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Course: CHMN 747 Leadership and Church Management

Mortenson, Greg and Relin, David. *Three Cups of Tea.* New York: Penguin Books, 2007. 332 pages

I certify that I have read this book from page 1 to 212 and that the following journal reflects my reading, thoughts, insights and experience during the reading activities.

"The first time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger, the second time, you are an honored guest. The third time you become family." Haji Ali, Korphe Village Chief. Based on this proverb, derived the title of this book Three Cups of Tea. Paying a tribute to his dead sister, Mortenson became faced with his greatest challenge in life. It was not K2 but rather a impoverish village where kids, especially girls had no access to school or any formal education.

In 1993 Greg Mortenson was the exhausted survivor of a failed attempt to ascend K2, an American climber wandering and lost through Pakistan's Karakoram Himalaya. After he was taken in and nursed back to health by the people of an impoverished Pakistani village, Mortenson promised to return one day and build them a school. From that rash, earnest promise grew one of the most incredible humanitarian campaigns of our time Greg Mortenson's one-man mission to counteract extremism by building schools, especially for girls, throughout the breeding ground of the Taliban.

In pursuit of his goal, Mortenson has survived kidnapping, fatwas issued by enraged mullahs, repeated death threats, and wrenching separations from his wife and children. Despite the many obstacles in his way he raised the money and returned to Pakistan, but it took a further two-years, more money and many roadblocks, to build that first school.

The book present great lesson of building relationships, for Mortenson the task was a real challenge. Just by being what he is, Pakistan people will not accept him as one of them, but as enemy, estranger, intruder or even someone sent by US government to gather information. That is the kind of mind set that prevails in that region of the world. He overcame the challenge faced and focuses on building relationship with people before he built anything else.

He past out his vision to the people and they help him to accomplish no just the promise of a one school, but bridges on the rocky mountain that will facilitate them to carry all material necessary for the construction. He empowered people to do the work, alone he will never make it, and he recognized that in the early stage of the project. He wanted other people to be involve in the project, he appointed key people to do some specific job, one of the example is the way he empower leaders to be committed to the work even the low-paid worker or voluntary. Involvement increased from day to day, both locally and internationally; the initial steps took place when Mortenson and Jean Hoerni founded the Central Asia Institute. As a result of the intrepid work of a man with a team, today they were able to build over fifty schools for the education of girls in the central Asia region.

The book narrates a very inspiring story with great leadership lessons for the readers. One of the greatest lessons I find in this book is that, leaders are to work hard to keep the promises they have made to people. Second, I find that the lesson of building relationship before building school and bridges is a powerful one, this lesson can be applied to the various level of leadership and management. Third, the empowerment of people was the key for the project success. Nothing much could be accomplished without Mortenson implemented skill of putting other to work in position of high responsibility and trust.

Failure is best illustrated in this book by the tremendous success attained by Mortenson and his team. After failing to accomplish his personal dream, the experience enabled him to fulfill the dream of thousands of girls in the remotes areas of Pakistan. In spite of the country’s political changes and transitions during the building process, Mortenson kept contacting and meeting new people in key places.

In a way of admiring this book I have to single out the chapter “Tea with the Taliban.” In this chapter Mortenson demonstrated resilience to continue the work he started, he set aside the threats from the local that did not respect his foreignness, the interrogations from US intelligence officers and the pile of messages that the American embassy emitted to all American citizens living in Pakistan.

Instead of abandoning the project, school, friends, the girls, the institute and the country itself, Mortenson took the next flight available to the remote areas of Pakistan, a war zone, infested with guns and bombs the land was not a secure place to travel.

Finally, I got to conclude by saying that the leadership style demonstrated by Greg Mortenson is one very difficult to find. People follow him every where, he challenged the leaders of the opposition to have decent talks at the table and to fine ways to bring a better quality of education to every Pakistani, especially the Girls.

One thing that resonated throughout the book is that “educating the children was a better way to fight terrorism in the region.” There is also a chapter that present ignorance as a main factor for what happens in these regions of the world. Indeed, the years spent in the region served as example to many leaders and organization in the quest of helping people in the world most dangerous area.