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hemisphere to Africa, Paas begins well before the era of the modern Protestant mission to Africa by covering Christianity in its earliest arrival in the apostolic and post-apostolic eras. Quoting another, he notes rightly a three-fold religious heritage of Africa: traditional religion, Islam, and Christianity (p. 296). These three touchstones will be referenced repeatedly as he lays out a history of African Christianity. Particularly attractive and helpful for the reader is Pass's constant inclusion of African Christianity within not just the religious milieu throughout the ages, but the political and cultural milieus as well. Thus, the reader is as well-grounded in African history, politics, and cultures as one can be from a survey text. This is especially helpful to the northern or western hemispheric reader who will not have a good grasp, if any, of any aspect of African history, religions, or cultures. That said, this also would be a fine textbook for any who teach in a modern African context given its combination of two books in one.

Christianity in Eurafrika is a recommended addition to the English-language library of any reader or teacher of the history of Christianity who is searching for a greater world perspective. Theological colleges and seminaries also should make this work part of their library collection. Very serious consideration especially should be given this work as a required textbook by those who are teaching church history at a location on the continent of Africa.

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Plueddemann, James E. *Leading across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 230 pages. \$22.00, paper.

My team was on the ground in the Horn of Africa. For months we had prayed and prepared to serve and love a community of orphans. Under the guidance of our national leader, we packed up the vehicle on our first day and expectantly journeyed the forty-five minutes through deep poverty and lush vegetation to meet these precious lives made in God's image. Upon our arrival, no smiles greeted us. Indeed, no children were in sight, nor were they even on the compound. "The kids are not here during the day," the director declared. "They are at school."

Where had communication broken down? Had I not worked with our national contact for months, ensuring that there was a need at the orphanage and that the plan was set? Why had we traveled nearly 8,000 miles? I had prepped my team to be ready for the unexpected, but as the leader, I now found myself frustrated. And my irritation only increased when I learned that our national leader knew the kids would not be there but had not wanted to tell us for fear of hurting our feelings.

With this and similar experiences behind me, I read James Plueddemann's *Leading across Cultures* and realized that my dilemmas in East Africa were partially due to a clash of cultural expectations and approaches to leadership. My goal-oriented approach to ministry was confronting a relationship-oriented culture that was "loving" me by not hurting me with "bad" news (see 23, ch. 5). Furthermore, my low-context culture, which fights vagueness and thrives on detailed planning and specific communication, was struggling under the ambiguity of a high-context culture that was comfortable with the unknown, celebrated fresh possibilities, and lived more in the present than by a schedule (see 23–24, ch. 8). With Plueddemann's help, I am learning how deep humility and adaptable leadership styles are imperative for effective cross-cultural ministry.

A Christian missionary is, by nature, someone who proclaims the gospel and makes disciples across cultures (13, 47). Presently, the church's greatest growth is happening among the poorest of the poor in the global south (Latin America, Africa, and developing countries in Asia), which means that if those in the West want to effectively participate in the Great Commission, we will likely need to partner with those in other cultures who are already engaged in this great task. Plueddemann's book is designed to empower leaders from different cultures to serve side-by-side in effective ministry for the glory of God and the strengthening of his omni-ethnic church (12, 15). The author's insights and guidance are well tested, for he brings a half century of mission-focused leadership to this book, having served with SIM as a missionary educator in Nigeria for thirteen years, a professor of educational ministries at Wheaton College Graduate School for thirteen years, the international director of SIM for ten years, and a professor of intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for fourteen years.

Following the introduction, Part 1 includes three chapters and examines the influence of culture on the theory and practice of leadership in a globalized church. Chapter 1 highlights how effective cross-cultural leadership demands a philosophy and practice that is biblically faithful and culturally flexible (28). Chapter 2 overviews Plueddemann's own journey in cross-cultural leadership, focusing especially on his decade and a half in West Africa and his decade as international director of SIM. Chapter 3 clarifies why "leadership development is at the heart of world missions" (47), stressing how missions is by nature cross-cultural and discipleship oriented. This latter point increased my appreciation for agencies like Learning Resources International and Training Leaders International, which are devoted to engaging in theological famine relief by equipping indigenous leaders to study, practice, and teach God's Word effectively.

Part 2 shapes the body of the book and considers some of the current research related to the impact of culture on leadership values. After emphasizing in chapter 4 the need to distinguish biblical guidelines for leadership from cultural bias, chapters 5–8 address a number of contrasting cultural values that often create tensions on multicultural teams (cf. 22–24). It was in these chapters that I experienced the most help in assessing my own leading across cultures. First, *low-context*

cultures like the one from which I come focus on ideas, are goal-oriented, resist change, and value individualism; in contrast, the *high-context cultures* of east Africa and elsewhere pay attention to the concrete world around them, are relationship oriented, welcome change, and value community (ch. 5). Second, increasingly those in the West value *low power distance*, which minimizes status symbols and inequalities between people; however, many of the cultures in the global south continue to value *high power distance*, which maintains levels of classism by distinguishing those with and without power, whether due to family pedigree, education, wealth, or the like (ch. 6). Because many people in places like Africa automatically elevate the status of a westerner, missionaries from the West must work to maintain their God-given calling as servants and not kings, and they must seek justice for the oppressed and carefully contest any unhealthy classism present in other cultures. Third, building off an African proverb that says, “If you want to travel fast, go alone; if you want to travel far, go together” (114), we see that some cultures value *individualism* whereas others value *collectivism* or *community* (ch. 7). In contrast to the West, which is highly individualistic, most of the world’s societies place group interests over self-interest. Here Plueddemann calls for leaders to leave egocentric individualism, family-centric collectivism, and ethnocentric collectivism to embrace a “theo-centric global collectivism” and “principle-centered individualism” in which they see individuals, families, and entire nations as objects of God’s love and as potential participants in the omni-ethnic people of God (123–24). Finally, leaders coming from low-context cultures have a *low tolerance for ambiguity* and therefore seek to minimize uncertainty and insecurity through policies, planning, and schedules; in contrast, high-context cultures have a *high tolerance for ambiguity* and therefore live with less stress, a slower pace, and often less respect for laws (ch. 8). One can easily see how one leader’s delight in order, consistency, structure, and procedure would clash with a leader who accepts uncertainty as a normal part of life. With this, the more a mission agency becomes multicultural, the more it will need to embrace a type of federalism that is centralized with respect to a common vision and core values but decentralized with respect to the specific activities happening on the ground (138–41). As Plueddemann noted earlier: “It is difficult to make decisions for Africa while sitting in an air-conditioned office seven thousand miles away. I needed to trust the Lord, and I also needed to trust the leadership close to the situation. . . . Decisions need to be made close to where they will be carried out” (41). In summary, Plueddemann suggests that high-context cultures commonly “place value on high power distance, collectivism, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a greater concern for interpersonal relationships,” whereas low-context cultures “prefer low power distance, value individual freedom, seek to avoid uncertainty and are more task-oriented” (155).

Part 3 addresses the question of how God’s universal biblical truth intersects with diverse cultural values. Key here is Plueddemann’s insistence that, while Scripture “stipulates the ultimate purpose of leadership and a core understanding of the nature of reality, it does not prescribe leadership style” (149). Chapter 9 stresses that, whereas cultures vary in their leadership values, the Bible tells

us what they ought to be (157). Thus Scripture teaches us that leadership's ultimate purpose is to glorify God by bringing people into full relationship with him and that leadership's primary goal is to develop people in such a way that points them to Jesus (161–63). Chapter 10 adds that, instead of being dictatorial or overly passive, leaders should take on a consultative approach, wherein they proactively attempt to influence the process of decision making while making final decisions by consensus (174–75). Plueddemann also states that the task of leadership is to develop people by modeling, teaching on, and praying for growing/loving relationships within the church (177–79).

The final section, Part 4, applies the insights from the Bible and culture to practical issues in world missions and the global church. Chapter 11 address the process of developing vision and strategy (see the key questions on 196), and then chapter 12 reemphasizes the need for developing global-centric leaders who see the world through God's eyes. The book concludes with an epilogue that warns against how we, or the cross-cultural leaders we partner with, can easily be blind to our own cultural values and hidden assumptions (212). He also cautions leaders from thinking their values and approaches to leadership are necessarily better than others.

My own journey into celebrating global Christianity and in serving as a cross-cultural leader is less than a decade in the making. I long to remain teachable and to enjoy effective leading across cultures, so I am very grateful to Plueddemann for capturing in this book a wealth of wisdom from his years in cross-cultural leadership and ministry training. As one who believes that Scripture affirms that Christ is most glorified where men and women practice complementary roles within the church and home, I took minor issue with Plueddemann's unqualified support of women in all areas of church leadership (174, cf. 21, 42–44, 56, 138–39). Nevertheless, I greatly appreciated his stress on the need for both men and women to actively engage in cross-cultural leadership and ministry. Having grown up in a context that has a low tolerance for ambiguity and that values goal-setting, individualism, and low-power-distance, God is helping me learn to lead effectively alongside my brothers and sisters in Africa's Horn who have a high tolerance for ambiguity and who naturally value relationships over plans, collectivism over self, and power-level distinction. Plueddemann's work has helped me think more deeply about leading across cultures for the glory of Christ and the good of his omni-ethnic people.

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