

New Book Uncovers the Hidden Challenges Families of Missionaries Face

For Immediate Release (Dallas, TX) — According to the International Bulletin of Mission Research, there are over 430,000 missionaries serving full-time around the world. Nearly 50% of all missionaries serve just five years or less on the mission field due to the physical, emotional, and spiritual commitment it requires. But what about the families of missionaries? Ann Bowman, author of the new book “I Never Signed Up For This,” shares her journey of watching both her daughters and their families become full-time missionaries. Bowman says she was not prepared for the onslaught of emotional turmoil.

“As the day of the airport departure neared, I was sad and apprehensive because not only my daughter was leaving but all my grandchildren as well,” said Bowman. “I didn’t expect the overwhelming grief that enveloped me as I drove away from the airport that day and for months afterwards. I felt that I had to hide it from friends and church members in order to be a ‘good Christian parent of missionaries. ’I questioned my spiritual maturity. I felt shame in my prayers, believing God must be disappointed in my grief—shouldn’t I be joyful that my daughters wanted to serve in this way? Wasn’t my deep sorrow a sign of a weak spiritual life?”

Bowman says most people don’t realize the constant threats of physical harm many missionaries deal with on a regular basis.

“My grandchildren often heard explosions or fighting in the mountains around their village as people groups and the military fought,” said Bowman. “One such skirmish separated them from their parents when a bridge was blown up. The military arrived in their small town in a long stream of trucks with soldiers and machine guns. My granddaughters had many young friends in their neighborhood who came to a Bible study in their home. One by one the girls began disappearing. My granddaughters, who were just 9 and 12 at the time, learned what it means to be trafficked when the parents of their friends said they had ‘gone to work. ’At one point, my daughter’s family was forced to abruptly leave so most of their belongings were left behind. They learned that their town was bombed, and their home was ransacked and so many

things that were dear to them were stolen. These are all frightening instances for adults, let alone children.”

Bowman credits a local church in the U.S. for helping her and her children during the worst moments.

“The church set up advocacy teams for each missionary family,” said Bowman. “This group met monthly and did video calls with my missionary family and had a prayer time with them. The women texted my daughter and the guys talked to my son-in-law. I appreciated it when one person on the team was assigned to me as the parent liaison. When war broke out in the country where my daughter was serving, they called to see how I was doing and to let me know they were praying. As I began to honestly seek God and be honest about my grief and even my anger towards Him, He met me at my point of sorrow and taught me much about His heart for mothers and the pain they often bear.”

With “I Never Signed Up For This,” Bowman hopes she can help other parents of missionaries deal with the struggles that they may not foresee.

“I had a number of missionary parents read the book as beta readers,” says Bowman. “Several said that they cried while reading the book. I had put into words what they had felt. I had described the departure scene at the airport exactly they said, capturing all of their emotions. There are very few resources for parents of missionaries, and my prayer is this book will help them navigate a very unique onslaught of emotions and allow them to find God’s grace even when they are fearful. From the beginning, I determined I would never get in the way of the Holy Spirit as He directs my children and their ministry calling. I hope the lessons I have learned along the way will give other parents and family members peace and reassurance.”

About the Author:

Ann Bowman has written for several magazines and books including Focus On The Family, Birds and Blooms, and Chicken Soup for the Soul Devotional Stories for Mothers. She hosted a parent devotional blog for many years and has been a MOPS speaker and Women’s Bible Study coordinator and teacher. She received a Certification in TCK Debriefing and has taught English classes for Chinese refugees as well as provided

Therapeutic Art for women rescued from human trafficking. She graduated from Texas A&M with a B.S. in education and has been married 44 years. She has four children and five grandchildren. Her book, "I Never Signed Up for This" is her first non-fiction work. Visit <https://neversignedupforthis.com/>.

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** For the safety and security of Ann's children, we will not be providing head shots of the author.