

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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Lost and Found

Here is a little story about a simple answer to prayer. Lars was away. I had to take the car to the repairman's house. Li Zeng, our live-in student, followed me in his car to bring me home. Directions to the house had been ambiguous, and Gloucester, Massachusetts gets the prize for town-easiest-to-get-lost-in. I prayed that I might not get lost—Li had to get to class, the repairman had to leave at 7:15. I got lost, made a quick turn without checking to see that Li was still with me. He wasn't. "Lord, Li will be late for class, the man will leave in a few minutes—what shall I do?" It's a long story, but after a phone call I found the house, left the car, declined the man's kind offer to take me home because I wanted to find Li so he would not miss his class. How was I to find him? "Lord, help me." I stood at an intersection and prayed that he would come along—an absurd request in a place like Gloucester. He'd been on a one-way street which would take him far out around the shore drive, with no reason to happen upon the intersection where I stood. Within five minutes here he was! God teaches us to ask so that He may answer our prayers. This reminds us of the source of our blessings. The answer to my prayer *not* to get lost was No—in order that I might be *especially blessed in the way I was found*.

Remember how the Lord brought Israel out (of Egypt) in order to bring them in (to Canaan)? He got me lost that He might get me found! Let's never forget that some of His greatest mercies are His refusals. He says no in order that He may, in some way we cannot imagine, say yes. ALL His ways with us are merciful. His meaning is ALWAYS love.



After I had written the above, I received the following much more astonishing story from Brenda Foltz of Princeton, Minnesota. She went rock-climbing for the first time.

I started up the rock as fast as I could, determined to "set my face like a flint" toward the peak. After a time, I came to a difficult ledge, and my breathless scrambling came to an abrupt halt. Suddenly, the rope was pulled too taut and hit me square in the eye. "Oh

NO!" I thought wildly, "my contact lens is GONE!" From my precarious perch I looked everywhere on the rope and sharp granite rock for a tiny, transparent lens, which could easily be mistaken for a water droplet.

"Lord Jesus, help me find it!" I prayed and pleaded, knowing the hopelessness of my search with such limited mobility. I looked as long as I could maintain my hold, praying with a sinking heart. Finally I resumed my climb with one last glimmer of hope—maybe the contact was still in my eye, crumpled in the corner or up under my eyelid. When I reached the top, I had a friend check to see if she could find it in my eye. It wasn't there. Every hope was gone.

I was *disappointed*, and anxious about getting a new contact so far away from home. As we sat and rested, surveying the world from such a gloriously high perspective, the fragment of a verse popped into my head: "The eyes of God go to and fro through the whole earth."

God knows EXACTLY WHERE MY CONTACT IS this moment from His high vantage point, the amazing thought struck me. But I'LL never see it again, I concluded.

So, still glum, I headed down the path to the bottom where the others were preparing to climb. About half an hour later another girl set out where I had also begun my climb. She had *no inkling* of the missing contact. But there, at the steep bottom of the rock face, she let out an excited cry: "Hey you guys—did anyone lose a contact?"

I rushed over as she continued yelling, "There's an ANT carrying a contact down the mountain!"

Sure enough. Special delivery! I bent down, retrieved my contact from the hardworking ant, doused it with water and put it back in my eye, rejoicing. I was in awe, as if my Father had just given me, though so undeserving, a big hug, and said, "My precious daughter, I care about every detail of your life."

I wrote to tell my family. My dad drew a cartoon portraying an ant, lugging a big contact five times its size. The ant was saying to God, "Lord, I don't understand why You want me to drag this thing down! What use is it anyway? I don't even know what it is,

and I certainly can't eat it and it's so BIG and HEAVY. Oh well, if you say so, Lord, I'll try, but it seems like a useless piece of junk to me!"

I marvel at God's ways and how He chooses to reveal His mercy in ways *far beyond* our human comprehension.

THE LORD IS GRACIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE,
THE LORD IS GOOD TO ALL ...
THE LORD IS NEAR TO ALL WHO CALL UPON HIM ...
THE LORD HEARS ... !

Qualities Needed in Leaders

1. Patience, fixed purpose, grit.
2. Willingness to stand alone. There is nothing eternal in troubles of any kind. The note of Eternity sounds through one thing only: our attitude toward the events which God allows in our lives.
3. Readiness to lead the way up hard places.
4. Refusal to accept the word impossible where things of the Lord are concerned. (We need to walk softly here, sometimes what would seem to be most for His glory, such as John's release from Herod's prison, Paul's from Nero's, does not happen. "Blessed is he that is not offended in Me.")
5. Daring. Cool love never dares.
6. Be prepared to go on, no matter what happens, in peace.
7. Know His book so that you know where to go to find what you need for yourself and others.
8. Know how to win souls, how to meet them where they are, without hustling them, how to burn in love and longing for them.
9. Sense of humor (blessed be fun!), that which makes you ride your waves instead of being swamped by them; a knack of taking things by the smooth, not by the nobbledy handle.

—Amy Carmichael

Earthquake

At 4:31 am on January 17 I thought Lars was having a severe attack of nerves. The bed began to shake, then the room jerked and rocked. He woke. "What in the world's goin' on?" he said. "An earthquake, darling," said I. We were in a motel about fifty miles from the epicenter. Becky Martin from Chatsworth, where I had spoken two days before, wrote:

"We were *shaken*" (Ps 46:1-3) but so thankful to be *alive*! My husband is a hospital chaplain and was at the bedside of a dying man at Northridge Hospital—ground zero of the epicenter. We went to my mother's. As we looked at the devastation, she picked

up the pieces of a platter and said, "Elisabeth said to us on Saturday, when you pray 'give us this day our daily bread' but it doesn't mean just food. This earthquake must be what the Lord has put on our platter for today—let's thank Him for it."

Recommended Reading

Paul Brownback, *The Danger of Self-love*, Moody Press. Did Jesus teach us to learn to love ourselves? Is this the prerequisite to loving others? Many have been misled. Brownback's answers are clear and scriptural—the best I've seen.

Sexist Nonsense

Are you as tired as I am of that word *sexist*? You will be when you hear this one: The authors of a school reading book had taken care to balance 146 male characters with 146 female characters, lest anybody feel "put down." Somebody did anyway. Feminists charged that among *animal* characters males were too heavily represented.

Now are you ready for this one? The *Tale of Peter Rabbit* was condemned not only as *sexist* (because only the disobedient character is male) but *ageist* (the crotchety farmer is old), *racist* by omission (all of the bunnies are the same color), and *materialistic* (Peter is hunting for food).

(from Stephen Bates, *Battleground: The Religious Right, Its Opponents, and the Struggle for Our Schools*)

Duplicity

... months ago a doctor insisted that a certain woman must consent to a Caesarian section, or her child would either die in the womb or be seriously handicapped. For religious reasons, the woman and her husband refused. The child was born naturally, although somewhat underweight. A TV announcer stated that legal questions remained: Does society have a right to intervene in order to save the life of a helpless unborn child? May the parents refuse what may or may not be a lifesaving measure?

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The duplicity of the secular mind is astounding, isn't it? In the above-mentioned case intervention was demanded, religious convictions notwithstanding, lest the *child* die. In the case of abortion, it is the deliberate intention of both mother and doctor that death occur. There is no legal question of their "right" to intervene. We are asked to believe that what is being destroyed in that case is an inconvenience. It is *not a child*.

Mendacity

William J. Bennett wrote, "In America today, the only respectable form of bigotry is bigotry directed against religious people. This antipathy toward religion cannot be explained by the moral failures and financial excesses of a few leaders or charlatans, or by the censoriousness of some of their followers. No, the reason for the hatred of religion is that it forces modern man to confront matters he would prefer to ignore."

The religious editor of a national newsmagazine explained why the media hate Christians: "because people want to sleep with their girlfriends."

Christians, by their very presence, are a nuisance, as the conscience of every man, woman, and child made in the image of God is a nuisance, if we are bent on doing what we feel like doing

Dennis Prager, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 1994, gives us a lexicon which shows how certain words are used by major American newspapers, by the electronic news media (especially television), and by many individuals in public and private debate. A sampler:

Christian Right: contemptible people who always try to impose their values on other Americans.

Abortion: a form of birth control.

Women's Rights: supporting the right to destroy a human fetus for personal convenience.

Fetus: an unborn baby that is to be aborted.

Baby: an unborn baby that is not to be aborted.

(N.B. When a woman is pregnant and wants to give birth, no one asks her, no matter how early in the pregnancy, "So how's the fetus doing?" We only use the term "fetus" when we plan to destroy it. Otherwise we use "baby" from the first day of pregnancy.)

Woman, Inauthentic: a woman who does not hold liberal views.

(N.B. Gloria Steinem called Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison a "female impersonator" [*USA Today*, June 11, 1993]. Ms Hutchison is a conservative Republican.)

Note From Lars

This note is a cross between an apology and heartfelt thanksgiving. The apology is for the many who, in response to their encouraging letters to Elisabeth, have received a postcard from me with handwriting that resembles chicken-scratch. The facts are: there are still just the two of us. This presents an impossible situation for Elisabeth to answer *all* the mail. She does, of course, get the difficult ones passed on to her from me. We don't know how else to do it since we do not want to have staff or letter-writers take our place. We want to maintain the personal touch, and hope you'll understand.

Praise to the Lord

In January we went to Brownsville, Texas, at the invitation of my old (in both senses) missionary friends from Ecuador, Malcom and Mardelle Brown. These two are in their seventies, still willing for their lives to be a thoroughfare for any who need them. Areas which most of us consider our own private property, such as money, home, rest, and time, the Browns think of as God's property first of all, to do with as *He* chooses. All sorts and conditions of needy folk down there on the Mexican border find their way into their hearts.

Dear Mardelle! Not yet married, she was the first outsider to visit Valerie and me in 1958 when we lived with the Aucas (those who killed my husband Jim Elliot). She made little sunsuits for Val, Quichua-style skirts and blouses for me, and had them dropped to us by parachute. She sent flashlight batteries, sandwiches, a birthday cake, anything her loving imagination knew we needed. And—while in Brownsville she dug into her closets and files and came up with all the letters I had scrawled to her in that house-without-walls (I sent them out via the bucket-drop from the airplane). What an experience it was to read those letters! The sights, sounds, smells of that tiny jungle clearing, events I had entirely forgotten which I discovered in these letters: e.g. that I had made arrangements in writing for Mardelle to

In heav'nly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear,
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?
Anna L. Waring (born 1820)

care for Valerie in case the Aucas should decide I was too dangerous to have around, and that Mintaka and some other women had buried one of the five men, probably Ed McCully. Also, Nanikiwi was said to have dug up the bones of all the men and scattered them on the Curaray beach. One letter included a list for Mardelle to pray about: a Quichua language school I had promised to conduct, the completion of *Shadow of the Almighty*, a visit from my in-laws, the disposal of the house Jim built, etc. I learned why the Aucas called me "Gikari"—it means woodpecker, and they said I had a *red* head (I was a blonde back then). There was more, but so clearly, all through those sometimes fearful weeks and months and years, the ineluctable evidence of God's overshadowing, cherishing love and care for us in the midst of many perplexities and things hard for flesh-and-blood to bear with equanimity. PRAISE for His utterly reliable faithfulness. He *never* breaks a promise! And praise for a friend and pray-er like Mardelle!

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 48107-7711.

Travel Schedule May-September 1994

May 7 Syracuse, NY; WMHR Radio rally, Gordon Bell, (315) 469-5051.

May 14 Harrisburg, PA; Home School Convention, Kim Huber, (717) 653-8892.

May 15-19 Cruise, "Friends of Ecuador," (bookings closed).

May 19-31 Ecuador, South America.

June 7 Peterboro, NH; Pregnancy Resource Center, Beth Cutaiar, (603) 924-8788.

June 23-24 Hendersonville, NC; Covenant Presbyterian Church, (704) 693-8651.

June 24-26 NC, E's 50th high school reunion.

July 15-17 Cheyenne, WY; C & MA Family Camp, Harry Bolwyn, (307) 635-1014.

July 23 Tuxedo, NC; Camp Greystone.

September 10 Marblehead, MA; Baptist Women, Lila Foster, (617) 631-6569.

September 10 Middleboro, MA; Missions Banquet, Mr. Kohl, (617) 585-5242.

September 17 Lexington, MA; Grace Chapel.

September 22-28 Hungary and Transylvania.

September 29-October 2 Vienna, Austria.

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