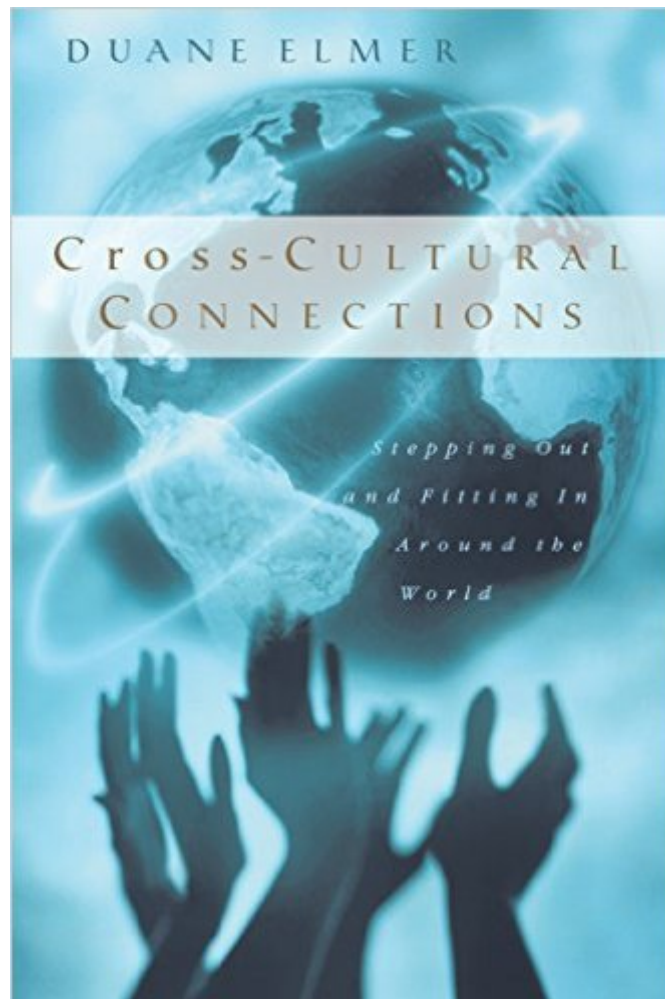


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Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping Out And Fitting In Around The World



Synopsis

With the new realities of global interconnectedness comes a greater awareness of cultural diversity from place to place. Besides differences in food and fashion, we face significant contrasts of cultural orientation and patterns of thinking. As we travel across cultures, what should we expect? How do we deal with culture shock? And can we truly connect with those we meet? Experienced cross-cultural specialist Duane Elmer provides a compass for navigating through different cultures. He shows us how to avoid pitfalls and cultural faux pas, as well as how to make the most of opportunities to build cross-cultural relationships. Filled with real-life illustrations and practical exercises, this guide offers the tools needed to reduce apprehension, communicate effectively, and establish genuine trust and acceptance. Above all, Elmer demonstrates how we can avoid being cultural imperialists and instead become authentic ambassadors for Christ. Whether you are embarking on a short-term mission trip or traveling for business or pleasure, this book is both an ideal preparation and a handy companion for your journey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The purpose of Duane Elmer's book Cross-Cultural Connections is to help the reader become aware of the different aspects of transitioning into other cultural settings. Understanding the issues of cross-cultural transition will enable the potential missionary or tentmaker to have an increased awareness of the issues he or she will face in the new setting. This awareness will allow for realistic expectations and reduce the effects of any difficulties one will encounter in the transition. In turn one will then be able to manage the transition effectively and be able to build new relationships.

helping the reader better understand new cultural settings, Elmer suggests cultural differences aren't "right or wrong, they're just different" (pg. 24). He sets limits on this assertion by saying there are absolutes. However, one must be careful not to judge too quickly before deciding some part of the culture is right or wrong. Some suggestions he gives for working through cultural differences are to stop and evaluate personal feelings and the feelings of others, to suspend judgment, and to ask "why" questions. Following these suggestions will allow one to have a more positive experience with cultural transitions. The most useful portion of this book provided the reader specific guidance on how to develop the right attitudes and skills for cross-cultural adjustment. Three primary areas were addressed: openness, acceptance and trust. For Elmer, "openness is the ability to welcome people into your presence and help them feel safe" (pg. 87). If a missionary does not maintain an attitude of openness and approachability, he or she will directly undermine receptivity of the gospel message.

Whether you are making specific plans for future missionary work in your own culture or a different, foreign culture, Duane Elmer's book is intended to lead you to take the necessary steps of preparation and prayer before reaching out in this manner. But it is not a mere preparation manual for those contemplating work, be it short-term or longer-term, in the mission field, whether in one's own culture or another. Elmer tackles the adjustment problem head-on, offering insights on just how weighty a matter it is for the first-time missionary. Summary The idea of "fitting in" wherever God may have you go in missions is not only part of the subtitle of this book but it is a premise that "fitting in" culturally will help you understand other people groups and cultures in a way that would have practical applications in missions where sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to other groups that may not have any background with gospel presentations is at a premium. But is not this a gigantic assumption that needs warrant and justification? Is not the gospel so attractive to fallen audience that it "sells itself" so to speak. Subtly layered throughout the book is a defense of the premise that the guest or foreign cultural perspective cannot be viewed or taken as superior or more "enlightened" or "advanced" than that of the host culture. The point of missionary work is to bridge or span with a minimum amount of anthropological confusion and tension those cultural factors that would prevent the good news from becoming winsome. In short, the gospel "sells itself" when missionary workers get themselves and their cultural ideologies out of the way. Ponder the variety of languages in the world.

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