

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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The Supremacy of Christ

Last October I received a copy of the Auca (now known as Waorani) translation of the New Testament. The orthography has been greatly altered since my day, so I can't read much of it now, but leafing through the pages I thought long, long thoughts. I had had nothing to do with the translation. I was with the Aucas only two years, during which Rachel Saint and I worked on reducing the language to writing, but we had barely begun to translate a few Bible stories when my daughter Valerie and I returned to Quichua work.

Sometimes I am asked to speak to young people who are toying with the idea of being missionaries. They want to know how I discovered the will of God. The first thing was to settle once and for all the supremacy of Christ in my life, I tell them. I put myself utterly and forever at His disposal, which means turning over *all* the rights: to myself, my body, my self-image, my notions of how I am to serve my Master. Oswald Chambers calls it "breaking the husk of my individual independence of God." Until that break comes, all the rest is "pious fraud." I tell these earnest kids that the will of God is always *different* from what they expect, always *bigger*, and, ultimately, infinitely more *glorious* than their wildest imaginings.

But there will be deaths to die. Paul found that out—daily, he said. That is the price of following the way of the cross—of course. If our object is to save others we must be clear that we cannot save ourselves. Jesus couldn't either.

This scares people. Yet what is there to fear when Christ holds first place in our lives? Where, other than in the will of the Father, shall we expect to find significance, security, and serenity?

God's guidance for me has been so different from my early notions—I was to be a jungle missionary for life! The complete futility, *humanly* speaking, of all the

language work I did (Colorado, Quichua, and Auca for various reasons, all came to nothing) was a deep lesson in the supremacy of Christ. Whom had I set out to serve? May He not do as He wills, then, with His servant and with that servant's work? Is anything offered to Christ ever wasted? I thought about the sacrifices of Old Testament times. When a man brought a lamb, the priest laid it on the altar, slit its throat, and burned it. The offering, then, was *accepted*. But what was left of it? Amy Carmichael taught me the implications of a *living sacrifice*. She wrote:

"But these strange ashes, Lord, this nothingness,
This baffling sense of loss?"
Son, was the anguish of My stripping less
Upon the torturing cross?
Was I not brought into the dust of death,
A worm, and no man, I,
Yea, turned to ashes by the vehement breath
Of fire, on Calvary?
O son beloved, *this* is thy heart's desire:
This, and no other thing
Follows the fall of the Consuming Fire
On the burnt offering.
Go on and taste the joy set high, afar,—
No joy like that to thee;
See how it lights the way like some great star.
Come now, and follow Me.

I want to put it down right here that I have certainly "tasted the joy." I cannot imagine a more wonderfully blessed life than mine. Faithfulness of a loving Father—that's what I've found, every day of every week of every year, and it gets better. How I do hope those prospective missionaries will believe me!

Gateway to Joy

If my daily (M-F) radio program, *Gateway to Joy*, is not heard in your area and you wish it were, you can obtain a demonstration tape to give to your local station. Call Linda Meyers, 1-800-759-4569.

Thank You for Praying

To all of you who pray for me—I need it, and I do thank you, from my heart. Will you also mention before the Lord the people who look to me for help? Ask Him to give me wisdom as I answer letters. Pray also for Alma Griffin, the wonderful woman who answers most of the radio mail. She sends it on to me, I read it, pray for over it, and answer a few. Here's a sampling you could pray for:

- "I seem to be incompatible around most women. I hope you good Sisters-in-Christ won't presume to offer me inappropriate and useless advice! I love you all in Jesus. Brother R_____."
- Husband killed in a car crash in 1991; in 1992 eight-year-old daughter accidentally shot and killed her thirteen-year-old brother (he had a twin sister).
- Husband on drugs and in prison for the third time.
- (from Saskatchewan) "While working the combine at night have been following the story of Glenda.... We are hurting. Our good-looking crop is frozen black, we have all production costs to pay so could easily get depressed. But—both of us are born again to our loving Savior, so will take one day at a time and praise Him!"
- (from Manitoba) "While trucking grain heard your program on Heaven.... We have two babies there. Please send tapes."
- Lost son, seventeen, to cystic fibrosis. Heard program while washing dishes and crying and praying.
- "Took two exams. I know in my heart I failed. Can God make me pass anyway?"
- "Have been suffering for six years about a past abortion. My husband and I stayed up till early morning hours crying about it. Since we couldn't do anything for the baby I made a small quilt, put it in a shoe box to bury. My husband put in a handkerchief because of the many tears we've shed.... I heard your program about the woman who thought God could never forgive her. 'What did *she* do that was so bad?' I wondered, 'I'm the one who's really bad.' She'd had an abortion! You said God forgives. It took my breath away. I cried on my baby's quilt, tears of sorrow and tears of joy—some day I will be with my child in Heaven!"

The Most Vexing Thorn

Feminism is not going to go away. Last November a threshold was crossed when the Anglican Church admitted women to the priesthood. *Time* magazine said feminism is rapidly emerging as "the most vexing thorn for Christianity." *Time* is a bit slow on the draw. Feminism from its inception more than twenty years ago has been a seriously vexing thorn for Christianity. It's not just now "emerging" as such. Trouble is relatively few Christians have bothered to think through even the social implications of this movement, let alone the shaky theology on which it rests.

It is interesting to see how many secular writers have noted the fallacies and contradictions of feminist ideology. Ann Berk, a radio station manager, wrote:

As working mothers, we embraced "quality versus quantity" because it's such an eminently sensible theory about child rearing and because we desperately needed a rationale to cling to as we went off to conquer the world, leaving the babies at home. But doubt lingers and nags, because we really don't know if the fruit will be bitter or sweet. Is there any substitute for being there? Does a phone call from the office take the place of touching?...

But there are those books again, promising happy unisex kids, growing up free. Whoopee. I'm tired of the lot of them, tired of the theories, the posturing, the preaching—the smugness.... Get a few of us together with our feet up and the awful truth pops out like chicken pox.

Then there's William Raspberry, a writer for the *Washington Post*:

I have long thought that feminists were playing on dangerous ground. It made sense to me that they wanted to get rid of the gender-specific constraints that had limited women's economic options. It was

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the next step that made me nervous: that women couldn't really be free unless men also were freed of their gender-specific roles and attitudes. The success of feminism, in short, would require the creation of a "new man."

Well, we've got him. He doesn't want to get married. If he was married, very likely he isn't now. If he had children, he isn't paying support. He's having fun. Feminism has liberated the man from the responsibility to grow up and put away childish things. He need not stick his neck out to ask for dates, open doors, send flowers, pick up the tab, or commit himself to anything. As for *sacrifice*, the kind that love, marriage, and fatherhood entail, he hasn't a thought. No longer inclined to do the thing he was made for—to be in charge, take responsibility and answer to God for it—the "new man" today seems to feel quite comfortable in going along with whatever the little lady (oops—*woman*—we're no longer to be called ladies, I'm told) wants.

Alas. This isn't really the new man. It's as old as Adam. He too went along with his wife's decision, and God held him responsible. "The mission of Christ's church is damaged," *Time* quotes, "when half its members are denied the chance to use their God-given gifts." Caution: is priesthood a gift God gives to women? I don't believe it is. Eve, too, felt cheated that she wasn't allowed to eat the fruit of *all* the trees in the garden. Everything that was good for her and Adam God gave. In His sovereign love He forbade the fruit that would destroy them. He had not designed human beings to bear the load of the knowledge of good and evil. I don't believe He designed us women to bear the weight of highest authority in either the church or the home, any more than He designed men to bear children. Ought we not to receive with thanksgiving what is given, glad that He withholds, for very good reasons, the not-given?

Ann Widdecombe, a member of Parliament and junior minister in the Conservative government, quit the Anglican church after the vote. "Its doctrine is doubt, its creed is compromise, and its purpose appears to be party politics. This was just the last straw."

Thank God there are still many men with conscience and clear vision. One of them, age thirty, who works with college students, told me he was seeking to speak out against the secular worldview of feminism: "The whole spirit that is conveyed is competitive and self-seeking. I see aggressive behavior, clinging to rights, taking initiative, and their zeal for 'equality' tends to obliterate all differences between men and women." He asks, "What is the key principle that I should stress?"

Mary, the mother of the Lord, expressed the principle which should characterize both men and women: the readiness to receive the gift God gives, no questions asked. Ephesians 5:22ff spells out the great mystery: the husband's gift of headship which requires sacrificial love; the wife's gift of subjection (we are *liberated!* The buck stops with the husband!). These "roles" can no more be reversed or equalized than can the relative positions of Christ and His church.

Jesus abandoned all equality, all rights, *all*, when He prayed, "Not my will, Thine." My friend Carla Brewington, a former card-carrying, raging feminist who has done a 180-degree turnaround, pierced directly to the heart of the feminist heresy: "It denies the Cross."

Recommended Reading

In 1988 I recommended *Stepping Heavenward* by Elizabeth Prentiss (1818-1878). She wrote to a friend, "Every word of that book was a prayer and seemed to come of itself. I never knew how it was written, for my heart and hands were full of something else."

One Reverend Marvin Vincent said, "The response to *Stepping Heavenward* was instant and general. Others of her books were enjoyed, praised, laughed over, but this one was taken by tired hands into secret places, pored over by eyes dim with tears, and its lessons played out.... It was one of those books which sorrowing Mary-like women read to each other, and which lured many a bustling Martha from the fretting of her care-cumbered life to ponder the new lesson of rest in toil."

Many have told me how greatly they've been helped by it, so I'm glad to be able to recommend a new edition, available from Calvary Press, Box 805, Amityville, NY 11701; (516) 789-8175. Special price for Newsletter readers: \$10 postpaid.

Too Much Fuss

"People make too much parade of their troubles and too much fuss about them; the fact is we are all born to tribulations, we also are born to innumerable joys, and there is no sense in being too much depressed or elated by either. 'The saddest birds a season find to sing.'"

—From a letter by Elizabeth Prentiss, 1872

Travel Schedule

March-July 1993

March 13 Chattanooga, TN; Woodland Park Baptist Church; Debra Martin, (615) 899-9185, home (615) 894-0216.

March 22-24 Taping for *Gateway to Joy*.

April 7-11 Madrid, Spain; Pocket Testament League.

April 16 Frederick, MD; Crisis Pregnancy Center, (301) 662-5300.

April 17 Sterling, VA; Faith Bible Church, (703) 430-1345.

April 18 Reston, VA; Reston Bible Church; Mary Wolfe, (703) 620-4263.

April 21 Boston, MA; Park Street Church luncheon; James Benson, (617) 523-3383.

April 23 Kansas City; Christian Association for Psychological Studies convention; Dr. Mack Harnden, (913) 345-0033.

April 23-24 Hudson, FL; Word of Life, (813) 856-7575.

April 28-May 2 Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, AK; Mrs. Ann Graham, PO Box 5544, Ketchikan, AK 99901.

May 11 Collingswood, NJ; Women Alive Ministries; Shirley Hughes, (609) 858-6750.

May 14-15 Boring, OR; Good Shepherd Community Church, (503) 663-5050.

June 25-26 Rancho Cucamonga, CA; Calvary Chapel; Janice Orate, (714) 276-9782.

July 24-25 Tuxedo, NC; Camp Greystone, (704) 693-3182.

July 26 Omaha, NE; Pope Paul VI Institute; Dr. Thomas W. Hilgers, (402) 390-6600.

Breakfast

Dump into the blender one or two bananas, a raw egg, a teaspoon or two of honey, a cup of yogurt, 1/2 cup of orange juice (or a few dollops of unthawed frozen o.j.). This will make about three glasses. A good breakfast, especially with bran muffins.

Keep in Touch

Are you moving? Getting married? Leaving school? *Don't forget to send us your change of address.* The post office DOES NOT FORWARD third class mail like the Newsletter. *Please remove your address label below and send it with your new address to:* The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, Post Office Box 7711, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

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