

Cross-Cultural Leadership Challenges and Opportunities in Mission Partnership

It does not take long for leaders in new cultural settings to realise they do not understand the rules of the new setting. Leaders from Western societies complain that followers do not do what they say they will do, show up late or not at all without any excuse, expect the leader to make all the decisions, and so on. Leaders from Majority World societies complain that their followers do not care about obligations, do not respect them as leaders, put policies above relationships, and more. In a globalised world, we anticipate continued proliferation of multicultural and multinational teams with ever greater diversity of leaders. While there are challenges, there are also opportunities. Cross-cultural partnerships can be far more fruitful than homogeneous partnerships—but it requires developing a “third way” of navigating relationships, policies, procedures, and values. We will explore selected elements of this in our session together.

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- I. Challenges Western leaders face
 - A. Cultural values challenges
 - B. Leadership definition challenges
 - C. THE biblical models of leaderships or multiple biblical models of leadership?
- II. A “Third Way” for Western leaders to navigate cross-cultural leadership
 - A. Approaches to Policies and Procedures
 - B. Focusing on People Rather than Projects

C. Valuing Honor and Face

D. Knowing When to Speed Up and When to Slow Down

E. Learning to Listen Well

F. Valuing Leaders in the Local Image Rather Than a Western Image

Suggested Readings:

Developing Indigenous Leaders (Paul DeNeui, ed., William Carey)

Cross-Cultural Servanthood (Duane Elmer, InterVarsity)

Leading Across Cultures (James Plueddemann, InterVarsity)