

MBN Commentary - Julie Roys

WCRF Air Date: 01-25-10

Title: Child Sacrifices

Transcript:

I can't remember her exact words, but I'll never forget the venom she shot through the phone line. I had simply called Greta to invite her to my church. You see, her parents and mine had served on the mission field together when we were kids. And, when her parents discovered Greta and I lived in the same area, and that I loved my church, they urged me to give Greta a call. But when I did, she let me know in no uncertain terms that the last thing she would ever do is look for a church.

That incident opened my eyes to a phenomenon that's tragically common among missionary kids. You see, Greta apparently was angry at God and her parents for sending her as a young child to boarding school. My brother and oldest sister had attended the same boarding school Greta had attended. And a few years later, I learned how deeply that experience had impacted them. I'll never forget my brother – as a 30-year-old – recounting through tears how being separated from my parents had devastated him emotionally. Like most missionary children of that era, he was only six or seven years old when my parents sent him away – visiting him only every three months.

I'm the baby of my family and never attended boarding school because my parents returned to the states when I was four. I thank God I was spared that trauma. Yet, my heart aches for those who have struggled to understand how a loving God supposedly called their parents to abandon them for the ministry. When they were kids, these children were told by well-meaning adults about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac for God. My mother told me that when she complained about sending her kids away, missionaries scolded her for putting her children before God. I'm glad most mission organizations today realize how faulty this reasoning is. After all, God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son. That story was meant to foreshadow the salvation God would offer in Christ – not to provide a model for parents. In fact, in Leviticus, Moses lists child sacrifices as one of the "detestable practices" of the pagan nations that Israel was supposed to renounce. True, God wants us to put Him first. But, putting Him first means taking care of our

families. In first Timothy, Paul says that if anyone does not provide for his family, he has denied the faith.

Somehow, this truth was lost on a generation of missionaries. And sadly, though many of those sincere believers saved many souls for Christ, they lost their own children. And even those missionary kids who retain their faith often walk with a limp. Some carry wounds that God has redeemed and used for good; but, I fear the vast majority carry wounds that debilitate them.

Certain mission organizations have invested much to try and right this terrible wrong. But others have done shamefully little. I believe it's time all mission agencies proactively seek out their wounded, apologize, and offer help. But, I believe this story also provides a lesson for Christian parents. Love your kids. Show them they're more important to you than your work. And understand, in doing that, you are furthering the kingdom of God. That's my view. For Moody Radio, I'm Julie Roys.