case when it comes to the duty to grow as leaders. Examining *The Leadership of C. S. Lewis: Ten Traits to Encourage Change and Growth* is indeed a pleasant duty for all who have been influenced (led!) by Lewis and dutifully seek to grow themselves.

JON HEERINGA  
First Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg

Bruce R. Johnson, ed., *The Undiscovered C. S. Lewis: Essays in Memory of Christopher W. Mitchell* (Hamden, CT: Winged Lion Press, 2021). 389 pages. \$24.99. ISBN 978193568813.

It may be tempting to believe that any new addition to the voluminous corpus of Lewis scholarship would either be hagiography or sheer redundancy. While that may certainly be true of a few outlying publications, it is difficult to argue the same for the latest volume of essays published in memory of the late Christopher W. Mitchell. This collection, *The Undiscovered C. S. Lewis: Essays in Memory of Christopher W. Mitchell*, is replete with insightful and illuminating discussions on Lewis the warfighter, communicator, and imaginative theologian (just a few of the traits and potentialities explored therein). While those aspects of Lewis's life and works may have been previously known, the "undiscovered" aspects of these essays stem from the unique perspective each contributor brings to light.

The book is divided into three main sections: Historical Studies, Assessments and Reassessments, and Interactions with Contemporaneous or Current Writers. In the first section, Grayson Carter's essay on Lewis's wartime experiences connects lines to some of the possible influences that