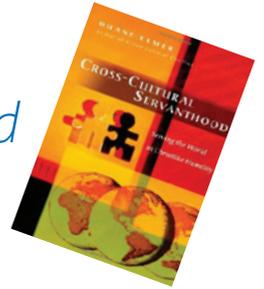




Book Review



Cross Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility by Duane H. Elmer
(InterVarsity Press, 2006)



Cross-Cultural Servanthood is a must read for anyone working with people from a culture different than their own. It is not just a book of how-to's, although it is that. Duane Elmer takes the reader through a powerful journey of introspection to help them examine their motives for choosing servanthood. He teaches the reader to explore whether their concepts of humility, forgiveness and community could be in conflict with the culture of the people in their relationship circle. He skilfully guides in personal and practical ways to ask: 'What does trust, openness, respect, acceptance look like through the other person's perspective?'

Elmer also encourages the reader to discern carefully and thoughtfully the difference between culture and the gospel of Jesus. The book helps us consider, 'How do I share the good news without attaching my own culture or personal opinions to my message? How do I learn about people, from people and with people that I meet?'

Cross-Cultural Servanthood is illustrated with honest personal examples from the author and others who have navigated the cultural divide. The powerful and touching stories bring the principles vividly alive. The book also addresses the times in our lives when we live in a sort of 'mystery or fog'. What is God doing? Is he working? Why is this happening? Is my ministry a failure? As we read this chapter we are led to consider those times and learn practically how to address the fog with the eyes of faith. Again, memorable stories and examples are shared to help us journey through the difficult questions we ask in these times.

Elmer concludes with a close look at the extraordinary life of Joseph in the Old Testament. Joseph had no cross-cultural training but landed in a country and culture he didn't anticipate. Yet, he successfully crossed the cultural divide using godly principles. He lived and served among a people with whom he had little common background or understanding of life. How did Joseph accomplish this uninvited task? Elmer helps us answer this question. Through dissecting Joseph's cross-cultural experience, readers discover how applying genuine openness, trust, acceptance, learning, understanding and service can lead to God being glorified and faith being kept intact in any cross-cultural setting.

Author Paul Borthwick has said of Elmer's book, 'This book should be required reading for every Christian seeking to serve cross-culturally, whether in a long-term or short-term capacity'. And I would add that we are often in cross-cultural relationships no matter where we live. This book is for all. ■

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