

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

November/December 2003

ISSN 8756-1336

Farewells

God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Throughout my life, I have considered those words, especially when circumstances have threatened to undo my faith in His love and provision.

When I went to Ecuador in 1952, I used my linguistic training to decipher three different Indian languages with a goal of translating the Bible. But at the end of my eleven years in that country, my labors seemed to have turned to ashes. One set of translation notes was in a suitcase that was stolen from the top of a banana truck. My Auca materials sit in my attic to this day. Only a portion of my Quichua work was useful to two other missionaries.

Of course, even more insuperable than that seemingly wasted effort was the question of why my husband Jim, to whom I had been married a mere 27 months (after 5 1/2 years of waiting), was killed by the Aucas, along with the husbands of four other young wives. Years later, my second husband, Add Leitch, who died of cancer after a short four years of happy marriage, commented: "One cannot unscrew the Inscrutable." God's ways are mysterious and our faith develops strong muscles as we negotiate the twists and turns of our lives. Although He allowed me to be widowed twice, God gave me my wonderful daughter, Valerie. She and her husband

Walter and their eight children have brought me such great joy. (I'm including a recent picture in this newsletter, because so often readers ask about Walt and Val and the children, who are growing up quickly and leaving the nest for college and marriage.) He also gave me a third good husband, Lars Gren, who, I hope, will outlive me.



Elisabeth and Lars, in a photo taken on a recent trip to Switzerland.

In December of this year I will celebrate my 77th birthday. I marvel at the ways in which God has led me, from my birth in Belgium where my parents were missionaries, to Wheaton College, to Ecuador—really to the ends of the earth in ministry travels. Psalm 16:5-6 best expresses my sentiments: "Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup, and

have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a goodly heritage."



I began writing this newsletter in 1982 with the help of Servant Publications in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At first I thought it might be a bit misleading to call it a "newsletter." After all, it didn't convey much actual *news*. It hasn't been "relevant" in the popular sense. But I took refuge in C.S. Lewis' remark, "All that is not eternal is eternally out of date," and I tried



The Shepard family at Christiana's wedding, July 19, 2003. Left to right: Evangeline, Walter III, Valerie, Walter, Jr., Sarah, Theo, Gaines Kergosien (Christiana's new husband), Christiana, Elisabeth Martin (matron of honor), Colleen, and Jim.

to include things eternal in every issue. Like the psalmist, I have had a burning desire to share "good words." ("My heart is teeming with a good word; I utter what I have framed concerning the King." Psalm 45:1, Kay).

Now it is time to end the newsletter. This will be your last issue. Two factors brought about this decision: One was wondering how long to keep doing the newsletter, and the other was that Servant could no longer continue doing the layout and all that is required to get the newsletter into your hands. So it seems to be the right time to bring this chapter of my life to a close. There is no adequate way to express my deepest gratitude to you readers for all that you have meant to me. I'm particularly grateful for having met many of you in person, and for your many notes and letters over the years.

I bid you farewell with words from a hymn written by Anna L. Waring in 1850:

*Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see;
I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.*

*I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child
And guided where I go.*

*Wherever in the world I am,
In whatso'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate.*

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For more information about resources by Elisabeth Elliot, visit her website: www.elisabethelliott.org.

I ask thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied,
A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

There are briers besetting every path,
That call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

In service which thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me;
For my inmost heart is taught the truth
That makes thy children free.
A life of self-renouncing love
Is one of liberty.



www.elisabethelliott.org

You will find back issues of this newsletter online at www.elisabethelliott.org. Also on my website is ordering information about many of my books and tapes, my speaking schedule, some photos, a daily devotional, and a link to radio transcripts from the Gateway to Joy broadcast.

Please visit the website often to see if there's something new!



Colleen Elliot with Lars and Elisabeth.

Lars' Ramblings from the Cove

From what I've heard, newsletters are difficult to "float," that is, to operate in the black. This one has been nothing short of phenomenal. A few of you readers may have been with us from the first issue in 1982. When Elisabeth started it, it became my obligation to see that it was in the black. If not, then I was to make up the deficit. This occurred only two times—the first and third year. I wrote a note, "Some of you may make year-end donations. If you do, maybe you can think of adding a bit for the newsletter." That was all, and the "red" became "black." In every other year, there has been a surplus. From the beginning, we began giving a tithe to various ministries, eventually increasing the tithe to 25 percent. Further gifts were given after Servant's expenses were paid.

From 1993 through 2003, \$240,000 was sent to various ministries, including the work of Bert Elliot (Jim's brother) and his wife Colleen, who have been missionaries in Peru for 53 years. They recently purchased their first home to call their own and are happily working away, a wonderful pair, greatly loved. The newsletter also contributed to the work of Ramez and Becky Attalah, who are with the Bible Society in Cairo, Egypt, where Becky has a ministry in "Garbage City," an almost unbelievable place. Many of you know of the Dohnavur Fellowship in India through Elisabeth's writings or by reading Amy Carmichael's books. You have supported their ongoing work. Other recipients of donations were a doctor in the Philippines who, I would say, gets more value out of a gift than one would expect, and a single woman who works in the inner city of Denver. Your gifts helped the Hungarian Literature Mission to translate many books, including 16 of Elisabeth's titles. We also gave to a few large organizations such as Focus on the Family, Campus

Crusade for Christ, Word of Life in New York, and Prison Fellowship, but mainly it was to the trusted, unsung workers whom we know from a personal relationship. The giving records from 1982 to 1993 are not available, but my guess would be that another \$75,000 or a bit more was donated during that time. I tell you this so that you may know how you have blessed others in blessing us. All along, your gifts have enabled many readers, especially those overseas, to receive the newsletter without cost. The newsletter has been mailed out to over 100 countries besides the United States, and at its height a few years back, it had 18,000 recipients.

It has encouraged us greatly to read the words many of you have jotted on the renewal cards. Sometimes you have sent long letters. Not many were left unanswered, even though often we responded with just a few words of thanks on a postcard. Elisabeth took this seriously and it was part of her joy to write to you.

There would not have been a newsletter without Servant Publications, which did the

layout, printing, mailing, and handling of subscriptions. It has been a good relationship, particularly with Kathy Deering, who has been the editor for many years, Louise Paré, who has managed the circulation processes for all 21 years, and Don Cooper, a publisher with a sense of humor (a trait not always found in the somber business of production deadlines).

So a wonderful portion of our life comes to an end. We are grateful beyond words for your kindness, encouragement, and generosity, and for the privilege of meeting many of you on the road, sometimes for coffee or lunch. May the Lord richly bless your lives. Only He knows whether or not we might meet on the road again.

Do visit the website. Messages get to us but we don't use e-mail for correspondence. If an answer is required, we'd be happy to hear from you via regular mail (10 Strawberry Cove, Magnolia, MA 01930). As always, I'll con-

tinue to send out books and tapes, and we'll try to keep up with the letters and cards.

And that's it from the Cove.



Lars and Elisabeth, Interlaken, Switzerland.

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