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Review of Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts: Recognizing and Developing Grassroots Potential, by Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert

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Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts: Recognizing and Developing Grassroots Potential

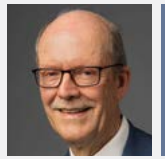
by Evelyn Hibbert and Richard Hibbert,
Littleton, CO: William Carey, 2023.

Pastors have long known in theory that one of their most strategic roles is to equip and multiply members of the church who are intentional about reaching their community (2 Tim. 2:2). The challenge has been that most pastors are trained as theologians and preachers, with little instruction in how to train missional leaders. The classroom model of their own schooling is usually of little help. In addition, pastors in many parts of the world today face another challenge: the people most receptive to the gospel are from cultures different from their own. Few pastors are actually prepared to work with people from differing cultural backgrounds.

Both the challenge of leadership multiplication at the grassroots level and the challenge of how to deal with the intercultural dimensions of the church's outreach are very ably addressed by Evelyn and Richard Hibbert in *Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts: Recognizing and Developing Grassroots Potential*. The authors are cross-cultural church planters who know by experience that the greatest potential influence for growing the church comes from leaders who live out their faith in their day-to-day life in the community surrounding the church. Perhaps they lead a small neighborhood Bible study group or a branch Sabbath School, youth activities, or some other ministry. They are what the Hibberts call "the growing-edge leaders of the church" (118, Kindle edition).

Once you have identified these growing-edge leaders in your community, how do you come alongside them and help them grow? This is what *Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts* is all about. Many of these leaders are women who are working without recognition and reaching out to

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their neighbors, friends, and coworkers, who often belong to different cultures. Culture not only shapes the expectation of what good leadership is but also the relations leaders build. That is why developers of growing-edge leaders cannot afford to be culture-ignorant. Instead, they must approach their mission in humility as culture learners.

One of the strengths of this book is the attention to biblical principles for good leadership. Their biblical model of leadership revolves around four critical characteristics of Christian leadership: community, character, clarity, and care. The book's most valuable contribution is its approach to learning. Taking Jesus as their example, the Hibberts use an approach that connects learning with experience and emphasizes problem-based learning in the context of real life.

Throughout the book, the authors emphasize that leadership development grows out of a process of discipling a community. As you work with a community of believers, selecting leaders who are recognized by their communities ensures that you are focusing on leaders that have already been tested.

The authors have invested much of their missionary career working among the Millet, a Turkish-speaking Roma group in Bulgaria that experienced a large-scale movement toward Jesus. There, the Hibberts developed an approach to leadership multiplication that has the potential to be fruitful in other contexts where the church is ministering across cultural boundaries. In this book, they share what they have learned through long years of patient leadership development, careful reflection and research, and comparing notes with leader developers from around the world.

This book has been written by missionaries, which may make some readers feel that it is irrelevant in their context. If you work in a predominantly white rural neighborhood, this book may not be for you. But if you are part of a multicultural church or in charge of a ministry working across cultural boundaries, you will find this book very helpful. 📖

