



## Sharpening Our Focus and Service with Cultural Intelligence

An excerpt from *Serving with Eyes Wide Open* by David A. Livermore

What do we make of all this? Do we throw up our arms in despair, cut up our passports, and throw out every letter soliciting funds for short-term missions? Believe me, there have been many times when I have been more than ready to go there.

At the end of the day, I'm not convinced we're without hope in seeing short-term missions as an effective tool for serving God's church globally. If criticisms alone are enough reason to abandon the entire movement, then let's be consistent. Let's also abandon all career missions and support of nationals, because we're not short on criticisms and bad behavior in those expressions of global missions either. Clearly we can't go there, or we fail to fulfill the central call of God upon his people—to extend his reign among all the nations. I'm committed to seeing us redeem short-term missions. How might we engage in short-term missions with eyes wide open and use it as a way to widen our perspective? It's time to move to the final section of this journey together—looking at what it means to do short-term missions with cultural intelligence (CQ). CQ is a tool to help us translate our widened perspective into better missional practice.

Don't be frightened by the technical sound of something like CQ. CQ is just a way of measuring our ability to interact effectively when we cross cultures. The theory was developed recently using some of the same ideas used to develop IQ, EQ, and the theory of multiple intelligences. We often are told there's little we can do to change our IQ. Fortunately CQ isn't like that. It's something that *can* be learned and developed over time, and the materials in this section are a way to begin your journey of becoming more culturally intelligent. By the way, you're already on your way. One of the biggest steps toward enhancing your CQ is simply to open your eyes to the realities of the world and to the challenges of cross-cultural interactions.

Don't try to attain some perfect CQ score (which doesn't really exist) by the time you go on your next trip. Our CQ is continually moving and growing. So our desire is simply to use the last section of this book to embark on a lifelong journey of growing in CQ as a way to more effectively love God and others in the twenty-first-century world. CQ will help us sharpen our focus and service in short-term missions, and it can enhance our missional living wherever we are, all the time.

CQ is a matrix that consists of four different emphases, all of which are linked together. The four interconnected elements of CQ are: knowledge CQ, interpretive CQ, perseverance CQ, and behavior CQ. Most materials designed for short-term work emphasize the kinds of things covered by two of the CQ components—knowledge CQ (cross-cultural understanding) and behavioral CQ (cross-cultural behavior). But all four components are needed for effective short-term missions. The interdependence of these four

factors is important, because having one without the others may actually be worse than having none of them.

Let me take a minute and briefly define the four elements before moving into expanded descriptions of each of them in the chapters that follow.

**Knowledge CQ: Understanding Cross-Cultural Differences**

Knowledge CQ, or cognitive CQ as it's called in the original research, measures our level of knowledge and *understanding* about cross-cultural differences.

**Interpretive CQ: Interpreting Cues**

Interpretive CQ, or meta-cognitive CQ as it's called in the original research, measures our ability to accurately *interpret* cues we receive as we engage cross-culturally.

**Perseverance CQ: Persevering through Cross-Cultural Conflict**

Perseverance CQ, or motivational CQ as it's called in the original research, measures our degree of interest in *persevering* through cross-cultural conflict.

**Behavioral CQ: Acting Appropriately**

Behavioral CQ, which is what it's also called in the original research, measures our ability to actually *act* appropriately when interacting cross-culturally.

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