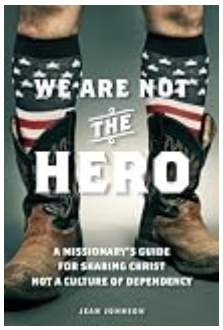
BOOKS I HAVE READ: WE ARE NOT THE HERO

Posted on March 6, 2013 by Eddie

Category: Reviews



A few evenings ago, we had dinner with a friend who has been involved with a developing mission movement in one corner of the world. Over many years, our friend and her colleagues have been patiently building relationships with local church leaders and supporting them as they get involved in reaching outside of their church boundaries. Our friend feels that they are at a point where things are about to really take off.

At the same time, she fears for the future of the work they are doing. A large, US based agency is looking to come into the country and ostensibly support this new mission movement. However, this support comes with strings. In particular, this agency wants to get things done quickly and years of patient building relationship building are being sidelined in the hurry to get things done. Younger, tech-savvy guys are given preference to older, wiser and more respected local leaders - something which just isn't done in that culture. And so it goes on.

The leaders of this large agency would do well to readÂ We Are Not the HeroÂ by Jean Johnson. SubtitledÂ *A missionary's guide for sharing Christ, not a culture of dependency*, this hard hitting book takes a good look at some of the mistakes commonly made by Western missionaries working in the minority world. However, this is not a "let's beat up the missionaries" sort of book. For the most part it is full of excellent advice and suggestions as to a more positive way forward. Many of the books I mention here are of a reflective or theoretical nature.Â We Are Not the HeroÂ has a good theoretical underpinning, but is extremely practical in nature.

One might have thought that things had moved on and that we don't need books like this anymore - sadly, this is not the case.I'm not sure that I'd want to make itÂ compulsoryÂ for all Western missionaries to read this - but they'd better have a really good excuse if they don't!

Thanks to Nora for drawing my attention to this book (when are you going to start blogging again?).