

# The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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## Amy Carmichael, God's Missionary

As an old woman I find myself often in a quiet reverie, pondering the countless blessings of my long life, and marveling at the way the Lord God has led me. I think very often of my lovely mother, who sang to us—"Jesus, tender Shepherd hear me," and "I went to visit a friend one day—," and of my earnest father, who taught us the great hymns of the faith such as "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and "It Is Well With My Soul."

We six Howard children were well acquainted with missionaries. My little brother once noted that "suitcases are forever bumping up and down the stairs," as our parents managed to keep an open home even during the Great Depression. We were often held spellbound at the dinner table, listening to missionary stories. I remember Mr. L.L. Legters telling of his years in Mexico, translating the Bible for illiterate Indians, and Miss Helen Yost, a delightful redhead who worked for years alone with American Indians in Arizona and New Mexico. We loved the thrilling and scary stories—Sir Alexander Clark (knighted by Queen Elizabeth) told of his being treed by a Cape buffalo, said to be the fiercest animal in Africa. For hours he sat in the tree as the buffalo circled the trunk, looking balefully at his prey, and seeming to say, "Come down!" I've forgotten how long the missionary had to cling until the animal sauntered away.

When I was fourteen I learned of an Irish missionary named Amy Carmichael whom I never met—a down-to-earth mystic whose beautiful writings captivated my imagination. She had gone first to Japan, where in her room she had two words written on the wall: *Yes, Lord.*

In the providence of God she went then to South India, where, as an itinerant evangelist, she soon discovered the evils of the Hindu temples where little girls and boys were used in unspeakably wicked ways. At first she could not believe such treatment of innocent children but soon discovered that things were far worse than she had imagined. She prayed earnestly for their deliverance and was able, over some fifty years, to make a home for many of these children.

She wrote, "I would never urge one to come to the heathen unless he felt the burden for souls and the Master's call, but oh! I wonder so few do. It does cost something. Satan is tenfold more of a reality to me today than he was in England, and very keenly that awful home-longing cuts through and through one sometimes—but there is a strange deep joy in being here with Jesus.

"Praising helps more than anything. Sometimes the temptation is to give way and go in for a regular spell of homesickness and be of no good to anybody. Then you feel the home prayers, and they help you to begin straight off and sing, 'Glory, glory, Hallelujah,' and you find your cup is ready to overflow again after all."

She wrote fifty or more books and stayed in India without a furlough until she died.

In my study here at home I have nearly two shelves full of Amy Carmichael's books, most of them bound in blue cloth with beautiful sepia-toned photographs of the picturesque Dohnavur compounds and the happy little children—few of whom can have any notion of what would have been their fate had the Lord not sent them to this place of safety, quietness, and overflowing love.

“There was a time when a gift of healing was given. Soon there was a buzz of talk, and colored stories flew all over the countryside—A place of healing! Miracles! Come, let us see! For still the multitude loves a spectacle. . . . There was a day when we asked Him, if He willed it so, to give us the gift, the charism, that had been in apostolic times. Would it not glorify His Name? Though we did see a putting forth of power, there was not anything comparable to the healing of the first century. The charism was not given. Why was that most blessed gift not given in its fullness?

“We know not what we should pray for as we ought. Not our poor thoughts, but the counsels of the Holy One be our guide.”

Amy Carmichael (Amma to her children) has been with the Lord for many years, but her work goes on, reaching little children who without her vision would surely have perished. My husband Lars and I had the privilege of visiting Dohnavur some years ago—a lovely place of order, quietness and, of course, much joy and laughter among the children. The single women who care for them in the bungalows are called Accals. They have given themselves unreservedly for the care of the children.

A letter I received from Dohnavur a year or so ago made me think of the mountains to the west of a place called Three Pavilions, a constant reminder of Isaiah 54:10, “‘Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,’ says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” The practical truth of those words has been seen as God meets all physical needs and Dohnavur experiences His loving-kindness in countless ways. This was their testimony as they entered into the 100th year of the mission. I am sure Amma and all her colleagues now in glory (as well as some still with us on earth) would echo the

words of David found in 2 Samuel 7:22, “How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you.”

## *Lean Hard*

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee” (Psalm 55:22).

Child of My love, lean hard,  
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care;  
I know thy burden, child, I shaped it;  
Poised it in My own hand, made no proportion  
in its weight to thine unaided strength;  
For even as I laid it on, I said  
I shall be near, and while he leans on Me,  
This burden shall be Mine, not his;  
So shall I keep My child within the circling  
arms of My own love.  
Here lay it down, nor fear to impose it on a  
shoulder which upholds the government of  
worlds.  
Yet closer come; thou art not near enough;  
I would embrace thy care so I might feel My  
child reposing on My breast.  
Thou lovest Me? I know it. Doubt not then;  
But, loving Me, Lean Hard.”

**May Prentiss Smith**

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

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## *The Presence of God*

“A sense of the presence of God is a rare gift. If given and then withdrawn, we examine ourselves, seeking the reason within. This numbness sets alight a longing for His felt presence. This is how faith is established! Believe what cannot be seen or felt. Rely on what can't be grasped. The realization of faults, inadequacy, inferiority to others, is God's way of forcing our dependence on Him. He planned it that way.

“We wish for ‘pure’ religion, feeling near to God, praying without distractions, enjoying quiet time—but it doesn't always work that way for long. Action clears and deepens spiritual affections.

“Don't strain to summon holy thoughts or feelings. Don't tell yourself you could be much more spiritual if you were somewhere else!

“Stay home, set your house in order, do the next thing.

“The taking up of the cross of Christ is no great action done once for all; it consists in the continual practice of small duties which are distasteful to us.”

**John Henry Newman**

## *If Only*

Over the years I have heard from women a good many “if only's”—“If only I weren't married to him”; “If only I were married to him!” “If only I'd had a husband like hers!” “If only he would try to understand me!” “If only he would talk to me!” “If only he'd help me with the children—I've been beside myself all day, but what does he do when he gets home? Flops down in front of the TV, picks up the newspaper, doesn't talk to the children, asks me to bring him a drink,” etc.

I was glad to receive this letter: “I've learned to handle my marriage and my husband by pray-

ing instead of filing complaints that fall on defensive (if not deaf) ears. The Lord is more than able and willing to meet the needs I wrongly thought my husband should fulfill, and while I was never a nagger, I have learned how effective it is to pray and tell the Lord about my ‘husband troubles,’ and let Him intercede for me.”

## *A Word From the Book of James*

“Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.

“If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it. But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind; and every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way, and then that. If you don't ask in faith, don't expect the Lord to give you any solid answer.

“A Christian who doesn't amount to much in this world should be glad, for he is great in the Lord's sight. But a rich man should be glad that his riches mean nothing to the Lord, for he will soon be gone, like a flower that has lost its beauty and fades away, withered—killed by the scorching summer sun. So it is with rich men. They will soon die and leave behind all their busy activities.”

**James 1:2-11**  
**The Living Bible**

## *The Comforter, the Holy Spirit*

“In all places and at all times, we can have that familiar friendship, we can have Him with us; and there may be through the day a constant interchange of private words, of little offerings, too small to have any name attached to them—by which the bonds of that familiar friendship grow closer and more real, until it comes to that special personal intimacy, which we call sanctity.”

**Janet Erskine Stuart, 1857-1914**

## *Just and Unjust*

It is true that God seems to bless all sorts of ministry, whether or not it was conducted in His way. Many receive Christ under the ministry of someone who is far from holy. When Moses was told to speak to the rock, he struck the rock instead. He disobeyed God (and paid a high price for that later) *but* he got the desired *results*—the water gushed from the rock. God did not deprive His people of the water they needed just because it was gotten in the wrong way.

Nevertheless, results do not validate the method. It's just that “He causes his sun to rise on

the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). And “upon whom does his light not rise?” (Job 25:3).

“Because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked . . . be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35b-36).

## *Orthodox Prayer*

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace.

Help me in all things to rely upon Your Holy will.

In every hour of the day reveal Your will to me.

Bless my dealings with all who surround me.

Teach me to treat all that comes to me with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Your will governs all.

Grant me strength in unforeseen events. Let me not forget that all are sent by You.

Teach me to act lovingly, firmly, and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others.

Grant me strength to bear the fatigues of the coming day with all that it shall bring.

Direct my will. Teach me to pray. Pray You Yourself in me.

Amen.

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