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Contact Information:

Jonathan Trotter

trotters41@gmail.com

<http://www.trotters41.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/trotters41/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/trotters41/

Twitter: www.twitter.com/trotters41

Serving Well: Help for the Wannabe, Newbie, or Weary Cross-cultural Christian Worker

by Jonathan & Elizabeth Trotter

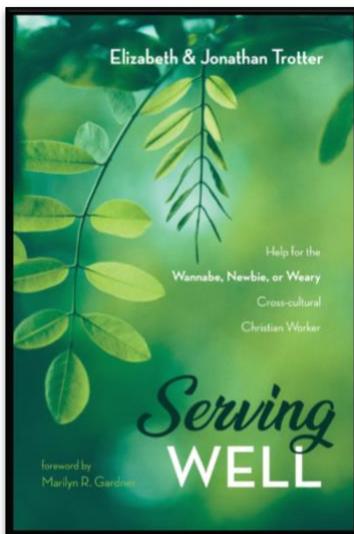
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New Title from Jonathan & Elizabeth Trotter

Serving Well: Help for the Wannabe, Newbie, or Weary Cross-cultural Christian Worker



Are you dreaming of working abroad? Imagining serving God in another land? Or are you already on the field, unsure about what to do next or how to manage the stresses of cross-cultural life? Or perhaps you've been on the field a while now, and you're weary, maybe so weary that you wonder how much longer you can keep going.

If any of these situations describes you, there is hope inside this book. You'll find steps you can take to prepare for the field, as well as ways to find strength and renewal if you're already there. From the beginning to the end of the cross-cultural journey, *Serving Well* has something for you.

Elizabeth Trotter is the editor-in-chief for the missions website A Life Overseas (alifeoverseas.com). She writes regularly at trotters41.com and velvetashes.com and is the author of *Hats: Reflections on Life as a Wife, Mother, Homeschool Teacher, Missionary, and More*.



Jonathan Trotter spends his days providing pastoral counseling at a local counseling center in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He also serves as one of the pastors at an international church. In addition to writing regularly for A Life Overseas, he has written for the IMB (International Mission Board), Velvet Ashes, The Huffington Post, and The Gottman Institute.

1) What is A Life Overseas?

A Life Overseas is a blog collective that provides a place of online connection for Christ-following missionaries and humanitarian aid workers living in foreign countries – from the past, present, or future. About 13,000 people gather around A Life Overseas' Facebook page to discuss ideas, to process issues, etc. As a team of writers who have logged years of overseas experience ourselves, we want to create an online space where expats of many nations come together to interact, encourage, and find a community that 'gets it.'

2) Why did you write *Serving Well*?

We didn't mean to, really. Years ago, we just started writing; we wrote to encourage, we wrote to share our stories, we wrote because we needed people to know and pray. And we realized that what we wrote resonated and encouraged across denominational and generational lines. So we kept writing. It is our hope that *Serving Well* will minister deeply to God's people scattered around the world, bringing hope, help, and a feeling of camaraderie.

3) What motivates your ministry?

We firmly believe that healthier cross-cultural workers lead to healthier churches and healthier disciples. These are hard jobs, often in hard places, and we want to come alongside those who are preparing for, in the midst of, or returning from, cross-cultural ministry. Many people feel terribly alone and isolated, and we want that to change.

4) Where do you serve?

We have been in Phnom Penh, Cambodia since 2012. We have taught in China, Thailand, the US, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Many of our sermons, podcasts, pastoral counseling training videos, and writings, are available at www.trotters41.com.

5) Tell us some about your family.

We've been married for 19 years and we have four children, ranging in age from 15 to 8.

6) What's Jonathan's background?

Before moving to the field, Jonathan served as a youth pastor in the Mid-west for ten years and as an inner-city ER/trauma nurse for three years. He is also a pilot and a licensed attorney. He enjoys walking with people towards Jesus and eating imported Twizzlers.

7) What's Elizabeth's background?

After a military childhood, a teenage Elizabeth crash-landed onto American civilian life. When she married her high school sweetheart, her life plan was to be a chemical engineer while he practiced law. Instead, they both fell headlong into youth ministry and spent the next ten years serving the local church. When her husband later decided he wanted to move overseas, Elizabeth didn't want to join him. Now, she can't imagine doing anything else. Elizabeth is a chemical engineer who loves math, science, and all things Jane Austen. Days find her homeschooling her four children, while nights find her eating hummus by the spoonful.

An Excerpt from *Serving Well: Help for the Wannabe, Newbie, or Weary Cross-cultural Christian Worker*

We were supposed to be church-planting missionaries. We were supposed to save the world, or at least our little corner of it. We were not supposed to be writers.

In January 2012, we showed up in Phnom Penh, Cambodia with our two selves, our four children, and a call. We started riding in tuk-tuks, driving motorcycles, and speaking Khmer. And we fell in love.

We tried to be faithful with the next thing, seldom seeing around the next bend. But we knew, come what may, God would be there—ahead of us and behind us—and so we kept driving. Trying to do the next thing faithfully, and with love.

He was faithful, and he was loving.

He is faithful, and he is loving.

And now, our deepest hope is that these words, these ink blots from Asia, will encourage you no matter what part of the road you're on. Maybe you're moving next month. Godspeed! Maybe you've been working cross-culturally for decades. Strong work! Maybe you're disenfranchised and you're preparing to return to a country you once called home. Grace to you.

Or maybe you just picked this up because somewhere in the distant future there is a sliver of a possibility that you might perhaps move abroad and/or minister across cultures. Awesome. And hello!

For all of you, our hearts are with you. And our prayers too.

It's not always an easy road, but it can be a good one.

Praise for *Serving Well: Help for the Wannabe, Newbie, or Weary Cross-cultural Christian Worker*

"*Serving Well* is a must read book for missionaries and for those who love them. This is a book you really need if you are 'called to go, or called to let go.'

In *Serving Well* we read both the spiritual and practical, simple and profound, funny and compelling in chapters written by Elizabeth and then Jonathan Trotter; hearing from each their voices and their hearts, the struggles and the victories, 'the bad days and the good days' of preparing to go and serving well overseas.

Their down-to-earth yet godly insights were born from living overseas and from authentically wrestling with the 'yays and yucks' of missionary life. They draw wisdom from both Scripture and sci-fi authors, Psalms and funny YouTube videos, encounters with Jesus and encounters with cops looking for a bribe.

Take two books with you to the mission field: the Bible, and *Serving Well*.

—Mark R. Avers, Barnabas International

"*Serving Well* is deep and rich, covering all aspects of an international life of service from multiple angles. It is full of comfort, challenge, and good advice for anyone who serves abroad, or has ever thought about it, no matter where they find themselves in their journeys. It is also really helpful reading for anyone who has loved ones, friends or family, serving abroad—or returning, to visit or repatriate. Jonathan and Elizabeth Trotter are both insightful and empathetic writers, full of humility and quick to extend grace—both to themselves and to others. Their writing covers sorrow and joy, hope and crisis, weariness and determination. Best of all, from my perspective as someone who has worked with TCKs for over 13 years, it contains an excellent collection of important advice on the topic of raising missionary kids. Choose particular topics, or slowly meander through the entire volume piece by piece, but whatever you do—read this book!"

—Tanya Crossman, cross cultural consultant and author of *Misunderstood: The Impact of Growing Up Overseas in the 21st Century*

"*Serving Well* is more than a book to sit down and read once. It is a tool box to return to over and over, a companion for dark and confusing days, and a guide for effective and long-lasting service. Elizabeth and Jonathan are the real deal and *Serving Well*, like the Trotters, is wise, compassionate, vulnerable, and honest. This needs to be on the shelves of everyone involved in international, faith-based ministry."

—Rachel Pieh Jones, author of *Finding Home: Third Culture Kids in the World*, and *Stronger Than Death: How Annalena Tonelli Defied Terror and Tuberculosis in the Horn of Africa*

