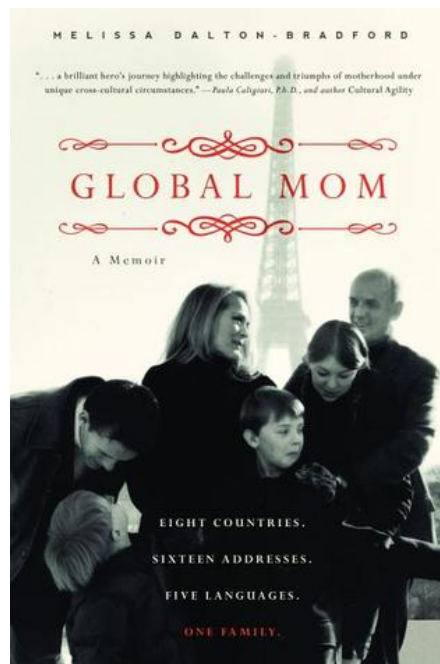




Global Mom: Eight Countries, Sixteen Addresses, Five Languages, One Family

Melissa Dalton-Bradford

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After more than twenty years living internationally—sixteen addresses, eight countries and five different languages—writer Melissa Bradford shares a fantastic journey of motherhood that will inspire any family.

Follow this family of six on their passage—extraordinary, hilarious and heartbreakingly poignant—from Bright Lights (of New York City) to the Northern Lights (of Norway) to the City of Light (Paris) to the speed-of-light of the Autobahn (in Munich). Continue deep into the tropics of Southeast Asia (Singapore) and end your voyage in the heights of the Swiss Alps (Geneva).

As varied as the topography—the craggy fjords, the meandering Seine, the black forests, the muggy tropics, the soaring Alps—this multicultural tale traverses everything from giving birth in a château in Versailles to living on an island in a fjord. From singing jazz on national Norwegian T.V. to judging an Indonesian beauty contest. From navigating the labyrinth of French bureaucracy and the traffic patterns of Singapore to sitting around a big pine table where the whole family learns languages, cultures, cuisines—where they, in short, learn to love this complex and diverse world and, most importantly, each other.

Global Mom: Eight Countries, Sixteen Addresses, Five Languages, One Family Details

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From Reader Review Global Mom: Eight Countries, Sixteen Addresses, Five Languages, One Family for online ebook

Anita says

I remember hearing about the tragic death of this family's teenager a few years ago, and so was intrigued to read this book. This is far more than a travelogue, as Bradford delves into the essence of parenting, global communities, and the transformative nature of grief. With poetic language and a richly detailed tapestry of experiences brought together into coherent chapter arcs, all colored by her faith and family, the reader joins their adventures and by the end feels like a personal friend, weeping and smiling together as part of this unfinished epic journey of life. Similar to my naive childhood wish to have twins before I understood what parenting a newborn entailed, I began reading this book with a bit of envy that this LDS mom of four, with a not-dissimilar background to my own (and a number of mutual Facebook friends), got to live this international, exotic story. By the end I was both awed at her stamina and content with my more settled, stable existence and predictable path, yet very grateful that she shared her story in its raw, authentic emotion, perplexity, and glory.

Alyson says

I first want to put a plug in for the audio version of this book. It is read by the author and she sings, speaks multiple languages and I feel like her personality came through as she spoke. Loved it!

I hope, if ever given the opportunity to live outside of the country, that I would embrace each country as the author did. I love how she learned the language and customs in each location and really let them into her life. I learned to love each country where she lived (well maybe not the people in Versailles as much as the people in Paris), as she told about her experiences. I love how much detail she gave and her willingness to show her weaknesses as she learned to navigate each new place.

I chuckled at how difficult the transition was for her children when they returned to live in the states for a short time. The story I most often share about the book, with those who haven't read it, was when her son Parker had to write an essay about a first lady he admired and he wrote it on Eve. I'm guessing he'd never heard the term "first lady" given to a US President's wife and so wrote on Eve, who was the first lady. LOL

Reading the book made me slightly jealous of her life. It is obvious that it was challenging and hard to leave people you'd come to love but it seems so rich. You can tell how much she loves her friends and that they were still her friends, even after she moved to a new place. Being a people person myself, I believe it would be a bonus to make so many life long friends from so many places!

The later half of the book has a different flavor from the first part but it is also open and honest.

I enjoyed discussing this book at book club. I also loved all of the different foods we had from multiple countries, even if all we could purchase from Norway, in our neck of the woods, was a bottle of water. ;)

4 1/2 stars

Popsugar Challenge # 14 A book involving travel

Nicole says

I'm torn on this book, but decided to go with a higher rating because ultimately it's one that I would recommend to others.

I was amused (at first) with her over-use of the English language (thesaurus much)? And the audiobook concertos that were inserted. And the "look at me and how silly we are with our living abroad adventure" type stories. And then, instead of amused, I was just down-right irritated.

But I plowed on, and I'm glad I did. I'm not sure it was intentional, but perhaps the first part of the book was used to juxtapose the second half - to show how far they'd come - from being silly new ex-pats who are just trying to keep up with their French neighbors, to people who have undergone a fundamental (and devastating) life-altering change. And to come to the realization of what family really means - in between all the moves, the day-to-day frustrations and tedium.

This is where I really started liking Bradford. I loved her descriptions of what it meant to lower the bar for herself, and what it means to have a resounding silence in the aftermath of grief. I really enjoyed her descriptions of home, and how her table came full circle in her story.

As I told a friend, this is a book that can practically lead itself in a book club discussion, as there is so much to talk about - world travel, putting your own dreams on hold for that of your partner's work, uprooting children (or is it having your children experience the world?), the stress (and excitement) of living in a new culture, losing a child, gaining perspective, what and where is home.

Beautiful, universal themes told in an interesting story. Recommended.

Rebecca says

I wasn't expecting to like her.

I expected the story of an upper-class couple, with an ambitious husband and a can-do wife who, because of these benefits gets to, not only travel the world but, truly experience the cultures and lifestyles of the countries in which she lives all the time gathering up a unique group of dearest friends, giving her children cultural advantages, and stock-piling linguistic skills to make an ambassador blush; and then she gets to modestly boast (oxymoron) about her experiences by writing a book.

"I could see from her clothing and gait that she was probably from mainland China, a place where getting stopped by uniformed officials wielding government papers could mean going to high court. Or prison. 'Ni Hao,' I stepped over, saying hello. Her face brightened and she wiped her eyes. We began speaking in Mandarin.

The next half hour was spent switching from Mandarin (with this frightened, transiting tourist from Beijing), to French (with the stiff, Swiss customs authorities, who had intimidated her on the train), to English (with Lauren, who was gracious enough to give me moral backup), and to German (by cell phone with the tourist's friend awaiting her in Zurich at the end of the final leg of her European train trip). Everything was clarified, this poor but greatly relieved Beijing woman and I hugged, and she went safely on her way, dragging her suitcase and calling out,

'Xie xie, xie xie, thank you, xie xie!'(p. 279)"

Truly, it's enough to make a foreign language-loving, wanderlusting, jealous heart ache.

But I loved her. I loved her candor and wit. I loved her ability to share so clearly and with such charm that I felt like I was getting to experience it with her. She wasn't bragging. She was *sharing*.

"What telling history means, I now understand, is not just talking for talking's sake, 'patching grief with proverbs,' as Shakespeare knows one should not because it kills community. Nor is it charting methodically through some timeline in order to make a graph so as to pinpoint key events or scientific equations behind tragedy. Grief is not time for sterile intellectuality because, when things are raw, it is the heart, not the brain, that says, 'Come be one' (p. 269)."

I was jealous, even of some of her difficult days (though not her most difficult day). But I could see that she truly earned every experience and handled her trials with grace. I haven't lost a son, but I have known deep pain and loss. She candidly and with great vulnerability invites and shares these moments. And so I allowed for my jealousy to abate and just to be grateful that in some small way she had invited me to sit down at her *langbord* to hear the travelogue of her life.

...

A favorite to which I could relate:

"'But this is easy,' Mr. Psy said, removing his glasses and folding his manicured hands while leaning forward on his frosted glass desk top. 'You're an artiste. You have the tempérament d'une artiste. You feel things profondément. This is a qualité. This tristesse is simply the price you pay pour l'art' (p. 167)."

Other moments I loved:

- * The Høytidelig procession (p. 43)
- * Hydrofoil ride hilarity (pp. 80-81)
- * Her attitude toward childbirth

Wendy says

I loved this memoir. I loved her in depth (but sometimes a bit too flowery and wordy) description of her family's interesting adventures in moving to new locations around the world. She really painted a beautiful picture of their lives in each country..

.I was amazed at how much they had to relocate because of her husband's job! I kept thinking things like, "please stay in Versailles, please let your kids settle in and have a rooted life! Don't move again!", or, "how are you doing this? Are you superwoman?" Her descriptions of their surroundings put me right there with them, cheering them on, hoping those kids would adjust and somehow perfect another language. Boy. these kids were adaptable! I am thoroughly impressed by what they accomplished.

I was absolutely stunned at the point where the tragedy strikes their family. I cried and cried for them....it was at this point that I felt her writing became really authentic, her true self. I was amazed that they continued moving around and starting over, even while they grieved. I felt her loneliness, being in Germany, amongst strangers who didn't know their story or know their pain. I especially loved her introspection about how we are all one community, home is not a place, but all the people you bring into your life, and how we are all more alike than different, whether rich or poor. Compared to her grief and loss, she realized people had so much more loss and hardship than herself. She gave some very poignant and spiritual messages.

Aneesa says

It took me over two years to get through this book. I digested it slowly. The author does an excellent job of painting a picture, her writing is wonderful that way. I found this book surprisingly easy to apply to myself as well. I was constantly comparing and contrasting my own life to hers, which was a very good exercise. I don't travel, our life is firmly rooted in Idaho. But yet I still related to her experiences with neighbors, her struggles with depression, family, and LIFE. It was well worth my time. I have been trying to figure out who to pass this on to, if you want to read it let me know and I'll mail it!

Kim says

This is a tough review to write. I was about 2/3 of the way through the book and was ready to throw in the towel. I absolutely loved learning about the different cultural norms of raising children in Norway and France. I absolutely detested the fact that it felt like she was trying too hard to be a writer she is not. Flowery phrases, similes, and metaphors abound throughout the book. And I just felt it wasn't needed. The story would have been good without it.

And then came Munich.

This is where the author finally become real to me- accessible- someone other than Super Mom. Having experienced a recent loss myself, this part of the book, her real, raw emotions, alternately spoke to me and made me cry. Her lessons learned in Singapore about the girl and the silver bowl were beautiful and ones I will continue to muse for a long time to come.

Overall I'd go with a 4.5 because I learned new things and she provided a slight balm for my battered heart.

Cheryl says

I loved this book. Cliche? I'm okay with that because this book did for me what I want all books to do for

me. I was intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually fed. I found myself living inside of the author's life, watching and feeling and experiencing all of the moments she described. I laughed, I sobbed, I smiled, I stopped and pondered... and then I jumped back in and devoured her words, although as slowly as I could so the words would seep into my skin and linger.

I am a traveler, but I have not lived beyond a very small geographic region. And I will be honest that part of the fascination of this book is seeing how the author and her family actually did it. They DID it. They lived in more than one country, learned more than one language, assimilated themselves into more than one culture, and they did it --not without fear, not without concern, not without doubt, but with more faith than fear, more courage than concern, and more determination than doubt.

The personal, unrelenting, and focused tragedy the family faces is absolutely heart-wrenching. And yet, the land of grief, the land the author speaks of --this country she has never lived in before --it has so much to teach. I was awed by the sheer amount of truth and experience that I read. I learned so much and I felt so much.

And so, I loved this book. I loved it dearly and I was sad when it was finished.

Kati says

I actually met Melissa (though I'm sure she doesn't remember) when I was on a study abroad in Paris. A group of us met her at church in Versailles and she kindly invited us to her home. She had us all gathered around her in her beautiful home listening to her amazing stories - green with envy. Her children gabbing in Norwegian. This is what we wanted. This life of amazingness. That was 2000. As a missionary in Philadelphia a couple years later, I went to a conference and she was on the program to sing. Crazy that this person would turn up so randomly twice in my life. Then, the other day I was handed this book as our book club read and was floored at the cover. How many times in my life have I wondered about that amazing woman?

Fast forward 13 years and I am not exactly the world wanderer I knew I would be. No regrets, though - I am thoroughly content with this life I have chosen. But part of me day dreams about what it would be like to live in that beautiful place - and experience those amazing things.

Her writing was much like her storytelling - she obviously lives in a different sphere than I (economic as well as talent) yet she has a way of making you feel a complete equal.

I would recommend this book to anyone who has ever wondered what it would be like to live abroad.

Zibby says

I find it difficult to review a memoir. Someone's personal and intimate life perspectives and details. And, Wow, what a life explored to its fullest.

I liked this book- but didn't Love it.

This book seemed to be several books in one- as opposed to several Stories in one. It wasn't that it was disjointed/hard to read- the chronology of things was obvious. But the emotional piece of it was hard to follow; at times raw and riveting and at times tedious as a reader. There were some beautiful pieces. I loved the attitude of assimilation and life-long learning and the perspectives that both travel/moving/cultures and loss provided Melissa with.

It was almost as if she sat down to write a certain kind of book, but in the writing process the therapeutic sharing of "writing" took the book in a different direction. Maybe she just needed a good Editor? I don't know. The title of Global Mom speaks toward the umbrella of the story, but the STORY was in the storm....

Cool vignettes. Neat experiences and reflections. Tremendous and brave sharing on the grief process. I am an emotional reader- so tears flowed, but not really a read I would highly recommend.

The subtle end note of 2 Cor3:2-3 made the most sense to me as to why she felt this story needed to be told. "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart." Her life is a beautiful inspiration of faith.

But that being said- I really had to WORK as a reader for inspiration to get into the book until over half-way through. Which made it more of an "okay" than Amazing book for me.

Kristin says

I started this book expecting a fun, around-the-world read with a story that would allow me to live vicariously (as I always thought I would be raising my children somewhere internationally and perhaps missed my calling in that regard). This book was that, but so very much more. Melissa Dalton-Bradford is a beautifully articulate writer, a 'word artist,' whose skill I found myself envying. She is also a gifted linguist, and it was so fun to listen to her (it is her voice on the audio book, lucky for us) as she utilized the various languages with gorgeous accents she and her family not only learned but mastered throughout their journeys. As a bonus, she is also a former Broadway singer and the few times she sings during the narrative are a real treat.

However, this is so much more than a fun travelogue. I didn't expect the depth and beauty that came from what she shared of the extreme loss the family experienced, and my heart was touched and changed by it. I found myself lingering in the car or walking an extra mile or two so that I could listen longer. I also found myself wishing that I knew the author personally. She is a delight. I'm sure I will listen to this book again sometime as it's a keeper.

Rosalyn Eves says

I'm hesitant to write a review for this book, because I don't think my words will be adequate to the experience of reading the book. I've met Melissa a few times in real life, and while I was struck by her intelligence and poise, I had no idea that so much was simmering in that brain of hers.

Global Mom tells the extraordinary story of their family, as they adapt to living in first Norway, then Versailles, stateside, then back in France, in Paris. To this point, it's really Melissa's extraordinary voice and observations that make the story: seeing her perspectives on the cultural differences (and the challenges of raising young children in each culture) was fascinating.

Global Mom: Eight Countries, Sixteen Addresses, Five Languages, One Family And then tragedy strikes. (Note: this isn't a spoiler--it's a central part of the story). That I knew the tragedy was coming because I've read some of Melissa's writings on the topic in no way made the event less poignant. Melissa's oldest son, Parker, dies in a tragic accident at age 18. And from that point on, the story is shot through with grief, and

the struggle to make sense of such an earth-shattering event. No matter where her family lives after that (Munich, Hong Kong, Geneva), what they experience is not just a new location, but an extension of the landscape of grief.

More than anything, this book has me thinking about place: about how place is made up of landscape (built and natural), but also history and culture and most of all people, and the relationships among people.

And of course, I'm still thinking about some of the gorgeous prose passages. Melissa's voice is really quite astounding at times: she comes across as warm, gracious, intelligent, thoughtful, generous and deeply philosophical. Here are two of my favorite passages (if among some of the most devastating):

And as his head tipped gracefully to one side, the earth fell off its axis and began spinning strangely, drunkenly, into unchartable and inaccessible regions out of which only a God can escape, or from which only a God can rescue.

This land of major loss was uncharted terrain, a land with its own language of silence. It was something more than a country, it was its own planet with its own air pressure and gravitational pull.

Other readers have parted out that there are two different parts of the story: before and after Parker's death. While this is true, the experience before his death is intimately tied up with its aftermath. Their rich family life underscores the depth of the tragedy.

After reading this book, there's a significant part of me that wishes I could provide this kind of rich international experience for my children, but honesty compels me to admit that I wouldn't reap nearly the harvest from it that Melissa has (nor would I willingly pay the price she has).

This was the best kind of book: it made me think, it made me weep, but it also made me hopeful.

Twila Newey says

This book was such a relief. I got to step out of the day-to-day stress of recent life and travel the world with Melissa and her family. Norway made me laugh out loud. France made me crave Jaques Genin. Munich made me feel (I will forever love Lars-the hairdresser). Singapore made me reassess. And Switzerland made me see home in faces rather than places. In fact, I had just finished when we received the news that a dear friend of ours passed away. As I walked into his funeral, met by so many beloved faces from our small downtown Mormon congregation, this reality split me wide open. I was a weepy mess of gratitude for all those people and our time there. It was such a blessing to be with them to mourn Jim's passing and celebrate his life together. In addition, to being funny and thought provoking, this book is also a poignant and insightful meditation on loss that helped me draw some other unexpected and helpful connections in my own life. And people are good, EVERYWHERE. Sometimes it's easy to forget that. This story is a welcome reminder of goodness. Well worth my time, well worth anyone's time.

Angela says

Written by a woman that I'm lucky enough to call a friend, Global Mom is an insightful, honest, beautifully written account of the Bradford family's "expat" life. But the memoir does more than detail Melissa's

adventures with her husband and four children as they navigate the social, cultural, and educational systems of Norway, France, Singapore, and other places across the globe. It's also plumbs the depths of a family's (and especially a mother's) grief when Melissa's eldest son, Parker, dies after attempting to save a fellow student from drowning. This is a wise, compassionate, and compelling memoir.

Stacey says

The writing in this book was a bit...extravagant...for me. A little too precious, at least at the beginning. But as I continued to read, the writing settled down a little and I began to really enjoy hearing about the author's experiences. Midway into the book, tragedy strikes. For me, the title is misleading, because the book is really about the tragedy. The impact is in the tragedy. It's almost as if there are two stories here, and because they are fairly equally balanced, it felt a little off. It wasn't plot and subplot, but more like there are two competing purposes for her writing, and to me it felt like the real purpose was NOT about being a global mom. That said, the author writes bravely of her experience and helped me understand a tragedy in my own family better. I felt her experience deeply.
