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Religion

Call of a Coward: The God of Moses and the Middle Class Housewife
Marcia Moston
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When Marcia Moston's husband, Bob, confided his belief that God was calling them to pack up and move to a Mayan Village in Guatemala, Marcia was stunned. In her memoir, *Call of a Coward: the God of Moses and the Middle Class House-Wife*, she tells of her inner conflict, of the fear of stepping from their neatly defined world in northwestern New Jersey with their ten-year-old daughter, Lilly, and following her husband to become missionaries in a third-world country.

Was the middle-class house-wife's faith in God and in her husband's understanding of what He wanted them to do strong enough? In the end, they rented their home, bought a heavy-duty Ford Explorer to drive the rough roads they would encounter, and dropped their pet fish off at a friend's house on their way out of their comfortable, secure life.

The family arrived first in Antigua for six weeks of language school and to live with a local family before leaving towns and paved roads behind and moving to their Mayan village. A terrifying two-hour drive on narrow mountain roads and around hair-pin turns was the only entrance (and exit) to the small village. The two-room house they rented had a kitchen that was "absolutely bare except for a cement firebox" for cooking. There was a weak current of electricity to a water heating unit and no phone service. Moston said she prayed for courage to accept this forsaken place and to follow God's plans.

Heat, bugs, medical, and other crises arose during their ten-month stay. Bob's mission to pass along the word of God was sometimes greeted with curiosity, sometimes joy, and other times resistance. A local shaman threatened him should he return to preach again. Marcia and Lilly taught English to villagers and shared faith and friendship. The description of their surroundings is vivid, their hardships gritty, their evolving friendships real. When they decided it was time to leave the village, it was after a major bout with hepatitis that left them all

struggling with health concerns.

Call of a Coward, written after the Mostons' return to the states is about their sojourn. But, mostly, it is about faith and the courage it takes to keep faith alive when life is difficult. The story is interesting, though more a travelogue of the family's journeys than an intimate revelation.Except for the author, who is the narrator, readers may not gain much insight into the other characters.Still, descriptions of the travails of living in a third-world country are evocative and well told.

Marcia Moston, winner of the Women of Faith 2010 Writing Contest and honorable mention recipient in the 78thth Annual Writer's Digest Competition, has been a newspaper columnist and a contributor to several magazines.

Penny Hastings