

## **Foreword for *I Never Signed Up for This***

I first crossed paths with Ann through a mutual friend and advocate for global women. In meeting Ann and her daughter, we connected over the unique and deeply emotional dynamics of celebrating adult children who are called to ministry overseas while at the same time struggling to release them and seeking ways to express your support of their calling.

As we chatted, we discussed the gap in resources for parents of missionaries. Ann felt pulled to put her personal story and experiences into a book—a piece of the puzzle that might help tell the larger stories of families separated by oceans and cultures.

Ann's book gives an authentic, albeit heartbreaking look at the reality of having grown children serving overseas in mission work. There's an element of showing outward excitement for your child following their calling, yet an inward anxiety that goes along with the changing hopes, expectations, and geographic nearness of your dearest family members.

Ann doesn't sugar-coat her experience as the mother of missionaries, but rather gives light to the hope in these stories—God's ongoing presence and care throughout the ever-changing world of missions and cross-cultural life. She gives a first-hand account of the importance of prayer, community, processing, and perspective as her children are ministering so far away.

As a parent of a former missionary myself, I understand that workers experience second-hand trauma, burnout, and intense stress. These are the very reasons Thrive exists—to provide holistic care for the hearts, souls, and physical bodies of women ministering overseas.

At Thrive, we provide spiritual resources, one-on-one relationships, and transformative experiences for women who are ministering overseas. This includes virtual and in-person events where missionaries are able to connect with like-minded women serving all over the world and who “get their life.” The restorative nature of Thrive's retreats and resources helps remind women ministering cross-culturally that they are not alone as they pursue their purpose wherever God has called them.

When I interact with missionaries through this work, I see so often how much the support of their families (or lack thereof) makes a difference. Ann provides practical examples of how to support grown children living overseas, as well as transparently shares what it feels like to pray for—and worry about—them from afar.

I am immensely grateful to Ann for putting her experience and passion into words. This book is going to be a powerful tool for so many. If you are a parent of missionaries, this book will help you process your own experience and remind you that you're not alone in this journey.

**Lorrie Lindgren**  
**Executive Director, Thrive**

*To learn more about Thrive's mission to replenish women in global missions, visit [thriveministry.org](http://thriveministry.org)*