

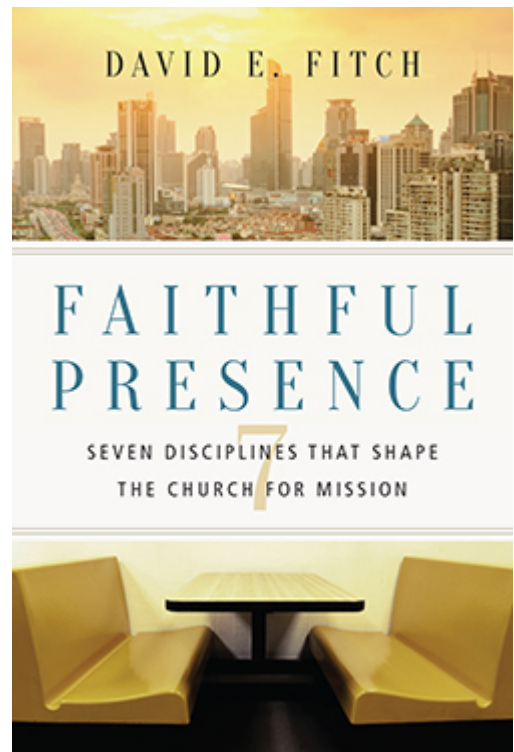
Reviews: Books about spiritual disciplines, love for prodigals and cross-cultural missions

November 30, 2016

Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines That Shape the Church for Mission

By David E. Fitch (InterVarsity Press)

David Fitch, the chair of evangelical theology at Northern Seminary and founding pastor of Life on the Vine Christian Community, begins his exploration of God's "faithful presence" by reminding Christians they are God's temple and the Spirit dwells in their midst (1 Corinthians 3:16). Then Fitch examines seven disciplines he believes should shape the church on mission.



Among the disciplines he explores is being with and ministering to "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). He also discusses how the discipline of being with children teaches believers how to be a child in God's family.

Fitch also explores the discipline of "fivefold gifting," which relates to the

leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12. Finally, he examines the discipline of kingdom prayer, which he calls the foundation undergirding all the other disciplines. Anyone who enjoys writings on spiritual foundations will appreciate this book.

Skip Holman, minister of discipleship

Northeast Baptist Church

San Antonio

Letting Go: Rugged Love for Wayward Souls

By Dave Harvey and Paul Gilbert (Zondervan)

Authors Dave Harvey and Paul Gilbert craft *Letting Go* in three parts.



Part One: Rugged Life offers insight on the characteristics and dynamics of the rebellious, wayward prodigal. Heartfelt stories, voiced by parents, spouses and leaders who have experienced the challenges of loving the wayward fill the pages.

Part Two: Rugged Love addresses the question, “What is rugged love?” The authors state: “Rugged love is the way God engages and reaches sinful

people. We are all wayward, dead and trapped in our sin. So, the way we love prodigals must be patterned after the rugged love of God.” Biblical examples and Bible verses support their rugged love approach.

Part Three: Rugged Grace offers a voice of hope for the caregiver, as the authors validate the common theme of shame, guilt, confusion, weariness and uncertainty shared from loving a wayward soul.

Harvey and Gilbert masterfully weave pain and recovery to create a compelling story. *Letting Go* is a wonderful resource for anyone struggling with the challenges of loving a wayward soul.

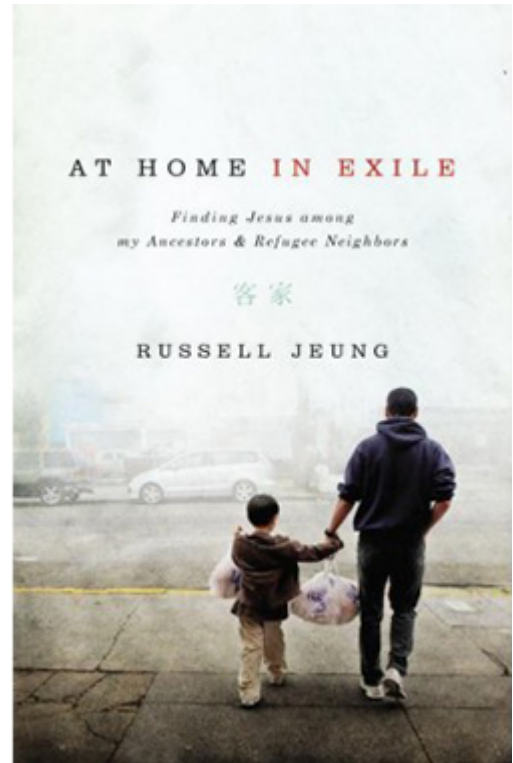
Bobbie Bomar Brown

Estes Park, Colo.

At Home in Exile: Finding Jesus Among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors

By Russell Jeung (Zondervan)

Many people born into privilege long to share their Christian faith with those less fortunate. For some, the shock of poverty is so horrific they quickly return to their suburban comfort. For others, living in the midst of those to whom they are called to minister becomes a life of self-discovery as experienced by Russell Jeung, author of *At Home in Exile: Finding Jesus Among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors*.



Jeung's father, a hard-working, ambitious Chinese-Hakka American, pulled himself out of poverty and became a wealthy businessman. Russell Jeung is a professor at San Francisco State University who spent more than two decades living in East Oakland's Murder Dubs neighborhood alongside refugees to whom he was witnessing for Christ.

The younger Jeung's memoir intersperses stories of those neighbors and their constant struggles for safety, human rights, and sufficient food and housing with historical information about the various immigrant groups who have settled in America—including his—and their efforts to survive.

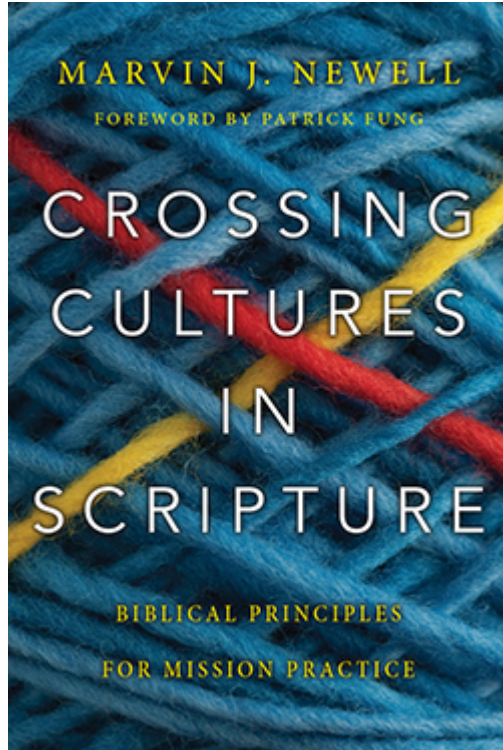
Jeung expounds on the inequalities of the American system and shares his political opinions. It is a glimpse inside a world that few would want to see but that Jesus himself embraced.

Alice Stone Thomas

Conroe

Crossing Cultures in Scripture

By Marvin J. Newell (InterVarsity Press)



Although Marvin J. Newell presents *Crossing Cultures in Scripture* as an exposition of biblical teachings about the Christian mission, it functions better as a discussion of the author's missionary experiences. While his insights are valuable, the confusion between the two keeps the book from being as effective as it could be.

Crossing Cultures is composed of 36 chapters, each examining a small section of Scripture and then providing a series of cross-cultural insights from the text. This is where the book's problem lies. Newell's insights, while compelling, seldom follow the biblical stories, but are readings of his experiences into the stories. For a book with a secondary agenda of demonstrating the necessity of reading Scripture literally, it more often than not avoids the actual message of the passages examined.

This is not to say *Crossing Cultures* is without value. Newell's two decades of missions experience make his insights worthy of attention. As a reflection on cross-cultural encounters, this book works well; as an exposition of Scripture, it falls short. As such, this book may be helpful to experienced Christians preparing for cross-cultural encounters, but may

lead to confusion regarding the nature of Scripture and its teaching on missions among less-mature believers.

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